

ANTH3623 Environmental Anthropology

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Office:	4030 Smith Lab	Web support:	Carmen

COURSE MEETING TIME(S):

Time: 9:35-10:55 Tues., Thurs.

Place: McPherson Lab 1005

REQUIRED TEXTS:

All readings will be provided on **Carmen** (*see the course bibliography at the end*)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

This course serves as an overview of the subfield of environmental anthropology. In other words, it explores anthropological approaches to understanding the relationship between humans and the environment. During the course, we will draw from a number of prominent scholars that have shaped this subfield to trace how perspectives in the study of human-environmental relationships have changed and evolved over time. With case studies from Amazonia to the Arctic, this course will look at how different human groups both manage and respond to the environment through their social organization, subsistence practices, technology, and religion. We will also examine contemporary U.S. cultural practices and beliefs in relation to the environment, and several course assignments will engage with human-environmental problems of local and national concern. Toward the end of the course, we will explore new theoretical and empirical developments in our understanding of the relationship of humanity to the environment, discussing specifically how climate change and the threat of global ecological crisis challenge our understanding of humanity's place on Earth.

COURSE GOALS:

By the conclusion of the course, each student should:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of how culture shapes human perceptions and interactions with the environment.
2. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of different theoretical paradigms in the history of environmental anthropology.
3. Apply theoretical paradigms from environmental anthropology to describe and explain human-environmental interactions.
4. Produce creative reflections on one's personal relationship to the environment through an anthropological lens.

BREAKDOWN OF GRADING:

Attendance (25 points): Regular attendance is expected of all students. Participation in class discussions is also strongly encouraged not only because it contributes to the intellectual environment of the classroom, but it facilitates individual learning as well.

Pop Quizzes and Take-Home Assignments (5x 5 points): Five small quizzes and take-home assignments related to course readings will be administered during semester. Be sure to read the chapters or articles assigned here in the syllabus BEFORE the start of each class.

Show & Tell Presentation (5 points): Each student will present an object that embodies their personal connection to the environment. Students will be asked to discuss the individual story behind the object as

well as what the object might teach us about human-environmental relationships and the ways humans develop meaningful attachments to the world around them. A sign-up sheet will be distributed the first week of class to assign individual presentation dates.

Show & Tell Creative Essay (10 points): This essay expands upon the “Show & Tell” Presentation delivered in class. However, it will explore facets of the chosen objects as well as personal relationships to them in greater detail. Furthermore, the essay will incorporate ideas from the course to support an overarching “human-environmental lesson” in the conclusion.

End of Semester Exhibition (10 points): The whole class will contribute to an end-of-semester exhibition in which the “Show & Tell” essays will be presented alongside artistic renderings of the chosen objects. More details on this final exhibition will be provided in the second half of the course.

Exams (2x 25 points): The midterm and final exams will consist of several short answer and short essay questions that frame key concepts and issues described in the course, requiring students to synthesize readings and apply the anthropological insights developed in class.

TOTAL: 125 points

COURSE GRADING SCALE:

100- 92.0%	A
91.9-90.0%	A-
89.9-88.0%	B+
87.9-82.0%	B
81.9-80.0%	B-
79.9-78.0%	C+
77.9-72.0%	C
71.9-70.0%	C-
69.9-68.0%	D+
69.9-60.0%	D
<60.0%	E

DISABILITY SERVICES

Students with disabilities (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions) that have been certified by the Office of Student Life Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Student Life Disability Services is located in 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue; telephone 614-292-3307, slds@osu.edu; slds.osu.edu.

COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT STATEMENT

All students should become familiar with the rules governing academic misconduct, especially as they pertain to plagiarism and cheating. Ignorance of the rules is not an excuse and all alleged cases of academic misconduct will be reported to the committee on academic misconduct.

CALENDAR:

Week 1 (Jan. 8 & 10) Introduction to Environmental Anthropology

(Tu): What is Environmental Anthropology?

Readings: None

(Th): Problematizing the Nature-Culture Divide

Readings: Posey “Indigenous Management of Tropics Ecosystems”; Ogden “Swamplife” (Ch. 1)

Week 2 (Jan. 15 & 17) Ecology and Social Organization

(Tu): Ecology and Social Morphology

Readings: Mauss “Seasonal Variations of the Eskimo”

(Th): Julian Steward’s Cultural Ecology

Readings: Steward “The Great Basin Shoshonean Indians”; Blackhawk “Julian Steward and the Politics of Representation”

Week 3 (Jan. 22 & 24) Humanized Ecosystems

(Tu): Ritual Regulation of Ecosystems

Readings: Rappaport “Ritual Regulation of Environmental Relations among a New Guinea People”

(Th): Case Study – Irrigation in Bali and Morocco

Readings: Geertz “The Wet and the Dry”

Week 4 (Jan. 29 & 31) Human-Animal Relations and Ecological Adaptation

(Tu): The Cattle Complex of the Nuer

Readings: Evans-Pritchard “Interest in Cattle”

(Th): The Sacred Cow of India

Readings: Harris “The Cultural Ecology of India’s Sacred Cattle”

Week 5 (Feb. 5 & 7) Ethnoecology and Native Environmentalism

(Tu): Ethnoecology and Ethnobotany

Readings: Conklin “An Ethnoecological Approach to Shifting Cultivation”

(Th): The Ecologically Noble Savage

Readings: Redford “The Ecologically Noble Savage”; Chapin “A Challenge to Conservationists”

Week 6 (Feb. 12 & 14) Symbolic Ecology

(Tu): Kincentric Ecology

Readings: Salmon “Kincentric Ecology”

(Th): Animism, Totemism, and Cultural Change

Readings: Biersack “The Mount Kare Python and His Gold”

Week 7 (Feb. 19 & 21) Ecology and Religion

(Tu): The Ecology Monks of Thailand

Readings: Darlington “The Ordination of a Tree”

(Th): **EXAM 1**

Readings: None

Week 8 (Feb. 26 & 28) Historical Ecology

(Tu): The Pristine Myth

Readings: Mann “Earthmovers of the Amazon”

(Th): Anthropogenic Environments of Amazonia

Readings: Marris “Black is the New Green”; Watling et al. “Impact of pre-Columbian geoglyph builders”

Week 9 (March 5 & 7) Political Ecology

(Tu): Political Ecology and Environmental Justice

Readings: Johnston “Anthropology and Environmental Justice”

(Th): Case Study: Political Ecology of the Zapatista Movement
Readings: Marcos "Our Word Is Our Weapon"

SPRING BREAK: March 11-15

Week 10 (March 19 & 21) Environmental Sustainability

(Tu): The Brundtland Report and the Advent of Sustainability

Readings: Brundtland "Our Common Future"

(Th): Guest Speaker

Readings: TBD

Week 11 (March 26 & 28) Phenomenology and Posthumanist Ecologies

(Tu): Phenomenology and Human Perception of the Environment

Readings: Ingold "Steps to an Ecology of Life"

(Th): Posthumanist Ecology

Readings: Pickering "New Ontologies"

Week 12 (April 2 & 4) Our Embodied Ecology

(Tu): The Wildlife of Our Bodies

Readings: Benezra "Anthropology of Microbes"; Sagan "The Human Is More Than Human"

(Th): The Human Body and the Landscape

Readings: Kawa "What Happens When We Flush?"; Pickering "Toilets, Bodies, Selves"

Week 13 (April 9 & 11) Ecological Crisis

(Tu): Ecological Crisis and Human Precarity

Readings: Tsing "The Mushroom at the End of the World" (selections)

(Th): Guest Speaker

Readings: TBD

SHOW & TELL ESSAYS DUE

Week 14 (April 16 & 18) The Anthropocene

(Tu): Welcome to the Anthropocene / Final Reflections

Readings: Steffen et al. "The Anthropocene"; Luciano "The Inhuman Anthropocene"

(Th): **IN-CLASS EXHIBITION**

Readings: None

Week 15 (April 24-30): FINAL EXAM ONLINE

Bibliography

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