ANTH 234

Cultural Ecology

Spring 2006
Mondays, 6:30-9:00, PNE 251

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PNE 346

Office Hours: M/Th 11:00-1:00 (and by appointment)
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Course Description
This course explores theoretical and methodological issues in the study of human culture and social activity in relation to ecological systems and the environment. Readings include both classic studies as well as contemporary research, with particular emphasis placed on the various dimensions and scales of social organization and activity, and on the role of cultural, religious, and political institutions in shaping ecological relationship as well as economic behavior.

Evaluation and Grading
Class sessions will entail a lecture component, combined with discussion of assigned readings. Regular attendance is expected of all participants; absences will be excused (or extensions granted) only in special circumstance, judged in conformity with College practice. Assigned readings must be completed prior to class time, and each student should prepare notes for questions and discussion. Course grades will be based on the following criteria:

- Participation = 20%
- 3 Assigned Essays (~5-7 pages each) = 20% each
- Research-based Term Paper (~10-15 pages) = 20%

Details regarding assessment exercises will be announced at appropriate junctures of the course.

Required Texts:

Schedule of Topics & Readings

PART I: CONCEPTUAL ORIENTATIONS

Week 1
Mon., Jan 30
Introduction

Week 2
Mon., Feb 6

Theoretical Foundations

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Energy & Adaptation

Week 3
Mon., Feb 13

Economy & History

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Rituals & Redistribution
• Roy Rappaport, 1967, "Ritual Regulation of Environmental Relations among a New Guinea People," 
  Ecological Studies in Cultural Anthropology, Garden City: Natural History Press, pp. 181-201 
  [Clapp GF51 .V35])

  Southwestern Journal of Anthropology 21:244-264 (reprinted in A. Vayda (ed.), 1969, 
  Environment & Cultural Behavior: Ecological Studies in Cultural Anthropology, Garden City: 
  Natural History Press, pp. 130-156 [Clapp GF51 .V35])

• J. Boone, 1998, "The Evolution of Magnanimity: When is it Better to Give than to Receive?" Human 
  Nature 9:1-21 [ILL]

Week 4
Mon., Feb 20 – No Class – Presidents’ Day

Week 5
Mon., Feb 27
Political Ecology
    Political Geography 11(1):12-36 [ILL]
  • Fredrik Barth, 1956, "Ecological Relationships of Ethnic Groups in Swat, North Pakistan," American 
    Anthropologist 58:1079-1089 [JSTOR]
  • Mauricio Bellon, 1996, "Landholding Fragmentation: Are Folk Soil Taxonomy and Equity Important? A 
    Case Study from Mexico," Human Ecology 24(3):373-393 [Expanded Academic ASAP]

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Ethnographic Focus: Amazonia
  • Picchi, The Bakairi

Essay 1 Due: Friday, 3 March 2006

PART II: REINTERPRETING THE PAST

Week 6
Mon., Mar 6
Archaeological Insights
  • Redman, Human Impact on Ancient Environments, chs. 4-8

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Indigenous Transformations
  • Krech, Ecological Indian
  • Janis Alcorn, 1981, "Huastec Noncrop Resource Management: Implications for Prehistoric Resource 
  • Michael Alvard, 1993, "Testing the 'Ecologically Noble Savage' Hypothesis: Interspecific Prey Choice 

Week 7
Mon., Mar 13
Local Knowledge
  • Arun Agrawal, 1995, "Dismantling the Divide Between Indigenous and Scientific Knowledge," 
    Development & Change 26(3):413-439 [ILL]
State Interventions


Essay 2 Due: Friday, 17 March 2006

** SPRING BREAK **

PART III: CONTROLLING INTERESTS

Week 8
Mon., Mar 27

Property & Commons


Conservation


Week 9
Mon., Apr 3

Development

- Rich, Mortgaging the Earth, ch. 8


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**Local Participation**


**Week 10**

Mon., Apr 10

**Global Management**


• Rich, *Mortgaging the Earth*

**Week 11**

Mon., Apr 17 – No Class – Patriots’ Day

Tue., Apr 18 – Monday Schedule

**Intersections of State & Local Eco-Governance**

• Lansing, Priests & Programmers


**Essay 3 Due: Friday, 21 April 2006**

**PART IV: ECOLOGIES OF MODERNITY**

**Week 12**

Mon., Apr 24

**Symbolism & Spirituality**

• Alley, *On the Banks of the Ganga*

**Week 13**

Mon., May 1

**American Modernity**

• Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation*


**Week 14**

Mon., May 8

**Student Presentations**

**Term Paper Due: Friday, 12 May 2006**