

Environmental Anthropology

Instructor: Elizabeth Hare

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Miller 106

Office hours: Mondays 12:15-1:15pm and Wednesdays 2:30-3:30pm or by appointment

Course Overview:

Environmental Anthropology is an approach for understanding human-environment interactions that emphasizes the diversity of human experiences that shape environmental relations. This class combines anthropological and multidisciplinary theories with ethnographic methods in order to critically explore contemporary environmental issues. This class takes as its starting point the notion that cultural experiences shape our perceptions of the world around us, in ways that both facilitate understanding and also limit the possibilities of our imaginations. Because of this, the class critically explores concepts that are too often taken for granted in environmental discussions, such as “environmental degradation”, “wilderness”, and “the pristine”.

As we critically explore theoretical frameworks for conceptualizing environmental relations, students are expected to apply these ideas in researching ethnographic case studies. Throughout the term, students will be conducting their own research on a local human-environmental matter of concern. The class culminates in an original ethnographic research paper that will combine the student’s own empirical findings with theoretical concepts from course materials.

Required Texts:

There are three required books for this class:

Fletcher, Robert *Romancing the Wild*

O’Reilly, Jessica *The Technocratic Antarctic*

Kawa, Nicholas C. *Amazonia in the Anthropocene*

They are available in the Huntley bookstore, as well as online from a variety of booksellers.

In addition, there are a number of articles in .pdf format available for download in the resources folder of the class Sakai site.

Grading and Assignments:

Participation and Attendance (20%) – Attendance is crucial. Students are expected to attend all classes and to regularly participate. Students are expected to come to class having done a close reading of the assigned texts and are expected to actively listen to lecture and be prepared to participate in discussions.

This is not a lecture course. While there will be introductory lectures to introduce particular topics, most class sessions will require your participation and the quality of the class will depend on students' contributions. Discussions may take different forms and you are expected to contribute to both large and small group discussions in ways that demonstrate that you have thought critically about the readings and films. This means that your success in this course depends on your completing the reading before each meeting. You should bring the readings to class with you as we will refer to them in our discussions. I may occasionally call on you to respond to a question or comment, give impromptu quizzes on the readings, or assign small homework assignments based upon class readings. All of these are considered part of this component of your grade. Engaging in non-course activities such as texting, chatting, or sleeping will negatively affect this component of your grade.

Attendance will be taken and it is your responsibility to make sure that your presence is recorded. Valid reasons for missing class include serious illness, a family emergency, or religious observance. Missed work must be made up regardless of the excuse. It is your responsibility to get the notes from any classes you miss from a classmate and read them before coming to discuss the missed class with me.

Reading Responses (30%) – A total of 10 responses are due throughout the semester. Responses are to be typed and two pages double-spaced or one page single-spaced, using a 12-point standard font and 1" margins. The reading response paper should address the reading assigned for that day. These reading response papers are due at the beginning of class. *Late responses will not be accepted*; they defeat the purpose of the assignment.

The purpose of the reading response paper is to learn how to make a synopsis, or summary, of the main argument of a reading assignment and to think analytically about that thesis. Reading response papers also encourage you to take the time to review the reading assignment, to think about what you read before you come to class, and therefore to enter into class discussion having already outlined several main issues.

The response paper should consist of two paragraphs. The first paragraph should be a brief summary of the main argument of the reading. It should answer such questions as: What is the author's argument? How does the author argue about the role of culture? Whom is the author arguing against and why? Which individuals or groups does the author focus on? How does she/he conceive of the process of creating cultural meaning about beliefs and social relationships? Where do power and inequality lie in these cultural processes? (You do not need to answer all of these questions, but you should use them as guidelines.)

The second paragraph should be your reflections upon the reading. What did you think was particularly striking or important in the reading? How does this author's approach to culture

compare with other authors' approaches we have read in the course? What are some of the other connections you can make between these texts and other texts we have read?

On some days there will be multiple readings assigned. In that case, you should choose one text as your primary text for the purposes of the response paper. Your first paragraph will focus on it. In the second paragraph you **must** draw substantive connections between the primary text that you chose and the other assigned texts for the day in order to receive full credit.

One important rule: do not use any direct quotations from the text. This should all be in your own words.

Local Environmental Ethnography (50%)

The final paper for this course takes the form of a short piece of ethnographic writing. The paper will draw on theoretical ideas covered in class and readings as well as your own ethnographic research. Rather than simply read about anthropology and read the final products of fieldwork, this project will allow you to develop your own fieldwork and analysis skills. I encourage you to explore your own interests with this project and to incorporate them into your research question.

Early in the class, you will identify potential fieldsites and environmental anthropological questions that are of interest to you. I am happy to assist you in choosing an appropriate fieldsite and in narrowing down your research question. Throughout the course of the term, you are expected to spend time in your fieldsite and to become familiar with your interlocutors. You may employ any of the methods we discuss in class (e.g. participant observation, ethnological comparison, structured and semi-structured interviews), however you will be asked to justify your choice of method(s) in each component of the project.

Data collected during fieldwork is an important component of anthropological research, but it is not the only one. Anthropologists relate to and interpret their findings through other anthropological and social theory texts. In your final paper, you should discuss your findings in relation to no fewer than 10 scholarly resources, including a minimum of 5 texts from this class.

Some questions to ask yourself when considering project ideas:

What anthropological topics are you interested in? Why?

What environmental issues are you interested in?

What kinds of places would be interesting sites for anthropological research? Why? Do you have access to them?

Are you comfortable talking to these people?

Will you have access to their time and key activities?

Is this a testable hypothesis or an open-ended question?

Which methods and/or theories are you interested in utilizing?

Most importantly, does this meet IRB exemption criteria?

A project meets this criteria if disclosure of the human subject's responses outside the research could not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation, AND the information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects cannot be identified, AND the project does not involve vulnerable populations. Vulnerable

populations are defined as minors, prison populations, pregnant women, persons with particular cognitive disabilities, undocumented persons, and/or persons involved in criminal activities.

NOTE: There are 5 components of this assignment:

- 1-page proposal due Week 4 (5%)
- Fieldnotes report due Week 8 (5%)
- 1-paragraph abstract AND 10-source annotated bibliography due week 14 (10%)
- Presentation due during Final exam period (5%)
- 10 page final paper due at Final exam period (25%)

Proposal – due week 4

The proposal should be no more than 1 page double-spaced, with 1” margins and a standard 12-pt font. It should include:

- a brief description of the fieldsite and study population, including a statement about why this project meets the requirements for IRB exemption.
- a concise and manageable research question
- a description of your methodology
- an explanation of why this project is anthropologically interesting (link to class materials)

Your writing must be concise in order to fit the necessary information onto one page. Note that concise does not mean that poor grammar or shorthand writing is acceptable.

Prior to submitting the written proposal, you *must* attend office hours to discuss your project. Failure to do so will result in a grade of zero for the proposal.

The project proposal is worth 5% of your total grade in this class.

Field report – due Week 8

The field report should be no more than 5 pages double-spaced. It should provide a brief (1 paragraph) update on the status of fieldwork itself (i.e. have you been able to establish rapport with interlocutors? What have you done while “in the field”?) The bulk of the assignment should address analytic matters: Does your research question still make sense? Will you be able to answer it with your research? What are some of your initial findings? You may wish to include a brief anecdote and/or phenomenological description.

Abstract and annotated bibliography – due Week 14

The abstract should explain the study population/fieldsite, research question and methods used in no more than 250 words. Things to include in the abstract:

- a brief description of your proposed ethnography and research question
- a brief description of the location (fieldsite) and the study population (demographics)

- a brief description of the methods you are using, and why
- relate the project to classic questions and themes in anthropology
- a concise summary statement

The annotated bibliography will list the sources you intend to cite in the final paper. For each source, write 3-5 sentences explaining the argument of each source and why it is relevant to your project. Remember, at least 5 sources must be assigned texts. Note: you do not have to use exactly these 10 sources in your paper, but it will only help you to do so.

This document should be double-spaced, 12 pt. standard font, 1" margins. Citations should be done according to the AAA style guide (available on e-commons).

The abstract and annotated bibliography is worth 10% of your final grade in this class.

Presentation – to be presented in-class during Final Exam period

In addition to the final paper, you will present your research findings to your classmates on the last day of class. This is a short “lightning talk” style presentation, no more than 5 minutes long. The presentation is an opportunity to practice and demonstrate your verbal skills, so slideshows and visual aids, if used, should work to further that goal.

Your presentation should include the following:

- a description of the location (fieldsite) and the study population (demographics)
- a description of the research question, including whether or not it changed during the course of your research
- a description of the methods you used and why you chose them
- an explanation of how your project relates to other anthropological and/or interdisciplinary research on the topic
- a discussion of your research findings

The presentation is worth 5% of your final grade in this class.

Final Paper – due in-class during Final Exam period

As you will see in this class, ethnographies are different compared to standard research papers. They tend to be more reflexive – they include the ethnographer’s experiences, biases, and interests – and they often have a narrative structure. They incorporate anecdotes and tell stories, and interpret them with support from anthropological and social theory. The arguments presented in ethnographies are supported by evidence from the author’s fieldwork experience and/or from scholarly literature. Unsubstantiated opinions should not be included.

While you should feel free to creatively explore the ethnographic genre, you should include the following in the paper:

- An explanation of the fieldsite,
- An explanation of the study population
- An explanation of the original research question. If the research question changed during the course of the study, explain how it changed, why, and what the final research question was.

- An explanation of the methods used and a justification for each of them.
- Connect the field research with the theories and concepts covered in class. Explain how your research relates to anthropological works on the topic.
- There must be a minimum of 10 scholarly citations, of which no fewer than 5 should be assigned texts.
- Discuss the findings of your anthropological fieldwork.

The final paper should be 10 pages, double-spaced, 1" margins, 12 pt. standard font. Citations should be done according to the AAA style guide.

The final paper is worth 25% of your final grade in this class

Policies:

In this course we will be reading and discussing material that may be challenging both academically and personally. This requires us to be open-minded and listen to one another; above all, it is crucial to maintain respect in all classroom interactions. You will encounter new ideas through the course materials, and you will learn to look at old ideas in new ways.

If you are not clear about something that was discussed in class or that was in the readings, it is important to ask. Attend office hours or make an appointment with the instructor. We will be covering a lot of material; don't fall so far behind that it becomes difficult to catch up.

Academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and cheating will not be tolerated and will be prosecuted in accordance with the student handbook. It is your responsibility to make sure that you are familiar with and understand college policy on this. You must clearly identify and credit all information taken from any published sources, the internet, other student's papers, your own papers, or class lectures and sections. Plagiarism and cheating on exams can result in your failing the assignment and/or failing the course.

You are responsible for checking the course Sakai website regularly for announcements. Please do not hesitate to see me during office hours for any reason related to this course. You may also schedule an appointment at some other time if your schedule requires it – the best way to schedule an appointment is either at the end of class or via email.

Grading

In this course, work that fulfills the basic requirements for an assignment in an adequate manner will receive a "B." In order to receive an "A" grade, work must demonstrate exceptional critical thinking and innovation. Grades are not subject to negotiation. I am happy to discuss your graded work with you under the following two conditions: 1) You must first read my comments, think about them, and wait 24 hours before coming to see me in my office hours or by appointment; 2) Your motivations for discussing your graded work should be in order to better understand why you received a particular grade or to learn how to do better next time.

No late work will be accepted for credit.

No incompletes will be granted for the course except in cases of valid and documented emergencies and prompt notification.

There is no extra credit available.

Special Needs

Scripps students seeking to register to receive academic accommodations must contact Academic Resources and Services (ARS) at ars@scrippscollege.edu to formalize accommodations. Students will be required to submit documentation and meet with a staff member before being approved for accommodations. Once ARS has authorized academic accommodations, a formal notification will be sent out.

A student's home campus is responsible for establishing and providing accommodations. If you are not a Scripps student, you must contact your home institution to establish accommodations.

Below is a list of coordinators on the other campuses:

- CMC - Julia Easley , julia.easley@claremontmckenna.edu
- Harvey Mudd – Deborah Kahn, dkahn@hmc.edu
- Pitzer- Gabriella Tempestoso, gabriella_tempestoso@pitzer.edu
and Danny Hernandez, Danny_Hernandez@pitzer.edu
- Pomona - Jan Collins-Eaglin, Jan.Collins-Eaglin@pomona.edu

Contacting Me

I highly encourage students to meet with me during my scheduled office hours to address questions about the class or to discuss anything in more detail. I respond to emails within 24 hours, except for emails received on Fridays (which I may respond to by the following Monday).

Class Schedule:

Week 1 – Introduction

Dove, Michael and Carol Carpenter “Major Historical Currents in Environmental Anthropology”

Week 2 – Nature/Culture

Posey, Darrell Addison “Indigenous Management of Tropical Forest Ecosystems: The Case of the Kayapó Indians of the Brazilian Amazon

Evans-Pritchard, E.E. “Interest in Cattle”

Harris, Marvin “The Cultural Ecology of India’s Sacred Cattle”

Reading Response #1 Due

Week 3 – “ the noble savage”

Redford, Kent “The Ecologically Noble Savage”

Nadasdy, Paul “Transcending the Debate over the Ecologically Noble Indian: Indigenous Peoples and Environmentalism”

Reading Response #2 Due

Week 4 – baselines and antecedent states

Denevan, William M. “The Pristine Myth: The Landscape of the Americas in 1492”

Mann, Charles C. “Ancient Earthmovers of the Amazon”

Pauly, Daniel “Anecdotes and the shifting baseline syndrome of fisheries

Proposal Due

Week 5 – wilderness

Cronon, William “The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature” and responses in *Environmental History*

Proctor, James D. “Whose Nature? The Contested Moral Terrain of Ancient Forests”

Reading Response #3 Due

Week 6 – work

White, Richard “Are you a environmentalist or do you work for a living?”

Kosek, Jake “Smokey Bear is a White Racist Pig”

Fletcher, Robert *Romancing the Wild* Introduction – Chp. 2

Reading Response #4 Due

Week 7 – play

Fletcher, Robert *Romancing the Wild* Chp. 3 – Chp. 6

Fletcher, Robert *Romancing the Wild* Chp. 7 – Conclusion

Reading Response #5 Due

Week 8 – perceptions

Bloch, Maurice “People into Places: Zafimaniry Concepts of Clarity”

Frake, Charles O. “Pleasant Places, Past Times, and Sheltered Identity in Rural East Anglia”

Ingold, Tim “Globes and Spheres: The Topology of Environmentalism”

Field Report Due

Week 9 – governance

O'Reilly, Jessica *The Technocratic Antarctic* Introduction – Chp. 2.

O'Reilly, Jessica *The Technocratic Antarctic* Chp. 3 – 5.

Reading Response #6 Due**Week 10 – knowledge**

O'Reilly, Jessica *The Technocratic Antarctic* Chp. 6 – Conclusion

Ellen, Roy “Forest Knowledge, Forest Transformation: Political Contingency, Historical Ecology, and the Renegotiation of Nature in Central Seram”

Reading Response #7 Due**Week 11 – Nature, Inc.**

West, Paige “Translation, Value, and Space: Theorizing an Ethnographic and Engaged Environmental Anthropology”

Escobar, Arturo “Whose Knowledge, Whose Nature? Biodiversity, Conservation, and the Political Ecology of Social Movements”

Hughes, David McDermott “Third Nature: Making Space and Time in the Great Limpopo Conservation Area”

Reading Response #8 Due**Week 12 – affect**

McLean, Stuart “Black Goo: forceful encounters with matter in Europe’s muddy margins”

Helmreich, Stefan “An anthropologist underwater: Immersive soundscapes, submarine cyborgs, and transductive ethnography”

Stewart, Kathleen “Atmospheric Attunements”

Reading Response #9 Due**Week 13 – placemaking**

Raffles, Hugh “‘Local Theory’: Nature and the Making of an Amazonian Place”

Ogden, Laura “The Everglades ecosystem and the politics of nature”

Reading Response #10 Due**Week 14 – Anthropocene**

Gibson, Hannah and Sita Venkateswar “Anthropological Engagement with the Anthropocene: a critical review”

Kawa, Nicholas C. *Amazonia in the Anthropocene* Chp. 1

Kawa, Nicholas C. *Amazonia in the Anthropocene* Chp. 2-4

Abstract and Annotated Bibliography Due**Week 15 – futures**

Kawa, Nicholas C. *Amazonia in the Anthropocene* Chp. 5-6

Zee, Jerry C. “Holding Patterns: Sand and Political Time at China’s Desert Shores”

Limbert, Mandana “Liquid Oman: oil, water, and causality in Southern Arabia”

Finals week -**In-class Presentation & Final Paper Due**