Course Description:

This course emphasizes the interconnectedness between people and nature. We will be concerned with people’s perceptions of and interactions with their physical and biological surroundings, and the various linkages between biological and cultural worlds. Topics to be explored include the processes of domestication, human alteration of the environment, the ecology of indigenous foodways, traditional ecological knowledge of plants, natural resource sustainability, environmental racism, and conservation policies through time and space. My goal in teaching this class is to provide you with a broader understanding of the role of culture in sustaining the diversity of plant and animal life on earth, and the role of nature and AGENCY in perpetuating cultural knowledge for future generations.

Some of the questions we will explore are:

- How do we define “nature” and “environment” and how do understandings of the human relationship with the natural world vary cross-culturally?
- How have humans shaped the environment over time and how has the environment shaped human societies?
- What is environmental degradation and what roles do humans seem to play in it?
- What happens when groups clash over the control of natural resources, definitions of the value of nature, and ways of preserving or conserving the environment?
- How do social categories like race, ethnicity, gender, and class shape the way that humans interact with the environment and experience the effects of environmental degradation?
- Under what conditions do humans act to conserve resources?
- What is “environmentalism” and who participates in environmental movements?

This course will examine the ways that anthropologists approach these questions and will highlight perspectives to answer the above questions from the subfields of cultural ecology, eco-feminism, historical ecology, ethnoecology, spiritual ecology, political ecology, and environmental justice.

Sections of Course:

This course can be divided into three sections. The sections will not be equal lengths of time.

Section One

In this section, you will be exposed to multiple dimensions and definitions of nature and culture. I will briefly expose you to some of the fieldwork conducted and methods utilized in environmental anthropology. Then, I will move into an in depth discussion of the theoretical framework which serves as the foundation of ecological anthropology today. In this section, you
will be expected to complete a short method based exercise. You will also be expected to complete Project #1 which will be a 4-5-page paper. The project will center on deconstructing a well-known book, Guns, Germs, and Steel and how we as a public view such works that evaluate cultural evolution in relation to the environment.

**Section Two**

In this section, we will explore the current theoretical constructs that constitute ecological anthropology in today’s world. We will discuss each paradigm (eco-tourism, ethnoecology, political ecology etc.) at length through our readings and case studies. In this section, you will be expected to be complete a film exercise and project #2 in which you and a partner will compare two cultural groups and their perceptions and interactions with their environments. (Your individual papers should be 4-5 pages and the group presentations will be 10 minutes). Also you will start working on your final papers were you choose an aspect of environmental anthropology which cultivates interest and/or is related to your declared major.

**Section Three**

Within this last section, we will discuss sustainability and development in our ever-changing world. We will highlight how ecological anthropology is important to our modern world and how you “fit” into that grand scheme. You also will be expected to finish your final research project (7-10 pages) and be expected to briefly discuss your topic to the class (5-7 minutes).

**Course Objectives:**

1) introduce principal approaches in current ecological anthropology and the key concepts within each;

2) practical environmental problems and issues as well as environmental discourses viewed from the perspective of these approaches;

3) the pivotal role of culture AND agency in human ecology, adaptations, maladaptations, environmental change, and environmental concerns;

4) how people culturally conceptualize, manipulate, transform, and humanize their natural environments over time; and

5) ecological and anthropological thinking about the above and the larger context of the development of ecology and environmentalism.

**Required Texts:**


Townsend, Patricia K., 2009, *Environmental Anthropology: From Pigs to Policies*, Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc. (Second Edition) [Be sure to use the Second Edition which is substantially different from the first one].
Additional Readings (These articles and selected chapters from these books will be provided on Moddle – the bolded books will also be available at bookstore for purchase):

Anderson, M. Kat
2005 *Tending the Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California’s Natural Resources*. University of California Press, Berkeley. (selected chapters)

Balée, William

Balée, William and Erikson, Clark (editors)

Butzer, Karl

Carniero, R. L.

Crumley, Carol

Dincauze, Dena

Errington, Fredrick and Deborah Gewertz
2002 *Yali’s Questions: Sugar, Culture, and History*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago. (selected chapters)

Escobar, Arturo

Diamond, Jared

Kottak, Conrad
Nazarea, Virginia

Norberg-Hodge, Helena

Rappaport, R. A.

Richerson, P. J.


Steward, J. H.

Stonich, Susan and Billie DeWalt

Taylor, Sarah

White, L.

**Course Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods Exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Film Exercise</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>News Exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project #1</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project #2</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Research Project</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Grading Scale:

Final grades will be determined using the following percentages

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93 - 100 %</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90 - 92 %</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>87 - 89 %</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>83 - 86 %</td>
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<td>70 - 72 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>67 - 69 %</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>60 - 66 %</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>59 % and below</td>
<td>F</td>
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Course Requirements:

This course requires that students engage in critical thinking and critical reading, and thus students are expected to come to class regularly, take thorough notes on lectures, and complete all reading assignments for the dates indicated. While some class meetings will include more lecture than others, student participation is an essential component of the course. All students must be prepared to respond to questions regarding reading assignments, lectures, and films on a weekly basis, and to participate in class discussion sessions and group exercises. One of the best ways to be consistently prepared for all components of this course is to take good notes on lectures as well as assigned readings. Use your course notebook to record any and all responses and questions you have regarding readings, lectures, and films. All work turned in for this course is to be completed in accordance with the Rhodes College Honor Code. I will be diligent about reporting all violations to the Honor Council. If you have questions about plagiarism you should talk to me directly.

Readings: All readings from the textbooks and additional readings are required. Assigned weekly readings should be completed before Monday morning of the current week.

In-Class Participation: Students are expected to attend all classes, complete all readings, and actively participate in all discussions. This is a significant percentage of your grade. The grade is based on the student’s attendance, his/her willingness to verbally participate in discussion, commitment to learning, and demonstrated preparation for discussion. The only excused absences are illness with documentation and athletic obligations that are documented beforehand.

Exercises: Each student will be expected to complete three exercises. The first exercise will be a method exercise. The second exercise will related to watching films on Moddle. Last, the news exercise will be due one time for each student throughout the semester. On the first day of class you will be assigned a week in which you will have to bring a current event related to human environmental interactions anywhere in the world. You will be asked to give a brief summary of the article to class and discuss why it sparked your interest etc.

Projects: There are 3 required projects for this class. Each of the projects will have a detailed outline as the semester follows. Project #1 focuses on the Diamond (1996), Errington and Gewertz (2004) and additional outside references. Project #2 consists of comparing and contrasting two cultural groups and their perceptions and interactions with their environments. Last, your Final Research project will consist of a topic that is self-chosen and should be related to your major and/or an area of interest.
Course Schedule: This is subject to revisions as the semester proceeds. Readings are to be completed on or before the assigned days. Also, remember that the News Exercise will be due for each student depending on your week to present a “hot topic”.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1: Aug. 25-28</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
<td>Kottak 1999 (Fri)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Week 2: Aug 29 – Sept. 2 | The Complexity in Defining Nature  
Why Ecological Anthropology? Why Diversity? | Townsend 2000 Chapter 1; Merchant 2005 Chapter 1-3  
Film: Planet in Peril |
| Week 3: Sept. 5-Sept 9 | No class Labor Day – Sept. 5  
Methods of Reconstruction in Ecological Analysis | Dincauze 2000                                  |
| Week 4: Sept. 12 -26 | Methods Exercise Due (Mon)  
Cultural Ecology | Townsend 2000 Chapter 2; Steward 1955; Butzer 1982 |
| Weeks 5: Sept. 19-23 | Neoevolutionism and Ecology                    | White 1949; Carniero 1970; TBA                  |
Film: Guns, Germs and Steel |
| Weeks 8: Oct. 10-14 | Project #1 Due (Wed)  
Eco-Feminism- Women and Nature | Merchant 2005 Chapter 8; Norberg-Hodge 2009     |
| Week 9: Oct. 17-21 | No Class Fall Recess (Mon. Oct. 17)  
Research Project Topic Due (Wed)  
Historical Ecology | Crumley 1994; Balée 1998; TBA                   |
Film: Ahuapua`a Fishponds and Lo`i (Hawai`i) |
| Weeks 11: Oct. 31-Nov.4 | Ethnoecology                                   | Nazarea 1999; Townsend 2000 Chapter 3-8       |
| Weeks 12: Nov.7-11 | Ethnoecology cont.  
Project #2 Due (Wed) and Class Presentations (Wed and Fri) | Anderson 2005                                  |
Film: Dirt the Movie |
| Weeks 14: Nov.21-25 | Film Exercise Due (Mon)  
Political Ecology  
No Class: Thanksgiving Recess Nov. 23 and 25 | Stonich and DeWalt 1996; Escobar 1998          |
| Week 15: Nov.28-Dec. 2 | Sustainability, Development and Environmental Justice | Merchant 2005 Chapters 7, 9-10; TBA  
Film: Radically Simple |
| Week 16: Dec. 5-7 | Wrap Up  
Final Research Project Due (Wed) and Class Presentations (Wed and Fri) |