

Anthropology & Environmentalism
Spring 2014
ANTH 3991.80 / HONORS 2175.84

Wednesdays & Fridays, 12.45-2.00 pm
1776 G Street, Room 168

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OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2.30-4.30 pm:

At the heart of anthropology is the study of how humans biologically and culturally adapt to different social and cultural environments. Known as 'cultural ecology', this is a key sub-discipline with a long and distinguished history, emerging from the work of Franz Boas (1858-1942). Cultural ecology emphasizes the existing context in which different groups adapt to specific environmental conditions and as such potentially conflicts with the assumptions and practices of environmentalism, which emphasizes the universal foundation of environmental issues. In this course we shall take environmentalism as our object of inquiry. We will examine the intellectual basis of this movement, the role of science in the rhetoric of environmentalism, and the transnational assumptions which drives its practices. Our goal is to better understand the assumptions and values of environmentalism in order to analyze how these may conflict with the environmental practices of different social groups.

The course is divided into five sections. Part I introduces the key principles of ecological anthropology. Part II examines the historical context of environmentalism, focusing on the United States. Part III describes environmentalism in American popular culture, particularly film and advertising. Part IV turns to an emerging anthropology of environmentalism. Finally, in the final section of this course we will discuss how anthropologists engage with environmentalism 'on the ground' through case studies in conservation that range from the Brazilian rain forest and state forest preserves in Indonesia to environmental justice among the Lakota peoples and ecological culture in post-Soviet Tartarstan.

REQUIRED TEXTS: Buy or rent, find online, download electronic copies, it does not matter as long as you have these books:

1. Townsend, Patricia. *Environmental Anthropology: From Pigs to Policies*. Waveland Press, 2008 [Second Edition].
2. Argyrou, Vassos. *The Logic of Environmentalism: Anthropology, Ecology, and Postcoloniality*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2005.

3. Sturgeon, Noel. *Environmentalism in Popular Culture: Gender, Race, Sexuality and the Politics of the Natural*. University of Arizona, 2009.
4. Descola, Philippe. *The Ecology of Others*. Prickly Paradigm Press, 2013.
5. Anderson, David & Eeva Berglund. *Ethnographies of Conservation: Environmentalism and the Distribution of Privilege*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2004.

Blackboard Readings:

- Luke, Timothy. "On Environmentality: Geo-Power and Eco-Knowledge in the Discourses of Contemporary Environmentalism" in Nora Haenn & Richard Wilk, *The Environment in Anthropology: A Reader in Ecology, Culture, and Sustainable Living*. New York & London: NYU Press 2006, pp. 257-269.
- Milton, Kay. "Cultural Theory and Environmentalism" in Nora Haenn & Richard Wilk, *The Environment in Anthropology: A Reader in Ecology, Culture, and Sustainable Living*. New York & London: NYU Press 2006, pp. 351-354.
- Motadel, David. "The German Conservation Nature Movement in the Twentieth Century." *Journal of Contemporary History* 43:1 (2008), 137-153.
- Nash, Roderick. "The American Cult of the Primitive." *American Quarterly* 18:3 (1966), 517-537.
- Rappaport, Roy. "Ritual Regulation of Environmental Relations among a New Guinea People." *Ethnology* 6:1 (1967), 17-30.
- Shepherd, Robert. "What Makes a Place Heritage?" in *Faith in Heritage: Displacement, Development, and Religious Tourism in Contemporary China*. Walnut Creek, CA, 2013, pp. 23-41.
- Spence, Mark. *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*. Oxford University Press 1999, Chapters 1 & 2.
- Steward, Julian. "Ecological Aspects of Southwestern Society." *Anthropos* 32:1 (1937), 87-104.
- -----. "The Concept and Method of Cultural Ecology" in Nora Haenn & Richard Wilk, *The Environment in Anthropology: A Reader in Ecology, Culture, and Sustainable Living*. New York & London: NYU Press 2006, pp. 5-9.

EVALUATION

1. **Attendance, evidence of preparation, and participation (20%):** In a course such as this, talking about ideas is as important as reading and writing about these. The more adept you become at discussing ideas, claims, points of evidence, and judgments, the more nuanced and sophisticated you will become in your reading, thinking, note taking, and writing as well. Do not think a question you have is not useful; chances are, someone else has the same question. If you miss classes because of prior commitments, this will negatively impact your grade. If you are ill, or must observe a religious holiday, your grade will not be affected. Most importantly, as with your written work, the quality of your contributions is far more important than the quantity.
2. **Group Presentation (15%; February 26th and 28th):** You will work in teams of two; each team will have approximately twenty minutes to present visual examples of how

'nature' is presented through advertisements, films, and other contemporary media forms.

3. **Short Papers (2 X 15% = 30%; due in class on February 5th and March 19th):** each paper will be five pages long and will respond to a guiding prompt. I will provide the prompts a week in advance of the submission dates.
4. **Final Paper (35%):** You will write a 10-12 page paper on a topic related to this course that demonstrates your familiarity with and ability to use anthropological concepts and source materials.

Paper extensions: in order to accommodate your needs, I make sure you have a full week to write these essays. Short of a documented medical emergency, no paper extensions are possible. Papers turned in a day after the deadline lose ½ grade; papers turned in two days late lose one full grade; papers turned in three days late lose two full grades. No paper will be accepted beyond three days late.

Course Outline

Part I: Ecology, Humans, and Anthropology

Week I (January 15-17): Ecological Anthropology

1/15: Course Introduction & Expectations

1/17: Townsend, *Environmental Anthropology*, Chapters 1-3

Week II (January 22-24): Indigenous Peoples & Places

1/22: Julian Steward, "Ecological Aspects of Southwestern Society" & "The Concept and Method of Cultural Ecology" in Nora Haenn & Richard Wilk, *The Environment in Anthropology* [Blackboard].

1/24: Townsend, *Environmental Anthropology*, Chapters 4-6

Week III (January 29-31): Ethno-Ecology & Eco-Systems

1/29: Roy Rappaport, "Ritual Regulation of Environmental Relations among a New Guinea People" [Blackboard].

Part II: 'Nature' and Society

1/31: Roderick Nash, "The American Cult of the Primitive" [Blackboard].

Week IV (February 5-7): 'Nature' and 'Culture' in Historical Context

2/5: Mark Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*, Chapters 1 & 2 [Blackboard].

2/7: Shepherd, "What Makes a Place Heritage?" [Blackboard]

Week V (February 12-14): The Making of Nature

2/12: David Motadel, "The German Nature Conservation Movement in the Twentieth Century" [Blackboard].

2/14: Sturgeon, *Environmentalism in Popular Culture*, pp. 1-52

Part III: Environmentalism and Popular Culture

Week VI (February 19-21) Noble Savages or Ecological Natives?

2/19: Sturgeon, Chapters 2 & 3 (pp. 53-99)

2/21: Sturgeon, Chapter 5 (pp. 120-146)

Week VII (February 26-28): Group Presentations

Week VIII (March 5-7): Globalization & Green Consciousness

3/5: Sturgeon, *Environmentalism in Popular Culture*, Chapters 6 & 7 (pp. 149-185)

3/7: Townsend, *Environmental Anthropology*, Chapters 10-12 (pp. 81-103)

Spring Break

Part IV: An Anthropology of Environmentalism

Week IX (March 19-21): The Humanist Ideal

3/19: Vassos Argyrou, *The Logic of Environmentalism*, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-35).

3/21: Argyrou, Chapter 2 (pp. 37-72).

Week X (March 26-28): Beyond Humanism?

3/26: Argyrou, Chapter 3 (pp. 73-118).

3/28: Argyrou, Chapters 4 & 5 (pp. 119-178).

Week XI (April 2-4): Beyond Nature v. Culture

Descola, Philippe. *The Ecology of Others*

Part V: Ethnographies of Environmentalism

Week XII (April 9-11)

4/9: Berglund & Anderson, *Ethnographies of Conservation*, Chapters 1 & 2

4/11: Berglund & Anderson, *Ethnographies of Conservation*, Chapter 3

Week XIII (April 16-18)

4/16: Berglund & Anderson, *Ethnographies of Conservation*, Chapters 4 & 5

4/18: Berglund & Anderson, *Ethnographies of Conservation*, Chapters 6 & 7

Week XIV (April 21-23)

4/23: Berglund & Anderson, *Ethnographies of Conservation*, Chapters 8 & 9

4/25: Berglund & Anderson, *Ethnographies of Conservation*, Chapter 10

Week XV (April 28): The Last Class

Timothy Luke, "On Environmentality: Geo-Power and Eco-Knowledge in the Discourses of Contemporary Environmentalism" & Kay Milton, "Cultural Theory and Environmentalism" in Nora Haenn & Richard Wilk, *The Environment in Anthropology: A Reader in Ecology, Culture, and Sustainable Living* [Blackboard].