Anthropology 5267: Ecological Anthropology
Fall Term 2009
Thursdays, 5 – 7:40 pm, in Green Library 166

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Office: 341A DM
Office hours: Wednesday 2:45 – 3:45 pm, Thursday 4 - 5 pm & by appointment

Course Description: People from very different cultures are increasingly engaged in conflict over natural resources and the types of landscapes in which they would like to live, work, and recreate. They are also increasingly engaged in projects aimed at achieving collaboration and consensus to overcome these conflicts. This course will examine how ideas about the environment are profoundly cultural. It will also illuminate the roles of history and power in cultural understandings. For example, even the most seemingly isolated groups exist within larger power structures and/or have changed over time through their interactions with colonial officials, development organizations, and modern governments. Additionally, even government agencies and development organizations have cultures and culturally-formed ideas about the environment, and we will study these ideas and some of the impacts they have had on their target populations. Questions that will underlie the readings and discussions include the following: Why has ongoing collaboration with native and Third World peoples continued to be so challenging to international environmental organizations? What are some of the cultural impacts of well-intentioned, sustainable development projects such as agroforestry, ecotourism, and pharmaceutical bio-prospecting? Can indigenous knowledge of plants and animals be successfully integrated into governmental agencies and their management plans? And, finally, are their viable alternatives to the way in which conservation is currently practiced?

Course Materials: There are nine books, available for purchase at the bookstore, and several articles, which will be available on the class Blackboard page site at http://online.fiu.edu. Most of the books are also available through Course Reserves in the Green Library if you choose not to purchase them.

Books:


GRADING:

(1) Reading responses. By noon on the dates that we meet, you should submit a reading response to the class Blackboard page. This should be the equivalent of about a page. You can very briefly summarize 1-2 of the main arguments, but I also want you to make connections between the material you have read and other material we have covered in class. You can also comment on whether you found the author’s argument to be convincing. Why or why not? (Note: you do not need to do this for the book discussion you will lead (see number 2), only for the other 10.) 10 responses, 2 points each =20 points

(2) You are responsible for leading a graduate student discussion of one book during the class. This is very informal. However, I expect you to read the book more carefully than you might otherwise, to read other students’ reading responses, and to come ready with discussion questions to present to the group. 10 points.

(3) One take-home essay. This will require a total of 8-10 pages (double-spaced) of writing in the middle of the class on the concepts covered up until that date. 30 points

(4) Independent research presentation and write-up. During the second half of the class, you will select your own case study that exemplifies some of the concepts we have covered in class and make a 10-15 minute presentation on that case study and your initial analysis of how class concepts are exemplified by that case study. The class will discuss your case study at that time. Over the following week, you will write a 4-5 page post-presentation essay. This essay should focus on your analysis of the case study and reflect on the input provided by your peers. Presentation: 20 points; Post-presentation paper: 20 points.
COURSE OUTLINE:

August 26: Introduction to Course, Review of Syllabus and Expectations, and Setting the Stage -
- What is at stake in understanding the relationships between different cultures and
the environments in which they exist?

UNIT 1: Cultures, Knowledges, and Ways of Seeing

Sept. 3: Culture and Understandings of Place
Reading: *Wisdom Sits in Places* (entire book)

Sept. 10: Migration and Place
Readings: (Available on Blackboard: [http://online.fiu.edu](http://online.fiu.edu))

Gordillo, Gastón. 2003. The Dialectic of Estrangement: Memory and the
Production of Places of Wealth and Poverty in the Argentinean Chaco. *Cultural

Aporta, Claudio. 2009. The Trail as Home: Inuit and Their Pan-Arctic Network of

Sept. 17: Culture and History in Conflicts over Place
Reading: *Understories*

Sept. 24: How Planners See the Environment vs. Local Use and Knowledge
Readings:
*Seeing Like a State*. Entire book EXCEPT chapter 5. You can also skim chapter 2.

Oct. 1: Convenient Misunderstandings of Local Practices

Dove, Michael R. 1983. Theories of Swidden Agriculture, and the Political

Fairhead, James and Melissa Leach. 1995. Reading Forest History Backwards:
The Interaction of Policy and Local Land Use in Guinea’s Forest-Savanna

Press. (excerpts available on Electronic Library Reserves).

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. 2008 [1999]. Becoming a Tribal Elder, and Other
Green Development Fantasies. In *Environmental Anthropology: A Historical
393-422. (this is available on the library’s Electronic Course Reserves)
Oct. 8: Integrating Western and Indigenous Knowledges of the Environment
Reading: *Hunters and Bureaucrats*

**********Monday, OCTOBER 12: ESSAY EXAM on UNIT 1 DUE by 5pm**********

**UNIT 2: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Oct. 15: Introduction to the Unit

Readings: (NOTE: no reading response is due, but come ready to discuss)

Responses by The Nature Conservancy and World Wildlife Fund for Nature


Oct. 22: Wilderness and its Place in International Conservation
Reading: *Imposing Wilderness* (entire book)

Oct. 29: Gender and Agroforestry Projects
Reading: *Shady Practices* (entire book)

Nov. 5: Putting a Price Tag on Biodiversity
Reading: *When Nature Goes Public*

Nov. 12: Integrated Conservation and Development
Reading: *Conservation is Our Government Now*

****NOVEMBER 13: HALF PAGE DESCRIPTION OF CASE STUDY DUE by email****

Nov. 19: Grassroots Organizing and Third World Approaches to Conservation
Reading: *Territories of Difference: Place, Movements, Life, Redes* (pages TBA)

Nov. 26: THANKSGIVING – no class

Dec. 3: Student Presentations on Sustainable Development Case Studies

Dec. 10 (or whenever the final exam day is for this class): Post-presentation papers due.