

Spring 2019
ANTH 3303: ECOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY
SOCI 3300: ECOLOGICAL SOCIOLOGY

Place: Physical Science Building 314
Time: Tue and Thu, 10.30 to 11.50 a.m.

Instructor: Pratyusha Basu
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Environmental issues have increasingly become an arena for disagreements over the proper relationship between human and non-human natures, and conflicts with business interests seeking unfettered access to natural resources. In all this, the environment becomes not a coherent object which can either be protected or exploited, but a contested collection of meanings which reflects differences within society. Thus, to dwell on the environment is to engage with the production of boundaries, both the insistent desire to distinguish between human, non-human, and inhuman natures, and the mystification of human connections to the environment due to intensifying social divides. We also need to consider how social distributions of power - which determine the extent to which the environment is collectively or privately owned, and the kinds of political alliances that are built around environmental concerns - are reflected in natural environments.

This course will follow environmental debates and struggles through theoretical conceptualizations and case studies drawn from around the world and within the U.S. In the process, it will seek to clarify local nuances of environmental issues in terms of their global connections, trace the role of the politics of power and protest in shaping relationships with the environment, and remain attentive to ways in which environmental understandings vary across places and over time. The aim of the course is to augment critical thinking skills and international awareness, necessary to understanding contemporary challenges facing

environments around the world, as well as evaluate possible pathways to meeting these challenges. Focusing on issues of contemporary significance to both environmental theorists and activists, this course aims to compare environmental debates across the world, and carefully contemplate the interconnectedness of our environmental futures.

Course Objectives

- To understand how environmental thought and practices vary across the world and are shaped by particular geographic contexts (e.g. differences between developed and developing countries).
- To learn how to view contemporary environmental issues from multidisciplinary perspectives, bridging scientific methodologies and social/critical theories.
- To analyse the range of contemporary debates in environmental change and protection.
- To improve written and oral communication skills through assignments and class discussions.
- To improve research skills through conduct of library research and writing a research paper.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Attendance, In-class and Take-home Assignments: 20%

In-class and take-home assignments will include answering short quizzes and short essays based on class readings, reporting the content of group discussions, and leading discussions on selected readings.

Essays (2): 20%

Essay questions will be provided via Blackboard and essays have to be addressed based on both class readings and library searches conducted by students. Each essay should be around 4 double-spaced pages (at least 1,000 words in length).

Exams (2): 25%

Each exam will consist of short answer and short essay questions drawn from the textbook and class discussions. Details will be discussed in exam review sessions.

Final Research Paper: 35%

Proposal: 10% (*due Feb 25*)

Draft of Paper / Presentation: 10% (*due Apr 24*)

Final Paper: 15% (*due in Final Exams week*)

A list of topics on which the research paper can be based will be provided. Format for the proposal, presentation and final paper will be provided via Blackboard. Length of the research paper should be at least 2000 words (around 8 double-spaced pages). Students will also be expected to make a group presentation on the topic and content of their final research paper.

Grading scale (based on weighted total percentage points)

A = 90% plus

B = 80-89.9%

C = 70-79.9%

D = 60-69.9%

F = 59.9% and below

READINGS

Required Textbook

Robbins, P.; Hintz, J. and Moore, S. 2014. **Environment and Society: A Critical Introduction**. 2nd edition. Wiley Blackwell.

All chapters mentioned below refer to the Robbins et al. textbook

Additional readings will be required and information on these will be provided via Blackboard.

Please remain attentive to any changes in required readings and readings/assignments schedule on Blackboard.

SCHEDULE OF COURSE TOPICS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Jan 22	introduction
Jan 24	Ch 2, population
Jan 29	Ch 3, markets
Jan 31	Ch 4, commons
Feb 5	Ch 7, political economy

Case Study: climate change

Feb 7	Ch 9, carbon dioxide
Feb 12	Ch 10, trees
Feb 14	<i>additional climate change readings</i>
Feb 19	<i>additional climate change readings</i>
Feb 21	<i>no class</i>

Paper proposal due: Feb 25

Case Study: food and water

Feb 26	Ch 16, french fries
Feb 28	Ch 15, bottled water
Mar 5	<i>additional food and water readings</i>
Mar 7	<i>additional food and water readings</i>

Mar 12 **Exam 1**

Mar 14

Mar 19 *Spring Break*

Mar 21 *Spring Break*

Essay 1 due Mar 25

Mar 26 Ch 5, environmental ethics

Mar 28 Ch 8, social construction of nature

Apr 2 Ch 6, risks and hazards

Case Study: waste

Apr 4 Ch 17, e-waste

Apr 9 Ch 12, uranium

Apr 11 *additional waste readings*

Draft of paper / Presentation due: Apr 15

Case Study: animals

Apr 16 Ch 13, tuna

Apr 18 Ch 11, wolves

Apr 23 Paper presentations

Apr 25 Paper presentations

Essay 2 due: Apr 29

Apr 30 *additional readings*

May 2

May 7 **Exam 2**

May 9

Supplementary Course Information

Class Environment

It is important to recognize that the classroom is an environment that requires respect for all participants. Therefore, students are expected to conduct themselves in a considerate manner. All participants in the class must respect the classroom environment by being on time, turning off cellphones, earphones, and headphones, avoiding extraneous talking and chatting, refraining from reading non-class material, and by not eating during class time.

Help with Writing

The University Writing Center (Library Building, Room 227, Tel. 747-5112) provides walk-in assistance with writing to all UTEP students at no cost (including walk-in assistance and on-line assistance with writing and citations). Check the website – <http://uwc.utep.edu/index.php/hours-location> – for a Spring 2016 schedule and more information.

Special Facilities

Individuals who have any disability, either permanent or temporary, which might affect their ability to perform in this class, must inform the instructor at the start of the semester. Adaptations of methods, materials, or testing may be made as required for equitable participation.

Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grades (I) will not be given in the course except under exceptional circumstances, based on written documentation, and at the discretion of the instructor.

Religious Preference Absence

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to the observation of a major religious activity must provide written notice of the dates to the instructor by the second week of the semester.

Selling Class Notes and Audio / Video Recordings

It is not permitted to sell notes and audio /video recordings from this class. If you need audio and video recordings of the class for personal study, please inform the instructor and obtain permission before doing so.

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating is unethical and not acceptable. Plagiarism is using information or original wording in a paper without giving credit to the source of that information: it is also not acceptable. Do not submit work under your name that you did not do yourself. If you are found to be cheating or plagiarizing, you will be subject to disciplinary action, per UTEP catalog policy. Refer to <http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity/> for further information.