

**Spring 2020**  
**ANTH 3303: ECOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY**  
**SOCI 3300: ECOLOGICAL SOCIOLOGY**

**Place:** Cotton Memorial Building 207  
**Time:** Tue and Thu, 12.00 to 1.20 p.m.

**Instructor:** Pratyusha Basu  
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Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
and Director, Asian Studies Program

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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: 25%**

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.

### **Exams (2): 30%**

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.

### **Group presentation on local environmental issues: 15%**

Students will identify one or two significant environmental issues that are facing El Paso and its surrounding regions. Based on group discussion, the students will present their findings to the class. Format for the group presentation will be provided in class.

### **Final Research Paper: 30%**

Proposal: 5% (*due Mar 24*)

Final Paper: 25% (*due in Final Exams week*)

A list of topics on which the research paper can be based will be provided. Format for the proposal and final paper will be provided in class. Length of the research paper should be at least 2000 words (around 8 double-spaced pages).

### **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

### *Textbooks:*

Eleanor Shoreman-Ouimet and Helen Kopnina. 2017, 1<sup>st</sup> edition. **Culture and Conservation: Beyond Anthropocentrism.** Routledge.

Rob Nixon. 2013. **Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor.** Harvard University Press.

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 21	introduction
Jan 23	climate change
Jan 28	culture and conservation
Jan 30	culture and conservation
Feb 4	culture and conservation
Feb 6	culture and conservation
Feb 11	culture and conservation
Feb 13	culture and conservation
Feb 18	environmentalism of the poor
Feb 20	environmentalism of the poor
Feb 25	environmentalism of the poor
Feb 27	environmentalism of the poor
Mar 3	
Mar 5	<b>Exam 1</b>
Mar 10	
Mar 12	

<i>Mar 17</i>	<i>Spring Break</i>
<i>Mar 19</i>	<i>Spring Break</i>
Mar 24	climate change and energy
Mar 26	climate change and energy
Mar 31	climate change and food
Apr 2	climate change and food
Apr 7	climate change and forests
Apr 9	climate change and forests
Apr 14	climate change and urbanization
Apr 16	climate change and urbanization
Apr 21	climate change and vulnerable communities
Apr 23	climate change and vulnerable communities
Apr 28	presentation on El Paso environmental issues
Apr 30	presentation on El Paso environmental issues
<b>May 5</b>	<b>Exam 2</b>
May 7	
May 11	Final research paper

## **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.