

Anthropology 430 – Special Topics: Amazonia

Fall 2016. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-10:50 am in XXXX.

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Office Hours: W 12:00-2:00

Fulfills elective credits in the Anthropology+Sociology, Sustainability (SUST), and Latin American and Latino Studies (LALS) programs.

Course Description:

This course offers an in-depth exploration of the history, politics, and cultures of Amazonia, with special attention paid to the varied relationships between human communities and their surrounding ecologies. Course material will focus on the social organization and cosmologies of indigenous Amazonians, the ongoing effects of colonization, development, and globalization in the region, and movements working towards sustainable development and social justice. By examining the dynamics of cultural and environmental transformation in the region, students will develop their own research projects exploring a particular facet of Amazonian political ecology.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Appreciate the staggering ecological and sociocultural diversity of the Amazon basin
- Analyze how indigenous Amazonian perspectives on and utilizations of the nonhuman world constitute an alternative ontology to that of “modern” Westerners
- Understand the multiple and long-standing cultural, economic, and political connections between Amazonia and the broader world
- Situate concerns over the future of the region within a political ecological framework
- Persuasively explain the drivers of, and possible solutions for, ecological devastation and socioeconomic inequality in Amazonia

Materials:

This course is designed around concise (and sometimes difficult) readings. All materials are available as PDFs on the course’s Bridges site, and may be printed on demand as a course reader. Additional materials—including films and online resources—will be available via the web.

Course Policies:

Attendance: Any more than two absences will be grounds for me to dock points from your participation grade, your final grade, or both. Of course, I am not an unreasonable person, and I understand that significant life events can take us over. You should communicate with me early and honestly about any absences. Continued lateness will also endanger your participation grade.

Readings & Participation: Assigned readings must be completed before the class date on which we will discuss them. You must come to class prepared to discuss, interrogate, and engage in focused explorations of the readings. Each student will have the opportunity to lead class discussion at least once during the semester. These presentations and discussion exercises will comprise a significant portion of your participation grade.

Other Policies:

- I do not accept late papers, so plan accordingly.
- Turn cell phones off while in class. Also, no social networking on laptops while in class.
- Plagiarism is cheating, and will result in your failing the class.
- Students who wish to receive academic accommodations for this course must first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). The most commonly requested accommodations are extended time for testing and use of the SAS Testing Center. SAS will provide registered students with an authorization form to share with each instructor. SAS is located on the 1st floor of the Main University Library and is open from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. <http://rwu.edu/go/sas>.
- Tutorial Support Services (TSS), located on the second floor of the University Library, provides peer and faculty tutoring at no charge for all RWU students. The Math, Writing, Science, and Foreign Language Centers offer assistance Monday – Thursday 9 am – 8 pm; Friday 9 am – 3 pm; Sunday 2 pm – 8 pm. For additional information about the Center, including tutor schedules, please see our website at <http://rwu.edu/go/tss>.
- Advising and Peer Mentorship is located on the second floor of the Library and houses academic advising, peer mentorship and provides comprehensive guidance and referrals related to a student's success. You can meet with a professional advisor or Peer Mentor on choosing or changing a major, improving academically, and accessing important resources on campus. The office follows up with students when academic concerns are shared from faculty and staff or identified through routine outreach initiatives. Please call the office at 254-3456 to find out more information about how the office can support your success.

Assignments and Evaluation:

- 40% Attendance, Class Participation, and Reading Log/Presentations.
- 25% Midterm Examination: essays due on October 21 (submitted via Bridges).
- 35% Original Research Project, investigating a contemporary aspect of Amazonian political ecology. Components of this multimedia/multimodal project will be presented in class, while other components will be due in the November and December. Students will be asked to connect their research findings to themes in the course during the Final Exam Period, at which time students will write capstone essays that will also be evaluated as part of the Original Research Project grade.

Grading Scale:

A= ≥ 93	A- = 90-92.9	B+= 87-89.9	B= 83-86.9	B-= 80-82.9
C+= 77-79.9	C= 73-76.9	C-= 70-72.9	D= 60-69.9	F= ≤ 59.9

<i>“Amazonia” Course Schedule, Fall 2016</i>			
Class/Date	Topic	Reading due for Class	
<i>Part 1. Indigenous Cultures, Environments, and Cosmologies</i>			
1	Th 9/1	Setting the Stage: Myths, Realities, and the Allure of the Amazon	Slater, “The Meeting of the Waters” (2003)
2	Tu 9/6	Anthropogenic Forests and Indigenous Ecological Knowledge	Clement et al., “The Domestication of Amazonia before European Conquest” (2015); <i>also</i> Cleary, “Towards an Environmental History of the Amazon” (2001), <i>highly recommended</i> .
3	Th 9/8	Native Amazonian Conceptions of Territory and Cosmos: Indigenous Historical Maps	Whitehead, “Indigenous Cartography in Lowland South America and the Caribbean” (1998); <i>also</i> Hemming, “Arrival of Strangers” (2009) – <i>recommended, not required</i>
4	Tu 9/13	The Shaman’s View: Spirits, Nonhumans, Family, and the White Other (<i>Yanomami</i>)	Kopenawa, chapters from <i>The Falling Sky</i> (2013)
5	Th 9/15	Subsistence Practices, Social Organization, and Gender Relations (<i>Munduruku</i>)	Yolanda and Robert Murphy, chapters from <i>Women of the Forest</i> (1974)
6	Tu 9/20	A Native View on Ecology: Indigenous Socialization of Nature (<i>Achuar</i>)	Descola, chapters from <i>In the Society of Nature</i> (1996)
7	Th 9/22	Warfare Rituals, Shamanic Rites, and the Transformative Use of Substances (<i>Parakanã</i>)	Fausto, “Death Producing Life” (2012); <i>also</i> Fausto, “Too Many Owners: Mastery and Ownership in Amazonia” (2008), <i>recommended</i> .
8	Tu 9/27	Cannibalism: Compassion and Kinship (<i>Wari</i> ’)	Conklin, chapters from <i>Consuming Grief</i> (2001)
9	Th 9/29	Amazonian Perspectivalism: A Distinct Ontology	Viveiros de Castro, “Perspectival Anthropology and the Method of Controlled Equivocation” (2004)
<i>Part 2. Encounters: Amazonia and the World</i>			
10	Tu 10/4	Colonial Encounters from the Indigenous Perspective	Vilaça, chapters from <i>Strange Enemies</i> (2010)
11	Th 10/6	Race and Rebellion in 19 th C. Amazonia: The <i>Cabanagem</i>	Cleary, “Lost Altogether to the Civilized World” (1998)
12	Th 10/13	The Rubber Boom (1880-1920): Globalization, Extraction, Slavery, and Debt	Taussig, “The Economy of Terror” (1986)
13	Tu 10/18	The Rubber Boom’s Legacies and Resurgences (20 th C.)	Lévi-Strauss, chapters from <i>Tristes Tropiques</i> (1973 [1955]) and Grandin, “Fordlândia: Under an American Flag” (2009)

14	Th 10/20	Indigenous Participation in Extractive Economies (<i>Munduruku</i>)	Burkhalter & Murphy, “Tappers and Sappers” (1989)
15	Tu 10/25	Connections between Rural Amazonians (“ <i>caboclos</i> ”) and Far-flung Worlds	Harris, “Sempre Ajeitando (Always Adjusting)” (2009); <i>also</i> Raffles, “Local Theory” (1999) – <i>highly recommended</i> .
16	Th 10/27	State-led “Development,” Cycles of Migration, and the Culture of Land-Grabbing	Campbell, “Frontier Capitalism and Figuring the State” (2015)
17	Tu 11/1	Rainforests, Ranching Culture, and the Contradictions of Extractivism	Hoelle, chapters from <i>Rainforest Cowboys</i> (2015)
18	Th 11/3	Urbanization: Meaning and Use of Cities for Indigenous Peoples	Chernela, “Directions of Existence” (2015)
<i>Part 3. Contemporary Struggles over Land, Resources, and Sustainability</i>			
19	Tu 11/8	The Players and the Problems in Amazonian Political Ecology	Vadjunec et al., “New Amazonian Geographies: Emerging Identities and Landscapes” (2011)
20	Th 11/10	Cosmography, Power, and Indigenous Articulations of Sustainability	Rubenstein, “Steps to a Political Ecology of Amazonia” (2004)
21	Tu 11/15	Confronting Biopiracy	Conklin, “Shamans versus Pirates in the Amazonian Treasure Chest” (2002)
22	Th 11/17	Climate Change and Government Interventions from the Local Perspective	Killick, “Perspectives on Climate Change and Its Mitigation: Ontological Wars in Amazonia” (2015)
23	Tu 11/22	Sovereignty over Territory: Communal Land and Conservation (<i>Kichwa</i>)	Erazo, “Landscape Ideologies, Indigenous Governance, and Land Use Change in the Ecuadorian Amazon” (2011)
24	Tu 11/29	Opportunities for Cross-Cultural Partnerships: <i>Kayapó</i> Alliances to Protect their Lands	Zanotti, “The Politics of Possession: The Proliferation of Partnerships in the Brazilian Amazon” (2011)
25	Th 12/1	Continued Threats to the Xingu: The Belo Monte Dam fiasco (<i>Kayapó</i> and other groups)	Turner and Fajans-Turner, “Political Innovation and Inter-ethnic Alliance” (2006) and Irigaray, “Killing a People Little by Little” (2014)
26	Tu 12/6	Who’s Indigenous? Who Gets to Say So? Ethnic Resurgence in the Tapajós Valley	Bolaños, “Redefining Identities, Redefining Landscapes: Indigenous Identity and Land Rights Struggles in the Brazilian Amazon” (2011)
27	Th 12/8	Rio Tapajós Under Threat: <i>Munduruku</i> Responses to Land-Grabbing and Dams	Campbell, “Preemption and Indigenous Strategy in Amazonian Land Conflicts” (2016); <i>also packet of Munduruku open letters</i> (2013-present)
– Final Exam Period TBD –			