ANTH-UA 321.2
Ideas and Nature and Society: an Introduction to Environmental Anthropology
MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY, 3:30-4:45

Professor Anne Rademacher
Departments of Environmental Studies & Anthropology
285 Mercer 906
Office Hours by Appointment

We live in an age that is increasingly referred to as the Anthropocene. Terms like “sustainability” and “greening” animate modern life, and suggest possible antidotes to the anxieties that follow a future marked by rapid, global environmental change. But how do different social groups characterize, and experience environmental change? Why does this matter for our environmental future?

In this course, we will use the analytical tools of anthropology to investigate the relationship between humans and their environment. We will consider geographic and cultural contexts, structures of inequality, and the ever-changing relationship between “nature” and “culture.” Drawing together classical anthropological texts and some of the newest debates in the field of Environmental Anthropology, we will consider how different groups of humans imagine, produce and protect the environment.

Nature and culture are embedded in political economic structures- of trade, investment, science and property. In the second part of the course, we will turn to political ecology, exploring the histories of capitalism and post/colonialism in the production and management of environmental crises. We will ask, How does nature come to be governed, owned and controlled? How are people marginalized by such projects and how do they contest their marginalization? In this section, our study of the environment focuses on the ways that nature and struggles for social justice intersect.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

a. Preparation. You must complete all readings before coming to class. You are required to attend every class, and to participate actively in class discussions. Class lectures will be based on the assumption that you have done the reading.

b. Reaction Paragraphs. In order to have effective classroom discussions, all students are required to submit a one to two paragraph reaction to the readings on Classes. Your weekly post will engage a key theme, and/or question that pertains to the readings. Posts are due no later than 6pm the day before class.

c. Leading Discussion. You will be responsible for leading class discussion during the semester, summarizing key arguments from the readings with an in-class presentation. Along with your presentation, you will compose a three-page write-up, due the day of the presentation.

d. Exams. There will be two in-class exams in the course.

e. Research Paper. Drawing on the themes and readings of the course, each student will write an original 10-15 page research paper (double-spaced) on an aspect of the course to be announced. You may write a paper on a different topic, if approved by Professor Rademacher. The paper is to be accompanied by an in-class presentation in the last week of classes. Additional deadlines for this assignment can be found in the course syllabus below.

GRADING

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Reaction posts and Class Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading Discussion (and Assignment)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Exams (2 x 20%) 40%
Research Paper 25%

HONOR CODE
All written work in this course must be original and composed exclusively by you, the author. You must acknowledge in writing any assistance you receive from the literature, other students, textbooks, internet, or any other source. Plagiarism is a serious offense and will be immediately referred to the Dean’s office. For information on NYU's policy on academic integrity, visit http://cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity

DISABILITY DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
Academic accommodations are available to any student with a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility, learning disability, or who is deaf or hard of hearing. Students should please register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980.

NYU’s Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities
726 Broadway, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10003-6675
Telephone: 212-998-4980
Voice/TYY Fax: 212-995-4114
Web site: http://www.nyu.edu/csd

COURSE SCHEDULE

Sept 7. Introducing Nature Culture
How do we make the environment? How does the environment make us?

Sept 12. The Nature of Nations

Reaction Post on Classes: What is Nature? What is Culture?


Reaction Post on Classes: What is the Anthropocene? What is Nature in the Anthropocene?


Sept 26. Does nature have agency?

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/30/world/europe/german-forest-ranger-finds-that-trees-have-social-networks-too.html?_r=1

Reaction Post on Classes: Do humans construct their environment?

Sept 28. Does nature do boundary work?

Evans-Pritchard. Interest in Cattle.

October 3. Structure, agency, and the human-animal interface


Reaction Post on Classes: Is nature a boundary object?

Researching and writing your research paper: Is Google “research?”

October 5. Can the Microbe Speak? Revisiting agency for nature


October 10. How has culture figured in the history of science? How has science figured in the history of the concept of culture?

Recommended if you are curious: Barth, F. Ecological Relationships of Ethnic Groups in Swat

Recommended if you are curious: Geertz, C. The Wet and the Dry: Traditional Irrigation in Bali and Morocco

Reaction Post on Classes: How should we study the environment? Why?

October 12. Human Population and the idea of Carrying Capacity
Rappaport, R. Ritual Regulation of Environmental Relations among a New Guinea People.

October 17. The Commons
Hardin, G. The Tragedy of the Commons.
Conklin, H. An Ethnoecological Approach to Shifting Agriculture.

October 19. Troubling the Commons?

Recommended if you are curious: Nazarea, V. A View from a Point: Ethnoecology as a Situated Knowledge. The Environment in Anthropology, Pp. 34-39.

October 24. Mid-term

In Class Midterm

October 26. Toward Political Ecology: Uncertainty and Environmental Crises

If you are interested, further reading: Blaikie, P. and H. Brookfield. 1985. Land Degradation and Society. (1-26)

Assignment: Research paper abstracts due in class on March 28.

October 31. Environmentalism and its Histories

Nov 2. Institutions and Environmental Problems

Nov 7. Environmental Justice: Culture, Power, History
Peet and Watts. Liberation Ecologies.


*Reaction Post*: What key concepts separate environmental anthropology (as we established it in the first half of the course) from political ecology (as it is taking shape in our readings since the mid-term)?

**Nov 9. A more-than-human environmental justice?**


**Nov 14. Case Study: Can environmental professionals be activists?**

*Assignment due.* 2 page research paper proposal plus bibliography due in class.

**Nov 16. Case Study: What to do after a natural disaster**


*Reaction Post*: In light of the Checker and Farbotko readings, what is environmental justice?

**Nov 21. Indigeneity and Environmental Movements**

To organize: class screening of the new release of *The Jungle Book*


White, R. 1995. "Are you an Environmentalist or Do you Work for a Living?"

**Nov 23. “Indigeneity” as Strategy?**


*Assignment due.* 5 page research paper outline to be submitted via email.

**Nov 28. Knowing Nature**

Reread: White, R. 1995. "Are you an Environmentalist or Do you Work for a Living?"


**Nov 30.**

*In-Class Student Presentations*

**Dec 5 & 7.**

*In-Class Student Presentations*
Dec 12.
   In-class final exam

Dec 15.
   Assignment. Final Papers Due.