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 environmental change that is both rapid and global. But what, precisely, is environmental change, and how do we understand its causes?

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 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? And in this section, our study of the environment focuses on the ways that nature and struggles for social justice intersect.

In the final section of the course, we will consider how some anthropologists have tried to think beyond the binary of nature and culture.

**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. Blog posts are due no later than 6pm the day before class.

c. **Leading Discussion.** You will be responsible for leading class discussion 1-2 times through 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 Anne 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**

Reading Reaction posts and Class Participation  
**25%**

Leading Discussion (and Assignment)  
**10%**

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.

**January 25. Introducing Nature Culture**

In-Class. National Parks (Ken Burns)

**January 27. The Nature of Nations**


Kosek, J. 2010. Smokey bear is a white racist pig in *Understories: The Political Ecology of Forests in New Mexico*. (M)


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

**February 1. Nature in the Anthropocene**


"Approaches to the Anthropocene: A Conversation with Philippe Descola and Bruno Latour":  
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDegAYkhVS0

**February 3.**

http://digitalcommons.trinity.edu/tipiti/vol7/iss2/1

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

**February 8. Nature in the City.**

February 10.
Gandy, Matthew. 2002. Concrete and Clay, chapters TBA

*Reaction Post on Classes: What is urban nature? What is urban culture?*

February 17.  Nature in Culture

February 22.  Boundary Objects: Cattle.
Evans-Pritchard. Interest in Cattle.

February 24.  Ecology of Cultures
Mauss, M. Seasonal Variation of the Eskimo.
Steward, J. The Great basin Shoshonean Indians.

February 29.

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

March 2.  Population
Rappaport, R. Ritual Regulation of Environmental Relations among a New Guinea People.

March 7. The Commons
Hardin, G. The Tragedy of the Commons.
Conklin, H. An Ethnoecological Approach to Shifting Agriculture.

March 9.  
*In Class Midterm*

March 21.  
*Guest Lecture. TBA.*

March 23. Uncertainty and Environmental Crises.

*Assignment: Research paper abstracts due March 27 by email*

March 28. Institutions and Policy
March 30. Historical Genealogies

April 4. Communities and Conservation
West, P. 2006. Conservation is our government now. Selections.

April 6.
Assignment due. 2 page research paper proposal to be submitted via email.

April 11. Environmental Justice
Peet and Watts. Liberation Ecologies.

April 13.
Guest Lecture. TBA.

April 18. Indigeneity and Environmental Movements
In-Class Film. Avataar
Slater, C. 1995. "Amazonia as Edenic Narrative". (WC)
White, R. 1995. "Are you an Environmentalist or Do you Work for a Living?" (WC)

April 20.
Film. Avataar (continued)
Assignment due. 5 page research paper outline to be submitted via email.

April 25. The Global Situation
Assignment Due. Political Ecology in Avataar.

April 27.

May 2 & 4.
In-Class Student Presentations

May 9.
In-class final exam
May 12.

Assignment. Final Papers Due.