ANTH 307/Ecological Anthropology (001641)
MnTC/LASC Category 10
Minnesota State University Moorhead
Fall 2014
KH 215, T, H 3:00-4:15PM

Instructor: Dr. Bruce Roberts
Office: KH213; Telephone: 477-2043
Office hours: Mon 1-2:30PM, Tue 9AM-12:30PM, Wed 11AM-12:30PM, Thu 9AM-12:30PM
Also by appointment
E mail: robertsb@mnstate.edu
Class web site: http://web.mnstate.edu/robertsb/307
All materials also on D2L

Official course description: an anthropological examination of cultural adaptation to the environment.
Detailed analysis of the major human subsistence strategies in diverse ecological settings worldwide.

This course falls under MnTC/LASC Category 10: People and the Environment. The goals of this category include:

- To develop students understanding of the concept of sustainability and the challenges we face in responding to environmental variables and resolving environmental problems.
- To examine how societies and the natural environment are intimately related.
- To develop a thorough understanding of ecosystems and the ways in which different groups interact with their environments on the way to becoming an environmentally literate individual.

Ecological anthropology studies human interaction with and adaptation to the environment. While we as humans adjust to our surroundings in both biological and cultural ways, in this course our emphasis will be on cultural adaptations, i.e., those traits that are learned and shared as members of societies.

This course will consist of three major segments:

1. First, I will introduce you to the theories/ideas and methods of ecological anthropology. You probably won’t like this part of the course but it’s necessary to understand the development of theory & method before moving on to a consideration of substance.

2. Second, we will examine the primary human adaptive strategies (sometimes referred to as subsistence patterns) that have been identified by anthropologists. We’ll look at how these patterns are manifested in various physical and sociocultural circumstances by discussing both generalizations and specific empirical case studies.

3. Third, we’ll consider some contemporary topics of environmental significance for the future of the human species as well as many other species.

Textbooks


Any and all supplementary on-line readings will be hyper-linked to the on-line copy of the syllabus.
**Student Evaluation/Assessment**

**Attendance and participation:** I don’t have an attendance policy so whether or not you come to class is your decision. Nonetheless, after teaching this course for over 20 years I can tell you that there is a distinct and consistent correlation between class attendance and grades. In the end it’s your choice.

**Readings:** Think of the book by Sutton and Anderson as the text. The books by Picchi and Dettwyler are cases studies – what anthropologists like to call *ethnographies*. They are written specifically for use in undergraduate classes and seek to convey a picture of a particular group of people and their culture. Picchi’s book on the Bakairi will be covered on the midterm exam and Dettwyler’s on Mali (predominantly the Bambara ethnic group) will be on the final exam. Do the reading. **On exams and quizzes I will ask questions that come straight from the readings.**

**Exams:** The midterm exam will be worth 100 points and given on October 20th. The final exam will be on December 15th at 2PM, also worth 100 points. Both exams will be comprised of multiple choice, true-false, and matching questions, as well as short answers/essays. They will cover material I have dealt with in class (including videos and lectures) as well as the assigned readings.

- **Make-up exams?** Hah! You’ll need a very good excuse to take a make-up for either, especially the final. *Any makeup exam will be ALL ESSAY and given only at my discretion* if you present me with a verifiable excuse or proof of extenuating circumstance (e.g., a death in the family, major vehicular problems, documented illness) within 24 hours of the exam. Failure to do either results in automatic forfeiture of the exam grade.

**Quizzes:** I’ll give 6 pop quizzes throughout the semester *at my discretion*. That’s supposed to mean I don’t tell you when they’re coming. However if you’re coming to class they should be fairly easy to predict. Each will be worth 10 points. Because only 5 count in the grading scheme the 6th one is either a bonus or a drop, depending upon your perspective.

Hopefully quizzes will provide you with tangible incentive to stay current on the readings and come to class. I view quizzes as a proxy for taking attendance. If you miss quizzes and/or don’t keep up on the reading the effect on your grade is going to be negative. Quiz format will either be short-answer or objective (multiple-choice, true-false, and matching) or perhaps a combination of both types of questions. *No make-up quizzes will be given.*

**Group presentations and individual papers:** Typically I have a set of topics of contemporary relevance that I like to cover in the second half of this course. This time instead of me talking about them it’s going to be you, both collectively and individually. Each person will be assigned a topic\(^1\) and a group. Groups will be comprised of five people. Each group then becomes responsible for covering the topic in class. The presentation will need to be based upon information collected from scholarly, scientific sources. I will provide each group with some starter material and class time but you must also locate additional material that will need to be approved by me. We will be using class time for this so please do not blow it off!

Each presentation should be approximately 30 minutes in length and must cover a checklist of points that I will provide in advance. In addition each group member will submit a short (e.g., 8-10 page) paper using at least 10 *bona fide*\(^2\) scholarly sources – i.e., *not Wikipedia!* More details on both the group and individual components of this project will be forthcoming shortly!

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1. The topics I have selected are:
   - Deforestation
   - Climate change
   - Wildlife conservation
   - Indigenous technical knowledge
   - Biotechnology and GMOs
   - Sustainable development

2. Genuine, real, authentic, valid.
Extra credit: None will be given. Just do what is asked of you and you'll be fine.

Accommodation: Students with disabilities who believe they may need an accommodation in this class are encouraged to contact Greg Toutges, Director of Disability Services at 477-4318 (Voice) or 1-800-627-3529 (MRS/TTY), Flora Frick 154 as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Summary of Evaluation Criteria & Grading Scheme

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
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<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group presentation &amp; individual papers</td>
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<td>28.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
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<th>Point range</th>
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<td>88-89</td>
<td>C-</td>
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Course schedule

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 25, 27</td>
<td>Introduction.</td>
<td>Sutton &amp; Anderson Chapter 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 3, 8</td>
<td>Fundamentals of ecology</td>
<td>Sutton &amp; Anderson Chapter 2</td>
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<td>Sep 10, 15</td>
<td>Human Biological Ecology</td>
<td>Sutton &amp; Anderson Chapter 3</td>
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<td>Sep 17, 22</td>
<td>Cultural Ecology</td>
<td>Sutton &amp; Anderson Chapter 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep 24, 29</td>
<td>Foraging/hunting and gathering</td>
<td>Sutton &amp; Anderson Chapter 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 1, 6</td>
<td>Origins of food production</td>
<td>Sutton &amp; Anderson Chapter 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 8, 15</td>
<td>Horticulture/small-scale cultivation</td>
<td>Sutton &amp; Anderson Chapter 7</td>
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| Oct 20     | Midterm exam                                                           | Sutton & Anderson Chapters 1-7                                          
The Bakairi Indians of Brazil |
| Oct 22, 27 | Pastoralism/animal herding.                                            | Sutton & Anderson Chapter 8                                            |
| Oct 29, Nov 3 | Intensive agriculture                                               | Sutton & Anderson Chapter 9                                            |
| Nov 5, 10  | Current Issues and Problems                                            | Sutton & Anderson Chapter 10                                           |
| Nov 12, 17, 19, 24 | In-class time for work on group projects and meetings with Dr. Roberts |                                                   |
| Dec 1, 3, 8 | Student presentations                                                  | Sutton & Anderson Chapters 8,9,10 Dancing Skeletons                    |
| Dec 15, 2PM | Final exam                                                             | Material from group presentations                                      |

Please note: details on this syllabus are subject to modification. Changes will be announced in class, via e mail, and posted on the D2L course website.

3 This is not free time and I will be checking who’s been naughty and who’s been nice!
A. COURSE DESCRIPTION
Credits: 3
Lecture Hours/Week: 3
Lab Hours/Week: 0
OJT Hours/Week: *.*
Prerequisites:
- ANTH 110 - Introduction to Cultural Anthropology
Corequisites: None
MnTC Goals: Goal 10 - People/Environment

B. COURSE EFFECTIVE DATES: 04/11/2000 - Present
C. OUTLINE OF MAJOR CONTENT AREAS
1. Examination of pre-industrial human adaptive strategies: hunting and gathering, horticulture, pastoralism, intensive agriculture.
2. Detailed consideration of the rise of industrialized food production and an assessment of its costs and benefits.
3. Biotechnology and GMOs.
5. Indigenous technical knowledge and its potential to contribute to sustainable development.

D. LEARNING OUTCOMES (General)
1. Understand and appreciate the social and cultural adaptive strategies that humans groups developed in dealing with diverse environments prior to the industrial age.
2. Recognize the potential of this indigenous knowledge to contribute to sustainable solutions to future food needs, energy provision, and resource conservation.
3. Analyze and critically assess the sociocultural, economic, and environmental costs and benefits of industrialized agriculture, including biotechnologically engineered food crops.

E. Minnesota Transfer Curriculum Goal Area(s) and Competencies
   Goal 10 - People/Environment
1. Explain the basic structure and function of various natural ecosystems and of human adaptive strategies within those systems.
2. Discern patterns and interrelationships of bio-physical and socio-cultural systems.
3. Describe the basic institutional arrangements (social, legal, political, economic, religious) that are evolving to deal with environmental and natural resource challenges.
4. Evaluate critically environmental and natural resource issues in light of understandings about interrelationships, ecosystems, and institutions.

F. LEARNER OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT
As noted on course syllabus