DESCRIPTION:

The objective of this course is to create a solid foundation in the study of the theories and methods in historical ecology today. This will be accomplished by evaluating the new trends that have driven historical ecology in the last ten years. This new approach demands an interdisciplinary view. The first part of the class will focus on the different epistemological approaches. We will look at the kinds of questions asked and the methodologies employed to answer them. The last part of the course will place emphasis on case studies where historical ecology has been employed to understand long-term regional dynamics of the relationship between humans and the environment. We will examine the theoretical and methodological relationship of historical ecology to biology, geography, and geology as well as to history. We will look at why historical ecology is a powerful approach to evaluating critical theories that range from biology to history. We will look at how the theories are evaluated and what factors favor their success or abandonment.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Books


Chapters from edited books:


There will be other assigned readings. Most of these can be downloaded as PDF files from the library service. Sometimes you will have to copy them from the library journals at the main library.

**EVALUATION:**

Evaluation will be based on the accumulation of points up to 100 (100 points =100 %).

**Final research paper (30 %), presentation of the final research paper (10%), short presentations in class (20%) and class participation (40%).**

**REMEMBER IT IS A RESEARCH PAPER, NOT A REVIEW PAPER.** The paper should be 15 to 20 pages in length, double-spaced including bibliography. For the paper you should choose a region of the planet where you can study the impact of human activity on the environment as well as the impact of the environment on the population. The paper should follow the format guidelines of the journal *American Anthropologist*.

There is a large amount of literature to be covered in this class and each student must be able to discuss each of the articles. You are responsible for all of the readings. It always helps to write a review on each article or chapter that you read, and have notes on the topics that are relevant for the discussion, as well as questions on the aspects that you do not understand.

**Disclaimer:** Some adjustments may be made in the schedule and course requirements during the semester. All changes will be announced.

**ATTENDANCE** is required.

**GRADE SYSTEM:**

**Grading Scale** Grades will be awarded according to the following scale in effect by the university:

- A  4.0  3.67  3.33  3.0  2.67  2.33  2.0  1.67  1.33  1.0  .67  0
- A-  B+  B  B-  C+  C  C-  D+  D  D-  E

A complete listing of university policy pertaining to grades may be found at [http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/files/handbook.pdf](http://graduateschool.ufl.edu/files/handbook.pdf)

**Classes and readings**

**Week 1, August 25:** General presentation: What is historical ecology.

**Week 2, September 1:** Epistemology: Concepts and Research Program.


**Week 3, September 8, Epistemology: Concepts and Research Program.**


**Week 4, September 15: Historical ecology and climate change.**


**Week 5, September 22: Historical Ecology and Environments.**

**Week 6, September 29: Rapid climatic change and societies.**

**Week 7, October 6: Climatic change and the case of the Maya.**

**Week 8, October 13: Climatic change and the case of the Maya.**

**Week 9, October 20: Anthropogenic landscapes and history.**


Week 10, October 27: Landesque Capital.

Week 11, November 3: Climate change and Landesque Capital: The case of the forest Garden in the Maya.

Preparation of final paper proposal.

Week 12, November 10: Historical Ecology and Maritime Ecosystems,

Week 13, November 17: Historical Ecology and Maritime Ecosystems.


Week 14, November 24: Holiday, thanksgiving.

Week 15, December 1: Social life of forest and historical ecologies.

Final paper due.

Week 15, December 15: reading days.

Optional Readings:

Mann, Charles C. (2002) 1491: before it became the New World, the Western Hemisphere was vastly more populous and sophisticated than has been thought ... the Amazon rain forest may be largely a human artifact. The Atlantic Monthly March 2002,41-6,48-53.


