

Spring 2011

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF PLANTS

ANT 4930 (8658)

Lecturer: Dr. Augusto Oyuela-Caycedo

Lecture sessions: Tuesday Period 5-6 (11:45 AM-1:40 PM), Thursday Period 6 (12:50 AM-1:50 PM).

Meeting Location: Tuesday **CSE E220**, Thursday at **CSE E221**

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Office hours: 9- 11:30 AM: Thursday and by appointment. Email: caycedo@ufl.edu

This class is an introduction to the study of the social life of plants. Biologists can reconstruct the genetic relationships of plants and their diversity as well as the process leading toward genetic modifications, but in the end it is only the anthropologists and archaeologists who can provide the hard evidence on how, where, and when these processes of domestication and socialization of plants took place. More importantly, archaeologists as anthropologists can ask why humans domesticated specific plants and what this means for the social organization of societies in terms of the control, use, management and dispersion of plants. In this course we will explore some of the explanations of the mutual interactions of plants and peoples, and their importance in the process leading toward diverse forms of social relationships around the planet that range from kin groups to state societies. We will do this by addressing issues like the human social interactions with specific plants in terms of relations of production that generate structures of power. We will also address the plants that favor these structures due to their specific characteristics.

In this course we will examine specific social histories of plants around the planet and what this means today.

Course Objectives:

We hope that the students will be able to answer and understand some basic questions such as:

1. What is the social life of plants? Why can we talk about social plants?
2. When, where and why did social plants originate around the planet?
3. What was the impact of social plants on the social structure of societies?
4. What were the effects social plants had on the political and economic structures of human society?
5. What social plants are relevant for hunter-gatherer groups today and in the past?
6. What was the contribution of social plants to the formation of state societies and empires?
7. What human social relations have social plants favored in the past and in the present?
8. Why it is important to understand the histories of some basic social plants and what these mean for human societies.

Textbooks:

Murphy, Denis J.
2007 *People, Plants, and Genes*. Oxford.

EVALUATION: A final paper (20%), class presentation of paper (10%), three exams (each 20%), and class participation (10%).

GRADE SYSTEM:

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

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

A complete listing of university policy pertaining to grades may be found at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

Assignments: You are expected to do the following:

- 1) Read the assigned material BEFORE coming to class. Many students have difficulty understanding the lectures because they do not familiarize themselves with the material prior to class. Do NOT be one of these students.
- 2) Participate actively in the discussion of the articles and the reading material.
- 3) Presentation of short papers and short reports as assigned by the instructor.
- 4) Produce a very original paper with clear objectives and ideas. The topic will be defined in agreement with the professor. The focus must be on a social plant. The students will have 30 minutes for the presentation and 10 minutes for questions.

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

ATTENDANCE is required. Final grades will be reduced one grade level for two unjustified absences. Students who are unable to come to class on a regular basis due to special circumstances should see the instructor at the beginning of the term to discuss such circumstances. Finally, please avoid at all costs coming in or walking out of the classroom in the middle of lectures. This is most rude and disruptive.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Part I: Social plants: Origins, context and diaspora of social plants.

Week 1. January 6: Introduction to the course. Optional:

Week 2. January 11 & 13: Toward a new materialist theory or posthuman approach?.

Reading: Deleuze and Guattari. Rhizome. Reading Franklin. Optional: Kirksey & Hemreich 2010 and Janzen and Martin 1982

Holiday no classes January 17.

Week 3. January 18 & 20: Social life plants: The evolutionary or co-evolutionary.

Readings: Murphy chapter 1 and 4 and 5 Optional: Jackson 1996 and Rindos 1980

Week 4. January 25 & 27: First Exam. Social life of plants: Genetics, kin selection and other forms of social reproduction. Reading: chapter 2 and 6. Optional: kin recognition in plants. Dudley 2007 or/and 2009. Karba and Shiojiri

Week 5. February 1 & 3: Social life of non-cereals and peoples. Reading: chapter 8 and 9. Optional: Bellwodd

Week 6. February 8 & 10: Social life of plants and agrouurbanism. Reading: chapters 10, 11 and chapter 12. Optional: Kuijt 2009

Week 7. February 15 & 17: Social life of hybrid plants. Reading: Murphy optional readings of chapter 14 and 15.

Week 8. February 22 & 24: Religious life of plants. Readings: Robin Wright 2009, Zent 2009

Week 9. March 1 & 3: Social life of plants.

Second exam

Exam march 2

Week 10. Spring brake March 5-12.

Week 11. March 15 and 17: Social life of plants.

Week 12. March 22 and 24: Social life of plants.

Week 13. March 29 and 31: Social life of plants.

Week 14. April 5 and 7: Social life of plants.

Week 15. April 12 and 14: Social life of plants.

Week 16. April 19: Final review

Classes end April 20

Finals April 23-29