

TROPICS AND TROPICAL CULTURE
ANT-4930 (Section 6199): Fall 2011

Instructor: Michael Heckenberger

Time/Location: T: 4-5 (10:40-12:35), WM 0202; TH: 4 (10:40-11:30), MAT 0018

Office Hours (Turlington B123 & B117): T: 12:45-1:30; TH: 11:30-1:30 ()

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Summary:

Tropics and Tropical Culture takes a critical look at the anthropology of three major tropical regions, the Pacific, Africa and the Amazon. It provides a brief survey of cultures in these areas, paying particular attention to how tropical forest and tropical island peoples have been portrayed in Western characterizations. It critically evaluates the characterization of tropical peoples as primitive, environmentally limited, and generally backwards, in comparison to the cultures of temperate and sub-tropical regions, a viewpoint that has been characterized as “tropicality.” This view of view of the tropics begins with Aristotles’ suggestion that the tropics, the “torrid zone,” was uninhabitable or only inhabitable by the most savages of races, and follows how tropical peoples have been portrayed, in print and film, as primordial and uncivilized through the 20th century. Anthropological studies are used to help deconstruct this bias and reveal the richness and diversity tropical cultures, and the places where they live.

Required Books:

J. Vansina (1990), *Paths through the Rainforest*, Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press

P. Kirch (2005), *On the Road of the Winds*, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press

L. Rabben (2004), *Brazil’s Indians and the Onslaught of Civilizations* (formerly *Unnatural Selection*), Washington: Smithsonian

Additional required readings for weeks 11-13 can be downloaded from my website (see above), including:

Week 11-13:

M. Heckenberger

- 2003, “The Wars Within: Xinguano Witchcraft and Balance of Power.” In *Darkness and Secrecy* (Whitehead and Wright);
- 2004, “Archaeology as Indigenous Advocacy.” *Practicing Anthropology*;
- 2007, “Xinguano Heroes, Ancestors, and Others: Materializing the Past in Chiefly Bodies, Ritual Space, and Landscape.” In *Time and Memory in Indigenous Amazonia* (Fausto and Heckenberger).

M. Heckenberger et al.

- 2003, “Amazonia 1492: Pristine Forest or Cultural Parkland.” *Science*;
- 2008, “Pre-Columbian Urbanism, Anthropogenic Landscapes, and the Future of the Amazon.” *Science*.

Weekly Outline:

Week 1:

T: 8/23. Introduction (begin Kirch)

TH: 8/25. Orientalism & Civilization

Week 2:

T: 8/30. Tropics as a place in time and space

TH: 9/1. Pacific: Geography and Early Occupations

Week 3:

T: 9/6. Polynesia: The Austronesians

TH: 9/8. Polynesian Kingdoms (Take-home 1 distributed)

Week 4:

T: 9/13. Guest Lecture: Dr. John Krigbaum

TH: 9/15. Film: Pacific (**Kirch 2 summary due**)

Week 5:

T: 9/20. Southern Asia

TH: 9/22. Africa & Early Occupations (begin Vansina)

Week 6:

T: 9/27. Africa: Early Bantu

TH: 9/29. Bantu Kingdoms

Week 7:

T: 10/4. Film: African Civilization

TH: 10/6. Kush Kingdoms, Aksum & Horn (**Vansina summary due**)

Week 8:

T: 10/11. West African Kingdoms and Colonialism

TH: 10/13. Scramble for Africa and Human Development Index

Week 9:

T: 10/18. Film: Ghosts of Rwanda (**Take home 1 due**)

TH: 10/20. The Neo-tropics (Take-home 2 distributed)

Week 10:

T: 10/25. The Caribbean & Atlantic Imperialism

TH: 10/27. Amazonian Prehistory & History (read Heckenberger web articles)

Week 11:

T: 11/1. Arawak/Tupi-Guarani Diaspora & Southern Amazon

TH: 11/3. Film: Lost Cities of the Amazon

Week 12:

T: 11/8. Xingu Indigenous History

TH: 11/10. Xingu Today (Begin Rabben)

Week 13:

T: 11/15. Kayapo

TH: 11/17. Yanomamo

Week 14:

T: 11/22. Tupi-Guarani, Carib, and Jivaro (**Rabben summary due**)

TH: 11/24. No class (Thanksgiving)

Week 15:

T: 11/29. Bio-cultural Diversity and Conservation

TH: 12/1. Global Concerns: Climate, Development and Human Rights
Week 16:

T: 12/6. Review

TH: 12/8. Conclusions (**Take-home 2 due**)

Evaluation:

Evaluation will be based on (1) three 500 word commentaries on primary readings; (2) two take-home exams (distribution and due dates noted in weekly outline). Summaries are worth 10% of grade each; take-home exams are worth 35% each. Summaries handed in one week late will be reduced by one point per week; take-home exams handed in late will be reduced by 10% each week and no materials will be accepted after 3 weeks from deadline.

Commentaries will be graded on a scale of high (full 10%), medium (7.5 of 10%), low (5 of 10%) (0 points will be given only for materials not submitted); Exams will be graded on a 100 pt scale, and divided into 15 short answer (1 phrase or sentence) worth 2 points each; 8 short essay (3-5 short sentences) worth 5 points each; and three essays (250-400 words) worth 10 points each (in all sections there will be some choice, i.e., more possible selections than need to be answered).

Grades for tests are assigned as:

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|----|----------|
| A | ≥ 90% |
| A- | 87-89.9% |
| B+ | 85-86.9% |
| B | 80-84.9% |
| B- | 77-79.9% |
| C+ | 75-76.9% |
| C | 70-74.9% |
| C- | 67-69.9% |
| D+ | 65-66.9% |
| D | 60-64.9% |
| D- | 57-59.9% |
| E | < 56.9% |

Please note that there are new policies for calculating grade point averages. See <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html> for details. Also note that a grade of C- does not count for credit in major, minor, Gen Ed, Gordon Rule, or college basic distribution credit (for further information regarding minus grades go to: <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>).

Additional Items:

Academic Honesty, Student Responsibilities, Student Conduct Code: Students are required to do their own work on exams. The penalty for cheating is to receive no points

for that exam and the incident will be reported to the Student Honor Court. The student is responsible to review the UF Student Responsibilities Guidelines, available online.

Students with Disabilities: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who then must provide this documentation to the instructor.