

Spring 2014

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF PLANTS

ANG 6030 (181C)

ANT 4930 (181C)

Lecturer: Dr. Augusto Oyuela-Caycedo

Lecture sessions: W 11:45-2:45

Meeting Location: TUR 2346

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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 favored social plants in the past and in the present?

8. Why it is important to understand the histories of some basic social plants and what does it mean for human societies?

Textbooks:

Tully, John. 2011. The Devil's Milk: A Social History of Rubber. Monthly Review Press. New York.

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
100	91.75	83.25	75	66.75	58.25	50					

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 difficulties understanding the lectures because they do not read 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 an 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. Jan. 8: Introduction to the course.

Week 2. Jan. 15: Toward a new materialist theory or posthuman approach?:

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

Week 3. Jan 22: Social life plants: The evolution or co-evolution.

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

Week 4. Jan 29: Social life of plants: Genetics, kin selection and other forms of social reproduction. Reading: Murphy chapter 6. Optional: kin recognition in plants. Dudley 2007 or/and 2009. Karba and Shiojiri

<http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/all-watched-over-by-machines-of-loving-grace/>

Week 5. Feb.5: *First Exam*. Social life of cereals and peoples. Reading: Murphy chapter 7. Optional: Bellwodd

Week 6. Feb.12: Social life of plants and agrouurbanism. Reading: Optional: Kuijt 2009

Week 7. Feb. 19: Social life of hybrid plants.

Week 8. Feb. 26: Religious life of plants. Readings: Robin Wright 2009, Zent 2009

Week 9. Mar.5: *Spring break*

Week 10. Mar 12: *Second exam*.

Week 11. Mar 19: Social life of plants. Reading: Carney and Rosomoff (Chapters 1-3)

Week 12. Mar 26: Social life of plants.

Week 13. Apr. 2: paper presentation

Week 14. Apr.9: paper presentation

Week 15. Apr. 16..Paper presentation. Third exam and **Paper due.**

Week 16. May 2, 10:40 am. Final Exam