

# Anthropology of Sustainability

**ANT 2402 (14AF)**

**M 4:05-645 pm**

**CSE E119**

Instructor: Dr. Richard Stepp

Office Hours: Grinter 337 by appointment

Office phone: 392-0299

## **Overview:**

This course applies the sustainability concept to the study of human interactions with the biophysical environment across space and time. As such, it draws upon all four subfields (Cultural Anthropology, Biological Anthropology, Archaeology, Linguistic Anthropology). The course is concerned with human perceptions of and interactions with their biotic surroundings, and the myriad linkages between biological, cultural, and linguistic diversity. The first part of the course explores different human adaptive strategies throughout time, beginning with foraging and the rise of agriculture, followed by the industrial revolution and up to the present. The nature of small-scale societies and their approaches to sustainability is addressed, especially with regards to traditional or indigenous ecological knowledge. The modern world system is examined in both political and cultural contexts related to environmental stewardship. Cross-cultural ideas about sustainability are explored. The human ecosystem and anthropocene concepts are examined. The goal of class is to provide a broader understanding of the role of culture in sustaining the diversity of plant and animal life on earth, and the role of nature in perpetuating cultural knowledge for future generations. The course will explicitly address all four of the substantive areas of sustainability studies. These four areas are: Ethics, Culture and Human Behavior; Economics, Law and Policy; Production Systems and the Built Environment; Ecology and Environmental Stewardship.

## **Learning Objectives and Goals:**

- \* To develop a holistic and systems-based understanding on how humans interact with the biophysical environment
- \* To understand the inter-relationship between the biophysical environment and human cultures
- \* To recognize the consequences of human activity on ecosystems at different scales
- \* To understand the role of historical, economic and cultural forces in environmental stewardship
- \* To explore the concept of resilience in human societies and culture

## **Textbooks (2 required):**

Anderson, E.N. 2014. *Caring for Place: Ecology, Ideology and Emotion in Traditional Landscape Management*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Robins, Richard 2014 *Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism*. New York: Prentice Hall

Link for rental: <http://www.coursesmart.com/global-problems-and-the-culture-of-capitalism/richard-h-robbins/dp/9780205933549>

## Course Requirements and Grading

There will be two exams in this class, each of which will count toward 25% of your semester grade. These exams will consist of short essay questions. The second of the two exams will not be cumulative.

You will be required to present an overview of your final paper project (described below). Presentations are concise, in-class summations of the scope of your project, your methods, initial discoveries, and the relevance of your work toward advancing critical concepts in the Anthropology of Sustainability. Your presentation will comprise ten percent of your overall semester grade.

A comprehensive final paper is required, ranging from 8-12 pages in length, typed and double spaced, based on an original research topic or theoretical discussion of your own choosing related to the anthropology of sustainability. We will discuss potential paper topics early in the semester and you will need to turn in a one page summary of your topic worth 5% of your final grade. *Paper topics must be approved in advance by the instructor.* The paper should be carefully proofed and spell checked before they are handed in. Assignments that do not meet basic standards for correct spelling and grammar will be returned ungraded. This paper counts toward 25% of your grade.

This class involves discussion: active student participation is essential. You will be expected to have done the assigned readings and be prepared to discuss them. Participation counts for 10% of your grade.

Your semester grade will be based on the following percentages:

Exam 1:	25%
Exam 2:	25%
Final Paper:	25%
Participation:	10%
Paper Presentation:	10%
Paper Topic:	5%

Grading Scale	
A = 93 or above	C = 73 - 76
A- = 90 - 92	C- = 70 - 72
B+ = 87 - 89	D+ = 67 - 69
B = 83 - 86	D = 63 - 66
B- = 80 - 82	D- = 60 - 62
C+ = 77 - 79	E = 59 or below

### E-mail policy

If your query can wait until the next class time then please do so. I would much rather communicate in person than by computer. We all receive an enormous number of emails each day and it is not healthy to sit in front of a computer for too long. If you must email, be sure to put ANT 2402 in the subject line, otherwise I will probably not see it (stepp@ufl.edu).

### Classroom behavior policy

Absolutely NO cell phone use and NO texting is permitted in the classroom at any time. Students using a cell phone for any reason during class-time will receive a warning. If the problem occurs again during the semester, the student will be asked to leave the class and will receive a 0% participation grade for the semester. No video/audio recording or photography. Disruptive behavior in general is not allowed. Failure to follow these policies will negatively impact your participation grade and may result in your dismissal from the course.

### Computer policy

An increasing number of studies have shown that laptop computer use in class hinders learning. Even more alarming is that this effect carries over to students seated nearby. This article links to many of these studies: <http://www.pbs.org/mediashift/2014/09/why-clay-shirky-banned-laptops-tablets-and-phones-from-his-classroom/>

Given these findings, I ask that you make an attempt at taking notes with pen/pencils and paper. If you absolutely must bring a laptop, you will need to sit in the back row of the classroom so as not to disturb other students with your screen. For those choosing this option, please do not use your computer for anything other than note taking.

### Attendance and make up policy

Attendance at all times is strongly encouraged but not mandatory. No make up exams or late assignments will be accepted except in extreme cases of documented illness or emergency.

### \*\*\*\*\*Overview of the Course and Assigned Readings\*\*\*\*\*

Occasionally, additional readings may be sent via email at least one week prior.

#### Week 1: 1/12

Overview of the course

Introduction to anthropology and sustainability

#### Week 2: 1/19

MLK Day

#### Week 3: 1/26

Where you at? Culture and persistence

Biocultural diversity and human ecosystems      Anderson: Chapters 1-3

#### Week 4: 2/3

The classification of nature

Anderson: Chapters 4-6

Belief systems and sustainability

#### Week 5: 2/9

Subsistence strategies and domestication

Anderson: Chapter 7-9

#### Week 6: 2/16

Climate change and indigenous knowledge

#### Week 7 2/23

**Exam One**

**Paper Topic Due**

#### Week 8: 3/2 Spring Break

#### Week 9: 3/9

The Culture of capitalism

Robbins: Chapters 1-4

#### Week 10: 3/16

The Modern world system

Robbins: Chapters 5-8

#### Week 11: 3/23

Globalization and biodiversity

Robbins: Chapters 9-10

Week 12: 3/30

Solutions!!

Robbins: Chapters 11-13

Week 13: 4/6

**Exam Two**

Week 14: 4/13

Student presentations

Week 15: 4/20

Student presentations

The future of sustainability

**Final Papers Due**

**University of Florida Policies**

*Honesty:*

As a result of completing the registration form at the University of Florida, every student has signed the following statement: "I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University."

*UF Counseling Services:*

Resources are available on-campus for students having personal problems or lacking a clear career and academic goals which interfere with their academic performance. These resources include:

1. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling;
2. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling;
3. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling; and
4. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

*Software Use:*

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

*Disabilities Accommodations:*

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 must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

*UF Grading Policy:*

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html> .