

the anthropology of sustainability

ANT 2402 Section 02HH Summer A 2014



Pachamanca during an Eco/Community Tourism Stay in Vicos, Peru. 2010.

Over the past 50 years, social scientists have broadened discussions of ecological sustainability to include social questions related to wellbeing, social justice, public health, and making infrastructural, economic, and environmental projects more beneficial to constituents. Anthropologists have been on the cutting edge of this process by contributing theoretical, ethnographic, and methodological insights that broaden our view of (1) the various actors, interests, and relationships involved in these problems and projects and (2) how the human experience both shapes and is shaped by our built/natural environments. This course will give an overview of these contributions and urge students to consider novel approaches to sustainability in their communities and beyond.

The course will open with a general discussion about anthropological approaches to the presumed distinction between nature and culture in archaeology and cultural anthropology. From there, we will focus on issues of contemporary importance in policy and anthropological research that actively addresses pressing questions about global economic, environmental, and social sustainability crucial to our wellbeing and health. We will discuss questions related to manufacturing and consumption, urbanization and migration, tourism and sex trafficking, access to education and food, always with an eye to the role anthropological understandings can play in helping us address these issues. Additionally, we will discuss social movements responding to sustainability challenges. The last week of the class will be participatory and ask students to review sustainability movements at UF, the rhetoric of sustainability as they encounter it in their lives, and the circulation of discourse related to sustainability in popular culture including video games, films and television shows, and literature. Graded components: three Scantron exams, one fun participation challenge, and attendance!

This course would be useful to students interested in: anthropology, ecology, political science, economics, sociology, NGOs/nonprofits, sustainable development, public health/health sciences, education, architecture and urban planning, rhetoric, literature/film, FYC, and beyond!

Please contact the instructor, Jamie Lee Marks, at Jamielm@ufl.edu for more information or a detailed syllabus.