ECOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

ANTHROPOLOGY 502/402 – FALL 2006
GRAVELEY 262
FRIDAY 9:00 – 12:00

instructor · Benedict J. Colombi, Ph.D.
email · colobene@isu.edu
office · graveley 164
hours · Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 1:00 – 2:00 pm or by appointment

class web site · www.isu.edu/~colobene


description

This course is a survey of basic issues and concepts, and contemporary research in ecological anthropology. Early in the semester, attention will be given not only to major figures, but also to contextualizing their contributions with respect to theoretical developments occurring within anthropology, biology, environmental studies, and cognate fields. The second part of the course will combine anthropological scale and complexity theory with ethnographic case study methods to analyze and model the social-ecological conditions facilitating contemporary human development. We will test the proposition that the crucial variable determining system sustainability is the relationship between human decision-making and social and ecological scale variables. Key words for the course include ecology and ecosystems, evolution and natural selection, culture and power, scale and complexity, complex adaptive systems, social and environmental sustainability, resilience, adaptability, transformability, human agents, ecological economics, nature as capital, ecosystem services, and ecological footprint.

requirements

Seminar presentations: 502 students will make three or more and 402 students will make one or more special seminar presentations selected from books or articles included in the syllabus. Each seminar presentation should include: (1) a brief background of author; (2) analytical summary of key arguments of the works; and (3) critique and directed discussion. You are encouraged to use data projector presentations (i.e. powerpoint) and handouts. The length of each presentation will be variable, subject to scheduling constraints.

Research paper: everyone will write a research paper. Research papers must be preceded by a prospectus, and a first draft. The final draft may be 15 to 20 pages in length for 502 students and 8 to 10 pages in length for 402 students. The prospectus must have a title, an abstract, and a short summary of your intentions, explaining your objectives, and the sources that you will use. The prospectus may be up to four pages.

class engagement

“Engagement” is measured by regular attendance, preparation in required readings, and in-class discussion. Everyone is expected to read extensively from the sources provided in the syllabus.
evaluation
Points will be assigned as follows: 40 points for seminar participation (discussion, special seminar presentations, and attendance); 60 points for the research paper, allocating 10 points for the prospectus, 20 for the first draft, and 30- for the final draft. To get full credit work must be completed on time, and be professional quality.

grades
The final grade for this course will be assessed according the percentage of points earned from the total points available for the course. The following breakdown of points and grades will be used:

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<th>Points</th>
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<td>100—90</td>
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academic integrity
You are expected to uphold the Idaho State University standard of conduct relating to academic integrity. You assume full responsibility for the content and integrity of the academic work you submit. The guiding principle of academic integrity shall be that your submitted work, examinations, reports, and projects must be your own work.

disability accommodations
Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. Please notify the instructor during the first week of class of any accommodations needed for the course. Late notification may cause the requested accommodations to be unavailable.

provisional course schedule
week 1 · aug 25
key topics · human agency and the state of the earth, social power, cultural worlds, and cultural transformations


week 2 · sep 1
key topics · Darwin’s theory of evolution and Marxist cultural theory


week 3 · sep 8

key topics · cultural ecology and anthropogeography


week 4 · sep 15

key topics · neoevolutionism and ecology


week 5 · sep 22 [prospectus due Friday, September 22]

key topics · human ecology and evolutionary ecology


week 6 · sep 29

key topics · why scale matters


week 7 · oct 6

key topics · evolution of human intelligence


week 8 · oct 11

key topics · scale and complexity


week 9 · oct 20

key topics · growth, scale, and power


week 10 · oct 27

key topics · complex adaptive systems


week 11 · nov 3
key topics · world-systems and sustainability


week 12 · nov 10
key topics · conservation and natural resource management


week 13 · [paper draft due Monday, November 13]
key topics · snake river basin, indigenous people, and water


week 14 · no class (Thanksgiving Holiday)

week 15 · dec 1
key topics · political ecology and water


week 16 · dec 8

key topics · ecological footprint, natural capital, and futurist scenarios


week 17 · finals week, paper due Friday, December 13, 9:30 a.m.