

Nature, Society and Adaptation

GRG 331K / ANT 324L - 17

(36985 and 31655)

Class Meets TuTh 11:00-12:15, RLP 0.108

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Last syllabus update: November 19, 2018.

This course examines the very long-term human trajectory in gaining control over resources, impacting the environment, and transforming planet earth into a meaningful human home. This trajectory has been related to long-term changes in human integration (reciprocity, trade, and redistribution) at a variety of scales, culminating in recent globalization. These changes have been associated with great achievements in quality of life for some, but with attendant problems of violence, impoverishment, and environmental impacts including, in some extreme cases, collapse. These challenges implicate both culture (learned habitual behavior, concepts, and associated objects and landscapes) and ethics (socially oriented decisions) as they promote or fail to promote resilience and adaptation with respect for human rights.

The course will discuss major transformations: the origins of the human species, the domestication of plants and animals, the rise of agricultural societies and urban civilizations, global mercantile colonialism, and modernization and urbanization. Attention will be paid to the theories and works of geographers, ecological anthropologists, environmental historians, and others. Lectures and student-proctored discussions examine selected strategies employed by humans to cope with the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities presented by different natural environments, with special attention to foraging, food, and farming. The course will also provide an introduction to ethical and policy issues surrounding sustainable development and alternative futures. Grading is based on attendance and participation, numerous writing assignments, oral presentations, and proctoring.

The course has a Writing Flag and an Ethics and Leadership Flag. It can be used to meet the core requirements for the Sustainability or the Cultural Geography tracks in the Geography major, and the upper division course requirements in the Anthropology major. It also can be used for the International Relations and Global Studies Major.

Prerequisites: Upper Division Standing

Course Website: Canvas

Students are required to use Canvas to access the syllabus, calendar, lecture presentations, readings, and assignments for the course; this site must also be used to submit all assignments:

<https://utexas.instructure.com/>

Required readings:

All course readings will be on Canvas, provided as links from each discussion paper assignment. Readings for this course include scholars such as Jared Diamond, Robert Carneiro, Robert

Netting, Michael Pollan, Ian Cook, selections from textbooks in cultural adaptation and biogeography, and timely articles from news sources and the Internet.

Summary of Grading:

Grading will be based on 10 short commentary papers (3 points each, 30%), two longer essays (50%), 2 presentations (5%), co-proctoring (5%), and quizzes (10%).

COMMENTARY PAPERS. The ten short (150-250 word) commentary papers should be sent to the professor via Canvas. Students should also print out and bring papers to the class the next day if they are not bringing their laptop or computer. Students' commentaries will be read by other students and used in classroom discussions, including peer groups proctored by students. Failure to attend, participate, and/or submit papers on time will result in deductions from the 3 points given for each essay, as will significant problems in the essays themselves.

PROCTORING. Students will be assigned as co-proctors for 10 sessions of the class. Proctors will help design class activities, including peer discussions and debates. Proctoring will provide 5 per cent of your course grade. As a proctor, you will be responsible for designing course activities for the day (other than the professor's lecturing). You will share proctoring duties in teams of 2 to 3 students; each person must lead at least one activity during class.

PAPERS. There will be two short course papers. Detailed instructions will be provided on Canvas. For both papers you will provide oral presentations (worth 2.5 points each). The first paper is 1000 words and is worth 20 points; you may revise and resubmit this paper, with the final score being the average between your first and second scores. The second paper is 1500 words and worth 30 points. Papers should be submitted on Canvas.

QUIZZES. There will also be 12 short attendance quizzes, worth 1 point each. Your lowest two scores will be dropped.

Grading will be on the plus minus system, as follows. Scores and totals will not be rounded up or down.

93-100 A, 90-92.99 A-

87-89.99 B+, 83-86.99 B, 80-82.99 B-

77-79.99 C+, 73-76.99 C, 70-72.99 C-

67-69.99 D+, 63-66.99 D, 60-62.99 D-

Below 60 F

Writing Flag

Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and you will be asked to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. Writing Flag classes meet the Core Communications objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Ethics and Leadership Flag

Ethics and Leadership courses are designed to equip you with skills that are necessary for making ethical decisions in your adult and professional life. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments involving ethical issues and the process of applying ethical reasoning to real-life situations

Writing Center

I strongly encourage you to use the Undergraduate Writing Center, FAC 211, 471-6222: <http://www.uwc.utexas.edu/>). The UWC offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. These services are not just for writing that has "problems": Getting feedback from an informed audience is a normal part of a successful writing project. Using methods that preserve the integrity of your work, they help you develop strategies to improve your writing and become a more independent writer.

Concision

This course may require shorter essays than you are used to. The two term papers are comparable in length to typical newspaper articles, blog entries, or presentations at professional meetings. Concision is a virtue; you should strive to be able to make a point in a limited space.

Classroom Policy on Electronic Devices and Behavior

Electronic Devices. Cell phones must be turned off and stowed during class. Laptops and tablets should be brought to enable sharing papers with other students and consult readings from Canvas. **If you cannot bring your laptop or tablet, you must print out and bring your discussion paper to class.**

Lectures and other class activities may not be recorded in any way without prior permission. Online materials may not be copied or distributed without prior permission.

Students will arrive on time, minimize unscheduled personal breaks, and stay until the class ends. Discussion will often include controversial issues. Expression of differing opinions and debate will be encouraged. Do not be afraid to express your real opinion, but also please respect the right of persons to disagree with you, and avoid ridicule, or ad hominem attacks. You often will learn more from those who disagree with you than from those who agree with you.

Accommodations for Special Needs

Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations can be discussed. For more information, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

Religious Holidays

By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual's behavior. Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

Emergency Evacuation

Students requiring assistance in evacuation must inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.

Sanger Learning Center

You may find assistance with specific strategies to help you study effectively at the Sanger Learning Center. The Center for Learning offers a range of services to become a better student through assistance in one-on-one tutoring, academic counseling, and other classes. For more information see <http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/>

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

If you use words or ideas that are not your own you must cite your sources. Otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University.

Tentative Schedule

The schedule is subject to revision as the semester proceeds. See the assignments on Canvas for details on the paper assignments, and links to required downloadable readings and to upload assigned papers. The lecture pages on Canvas will contain links to lecture presentations (pdf files of Power Points) after each lecture.

Jan 22 Introduction to Course

Jan 24 Lecture: Visions of Human Nature, Goals, and Efficiency

Jan 28 Assignment 1 (due on Canvas 5 pm), Conflict of Visions, GK proctor; proctoring ideas

Jan 29 Discussion; Conflict of visions

Jan 31 Lecture, Studying Culture and Environment, Attendance Quiz 1

Feb 4 Assignment 2 (due 5 pm), Activism and Science

Feb 5 Discussion, proctors 1

Feb 7 Lecture, Terminology, Collapse, Quiz 2

Feb 11 Assignment 3 (due 5 pm), Collapse

Feb 12 Discussion, proctors 2

Feb 14 Lecture, human context, Quiz 3

Feb 18 Assignment 4 (due 5 pm), Human Origins

Feb 19 Discussion, Proctors 3

Feb 21 Lecture, Foragers, Quiz 4

Feb 25 Assignment 5 (due 5 pm), Foraging

Feb 26 Discussion, Proctors 4

Feb 28 Lecture, Foraging in Long term context, Quiz 5

Mar 4 Assignment 6 (due 5 pm), Foragers Impacts, Proctors 5
Mar 5 Discussion
Mar 7 Lecture, agriculture, civilization, violence, Quiz 6

Mar 12 Student presentations on term paper 1
Mar 13 Assignment 7 (due 5 pm), Violence and Efficiency
Mar 14 Discussion, Proctors 6
Mar 15 Term paper 1 due

March 16-24 Spring Break

Mar 26 Lecture, Small Farms and Kitchenspace, and Quiz 7
Mar 27 Assignment 8 (due 5 pm), Family Farms and Kitchens
Mar 28 Discussion, Proctors 7

Apr 2 TBA
Apr 4 TBA

Apr 9 Lecture, Background to Modernization, Quiz 8
Apr 10 Assignment 9 (due 5 pm), Modernization
Apr 11 Discussion, Proctors 8

Apr 16 Lecture, Modernization's Impacts, Quiz 9
Apr 17 Term Paper 1 revision due, Term Paper 2 Topics due 5 pm
Apr 18 Discussion of term paper topics

Apr 23 Lecture, Research Examples
Apr 24 Assignment 10 (due 5 pm), Futures
Apr 25 Discussion, Proctors 9

Apr 30 Oral Presentations for Paper 2, Quiz 10
May 2 Oral Presentations for Paper 2, Quiz 11

May 7 Walk in office hour
May 9 Conclusions, Quiz 12, , Term Paper 2 due