

ANTH 385R Q, TPSL (021A / 5852)
Indigenous Cultures, Human Rights and the Environment
4:20-6:00pm Mondays & Wednesdays
Spring 2014 • 04A1 / 5325

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Course description:

We often think we know what we mean when we say we believe in “human rights” or that something is “environmental.” But, like many other complex issues, these concepts are socially constructed and often serve specific rhetorical purposes for different players. What *is* an indigenous culture? Who counts, at what point in history, for what purposes? How do we decide what human rights are? How do we understand the environment? More importantly, from an analytical perspective, what does the recognition of *indigenous* allow us to think and do that the absence of such an idea would preclude? What kinds of thinking does such a categorization make more difficult? And how do such cultural constructs apply to political movements, national and international policy, advocacy and cross-cultural understanding?

Using interdisciplinary tools of analysis—but with a slight weight toward anthropology and the social sciences—we will consider the complexities of the environment through the lens of indigenous cultures and human rights by looking closely at how meaning, belonging and policy are interlinked and contextual. We will do this by researching, modeling and discussing three separate issues *as stakeholders*. The class itself will be centered around four round tables where students will research, prepare and share their perspective as active role players, each with a stake in the environmental issue at hand. While I have chosen the first two roundtable topics, the third and final issue will be chosen, researched and prepared wholly by students with a focus on local issues, human rights and the environment. This roundtable will be held publically and presented at the honors seminar at the end of this semester.

Required Texts: The following books are available at the bookstore—Wait to buy Gibson and Igoe (half the class will read each).

- Gibson, Jane W. 2004. *Skin and bones : the management of people and natural resources in Shellcracker Haven, Florida*. Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth.
- Niezen, Ronald. 2003. *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity*. Berkeley: University of California.
- Slater, Candace. 2003. *In search of the rain forest*. Durham; London: Duke University Press.
- Sullivan, Robert. 2000. *A whale hunt*. New York: Scribner.

Objectives:

- Introduce students to qualitative theories of analysis, especially discourse analysis, by looking closely at a particular set of interwoven relationships: indigenous cultures, human rights and the environment.
- Explore and practice writing and dialogue as ways of effective communication and analysis.
- Explore the ways in which social hierarchies are written in, on, and through social space via constructions of identity, policy, and meaning.
- Enhance students’ abilities to understand and apply qualitative methods and analytical concepts in both policy-making and everyday practice.

Assessment:

- 10%: Paper 1 – Analysis of major concepts
- 10%: Round table 1 – Annotated bibliography
- 10%: Round table 1 – Participation as stakeholder
- 10%: Round table 1 – Written decision
- 10%: Round table 2 – Annotated bibliography
- 10%: Round table 2 – Participation as stakeholder
- 10%: Round table 2 – Written decision
- 10%: Round table 3 – Annotated bibliography
- 10%: Round table 3 – Participation as stakeholder
- 10%: Round table 3 – Written decision

Paper 1:

The semester is divided roughly into quarters. In the first quarter we will be concerned with the vocabulary of human rights. To both communicate and write effectively across communities it is necessary to find a shared vocabulary or at the very least to know how to unpack and understand how words and the ideas behind them are being used differently and for different purposes by different stakeholders. Subtle differences in the ways that words are used, by whom, and in what context make incredible differences when you are concerned with power, knowledge and politics. Your first paper is designed to 1) allow you to explore and think about these issues through the analytic tool of writing. It is also 2) a way for me to assess how you, as students, are working through and understanding the ideas we work on in class.

Annotated Bibliographies:

The following three quarters of the semester will be devoted to working on a series of roundtables. For each, you will be responsible for an increasing amount of research. The goal of this research will be to understand the complexity of the problem as a whole and to become intimately familiar with the particular issues of your perspectives (as one of the stakeholders). The purpose of this annotated bibliography is four-fold: 1) to help you keep track of the research that you do so that you can more easily refer to it during round tables and recall it for written decisions, 2) to help me assess how well we are doing as a class and what help I need to give you after each quarter and 3) to help me assess the time and effort that you have put into the research portion of the round table.

Participation / Performance:

The participation / performance portion of the class assessment, I hope, will be the most fun. This is where you, as students, get together at an official round table, bringing all of the stakeholders together (you!) and try to suss out a final solution to the problem at hand that will make all the stakeholders happy. As each of you will be responsible for a particular stake in the issue, it is critically important that you do the work required to both understand and to clearly articulate your position in relation to everyone else's. Your community's future and ability to function may well be at stake. Here we will build our rubrics as a class and each person will assess their own performance/participation and the other stakeholders' performances. I will be the only one to see the individual assessments, but I will take them into consideration when assigning a grade for this portion of the class.

Written Decisions:

Following each of the round tables and their assessment (see above, we will do this immediately following the round table), you will each be responsible for writing up a "decision". A "decision" is a report that would provide—at minimum—a comprehensive overview of the evidence, the assumptions being made (i.e. funding will remain the same) and should include "findings of fact" (evidence), support (why) for the decision being made and a conclusion. We will discuss, as a group, what we would find most convincing in a decision paper and how they would be most successful for our particular context. These decision papers will be graded on their own merit, but they will also be used to assess how well

each stakeholder's contribution was articulated to others. A portion of your grade will also be assessed on whether you can *usefully* apply the concepts and vocabulary from the first theory/vocabulary part of class to the "problems" you are exploring in your roundtables.

Discussion

This is a seminar class. That means the class consists of in-class discussions. Participation is required and graded heavily. In addition to regular participation in discussion you will, in a small group, be asked over the course of the semester, to be in charge of leading in-class discussions. One of the important goals of this class is to guide you in: identifying important issues within a field; becoming familiar with key ways of reading and understanding; and being able to focus and analyse key questions or tensions within a reading as a precursor to asking more difficult and subtle questions. One way of honing those skills is to think about how you would teach them to others—or better yet, how you would lead others to discover for themselves the important aspects of a reading and how the ideas presented can help them see the world differently. Your job, as a group, in these instances is to discuss the day's readings with your group members so that you are intimately familiar with them. Then you will come up with a set of questions, conversations, or activities that will help your classmates also move beyond the obvious issues discussed in the readings and relate them to the larger issues in anthropology and the class.

Attendance and being on time:

One of the major premises of this class is that we are here to help one another learn. If you are not in class you cannot participate in this critical experience. You get two free absences, no questions asked. *But*, if you miss more than two classes, you should be aware that your FINAL grade will suffer by 1/3 grade for each class you miss after two. Thus if your final grade is a B and you miss three classes, the grade you receive will be a B-. If you miss four classes it will be a C+. Much of this class is focused on in-class discussion and activities that you will not be able to make up and will affect your grade. If *you* miss class, *everyone* suffers.

ASSIGNMENTS and LATE PAPER POLICY:

All papers and assignments must be turned in on time. Turning in a paper late causes significant problems both for me (in trying to keep track of individual papers and juggling assignments) and also for you, because you will then continue to be behind throughout the class. In addition, *turning in late papers is unfair to those who completed their papers on time*. It is up to my discretion whether I will accept a late paper. Generally, I will not. However, on those rare occasions when I do, the paper's grade will fall by 1/3 grade for each day it is late (i.e. a B+ will become a B, or an A- will become a B+). Any paper turned in more than 15 minutes after the start of class will be considered a day late. If you plan to request an extension for a late paper be aware that I will NOT grant extensions because of unexcused absence, sports absences, undocumented illnesses or emergencies, overwork, or family vacations. If you have a medical, family or personal emergency you may request an extension ONLY if you have documentation from a doctor, parent or counselor. Again, this is a fairness issue for those students who do manage (despite their also busy lives) to turn papers in on time.

THE SMALL PRINT:

- **Student Honor Code:** *As a student of Oxford College you are bound by the Student Honor Code and are responsible "for maintaining standards of unimpeachable honesty in all academic work....The Honor Code is based on the fundamental expectations that every person in Oxford College will conduct his or her life according to the dictates of the Honor Code and will refuse to tolerate actions in others which would violate the honor code"*
(http://oxford.emory.edu/audiences/current_students/Academic/academic-success/student-honor-code/).
- Student work submitted as part of this **course may be reviewed by Oxford College and Emory College faculty** and staff for the purposes of improving instruction and enhancing Emory education.
- One of the key benefits of a liberal arts education is the instructor's ability to react to students' needs, interests and abilities. In the spirit of providing you with an education that remains responsive to particular contexts, **this syllabus and schedule are subject to change.**
- **Disabilities:** If you are a student with a documented disability on record and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class please make an appointment to see me in my office. If you need a note taker please see me immediately after class.

—**Religious Holidays:** *If you must miss class for a religious holiday, please notify me, in writing, one week before class in order to be excused (assignments due on a particular day must still be turned in on or before the day specified).*