

Sustainable Futures: New Directions in Environmental Anthropology
Master's course, 7.5 credits, Spring 2020
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Most people would agree that the human impact on nature or the environment has reached a point today where long-term human survival on earth is at stake. Business as usual is no longer an option. Things have to change and new and more sustainable forms of production and consumption have to be developed. This realization, however, is not necessary translated into action. We have, for example, seen this in the international climate change negotiations. In this course we will address various contemporary environmental issues and explore different ways of thinking the nature-society interface. We will do this from the vantage-point of present-day scholarship in environmental anthropology, broadly defined.

The course is structured around four themes: 1. *living the anthropocene*, 2. *rural livelihoods*, 3. *political ecology* and 4. *multispecies entanglements*. These themes run into each other and several of the course readings concern more than one of the themes. I have nevertheless divided the literature under these four headings, basically structured as weekly readings (see the course outline below). You will write a two-page reaction paper for each theme and these will be presented and discussed at the weekly seminars.

To get credits for the course, the four reaction papers have to be submitted, presented and approved. During the last week you will also write a take-home exam with four essay questions; each question should be answered with 1,5-2 pages (not more than 8 pages in total). The discussion should be based on your reading of the course literature; discuss and place different authors against or in relation to each other

and pursue your own argument or line of thought. Just referring to or quoting texts is not enough. Neither is free speculations, or just statements of opinion, like “I don’t like xxx”; try instead to argue and explain why certain claims are problematic! You have to show me that you have read, grappled with, understood and can work with/ make use of the texts. The seminars are obligatory - you will be discussant on each other’s reaction papers (this exercise is part of getting the reaction papers approved). Grading, however, is mainly based on the take-home exam. If there are questions concerning the course format, readings, reaction papers and examination these should be sorted out at the course introduction.

As this is a Master’s course and we are dealing with complex and morally, ethically and politically challenging issues, I hope You all come prepared to class. A lecture - in the schedule below - is also an invitation for dialogue and discussion! Beside the course readings, I will add a number of texts and films on Mondo for those interested. We meet in Room B600, unless something else is stated.

To repeat, participation in all lectures and seminars is MANDATORY. If you are ill and unable to come to class, inform me in advance.

Schedule

LIVING THE ANTHROPOCENE

Monday May 4, 9-11	Introduction: <i>Climate Change, the Anthropocene and Biosocial becomings</i> . Lit. Ingold (2013), Latour (2014), Haraway et al (2017), Hornborg (2017) and Tsing (2015).
Wednesday May 6, 10-12	Debate: <i>Anthropocene and the role of Anthropology</i> .
Friday May 8, 10-12 13-15	Seminar group 1 – reaction paper 1 Seminar group 2 – reaction paper 1

RURAL LIVELIHOODS

Monday May 11, 10-12	Lecture: <i>Living on the Land</i> Lit. Li (2014).
Tuesday May 12, 10-12	Guest lecture: <i>TBA</i>
Friday May 15, 10-12 13-15	Seminar group 1 - reaction paper 2. Seminar group 2 – reaction paper 2

POLITICAL ECOLOGY

Monday May 18, 10-12	Lecture: <i>The Political Ecology of Energy</i> Lit. Karlsson (2015), Hornborg (2009) & Powell (2018). OBS- Room F 339.
Tuesday May 19, 10-12	Film and discussion
Monday May 25, 10-12 15-17	Seminar group 1 – reaction paper 3 Seminar group 2 – reaction paper 3

MULTISPECIES ENTANGLEMENTS

Tuesday May 26, 10-12	Lecture: <i>More-than-human Anthropology</i> Lit. Lien & Law (2011), Kirksey (2014), Gagliano (2017) & de la Cadena (2015).
Tuesday May 26, 13-15	Film and discussion; <i>Sweetgrass</i>

Friday may 29, 10-12
13-15

Seminar group 1 – reaction paper 4
Seminar group 2 – reaction paper 4

Friday June 5, 15.00

Submission of exam on Mondo and hard copy to
Student office before **3 pm**.

Readings

Books:

Cadena, Marisol de la, 2015, *Earth Beings: Ecologies of Practice Across Andean Worlds*, Duke University Press. (285 pp)

Li, Tania Murray, 2014, *Land's End: Capitalist Relations on an Indigenous Frontier*, Duke University Press. (250 pp)

Powell, Dana E., 2018, *Landscapes of Power: Politics of Energy in the Navajo Nation*, Duke University Press. (250 pp)

Tsing, A., 2015, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*, Princeton University Press. (290pp)

Articles:

Gagliano, M. et al., 2017, "Introduction", *The Language of Plants*. Minneapolis and London: Minnesota University Press (Introduction available online).

Haraway, D. et al, 2016, "Anthropologists are Talking – About the Anthropocene", *Ethnos*, 81(3):535-564.

Hornborg, A., 2009, "Zero-Sum World: Challenges in Conceptualizing Environmental Load Displacement and Ecologically Unequal Exchange in the World-System" , in *International Journal of Comp. Sociology*, Vol. 50(3-4): 237-262.

Hornborg, A, 2017, "Dithering when the planet burns: Anthropologists' approaches to the Anthropocene", *Reviews in Anthropology*, Vol. 46(2-3):61-77.

Ingold T., 2013, "Prospect", in *Biosocial Becomings: Integrating Social and Biological Anthropology*, eds T. Ingold & G. Palsson, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (available as e-book at SUB).

Karlsson, B. G., 2015, "Political Ecology: Anthropological Approaches", *Enc. of Social and Behavioral Sciences* (provided by department).

Kirksey, E ed., 2014, *The Multispecies Salon*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, (Introduction of the book is available online, <http://www.multispecies-salon.org>, pp. 1-33).

Latour, Bruno, 2014, "Anthropology at the Time of Anthropocene – a personal view of what is to be studied", special lecture at AAA, Washington 2014. (provided by department).

Lien M. E. and Law, J., 2011, "Emergent Aliens: On Salmon, Nature and their Enactment", *Ethnos*, Vol. 76(1): 65-87.

Useful site for extra readings: <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/citation-matters-an-updated-reading-list-for-a-progressive-environmental-anthropology>

Grading

The course grading is based on the Take-Home Exam, and in case someone is between grades I will consider the quality of the Reaction Papers and the level of active participation in class. The take-home exam has a maximum of 20 points, five points for each question:

Pass:

A = 20-19 points

B = 18-17 points

C = 16-15 points

D = 14-13 points

E = 12-10 points

Fail:

Fx = 9-7 points (revise and re-submit)

F = 6 and below (new examination at a later date)