

## **Syllabus: ANT 326: Folklore, the Environment, and Public Policy**

**Course description:** Folklore, the environment and public policy examines the interaction of humans with the environment from the perspective of folklore, and reviews its impact on public policy at the local, state, federal and international level. This is an online course using Blackboard. **3 credit hours**

**Instructor: Pauleena MacDougall Office hours by appointment**

**110 So. Stevens Hall**

**581-1848**

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**Prerequisites: none**

### **Course objectives:**

Students will learn about how folklore reveals the way people interact with the environment through their work, recreation, and aesthetics. The course will review major theories of the commons, sense of place, liberation ecology, and issues relating to the environment and sustainability of culture. It will examine the way people name places, how they imagine place and will review the politics of sustainability from a cultural perspective. Students will examine the ethics of place both theoretically and practically, and will explore whether there is a distinction between land ethic and human ethic. All of this will be placed within the context of folklore: for example, traditional work that interacts with natural resources, traditional healers, the use of herbal medicines, the words people use to describe places, the stories people tell about their place. Students will examine how these ideas of folklore and the environment can be used to inform public policy debate about population/environment.

This will be a course in which students do research using primary sources, fieldwork, materials from the Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral history, or the American Folklife Center and other folklore resources.

The course will fulfill the gen ed requirement relating to environment and population. Students will be exposed to the concepts listed:

- a) the role of both local and global environmental change on the quality of human life;
- b) the pervasive role of human population growth on environmental quality and the quality of life, both in industrial and developing countries;
- c) the influence of cultural, religious, economic, educational, and political factors on population growth and environmental quality;

- d) possible solutions to the population/environment problems, which may include the role of technological advancements, a reexamination of educational and political institutions, enlightened reassessment of traditional religious and economic conceptions.

**Expected outcomes:**

- Students will acquire interdisciplinary skills, understand environmental issues from a folklore perspective and gain new insight into grass roots movements that impact environmental policies.
- Students should be able to compare and contrast the effects of different belief systems on human interaction with natural ecosystems.
- Students should be able to analyze the impact of a specific human cultural practice, belief system, or political/economic policy on the supporting ecosystem.
- Students should be able to project and explain the likely effects of modifications to the ecosystem.
- Students should be able to suggest specific modifications to cultural practices and/or political/economic policies that relate to a natural ecosystem.
- Students can describe a technologically advanced human society structured to be in balance with its sustaining ecosystem.
- Students demonstrate an understanding of how popular views of nature are influenced by scientific discoveries.
- Students demonstrate their understanding of how stories within a culture shape perceptions and values about the natural environment.

Electronic requirements

Course Infrastructure and Access

This course is given entirely on Blackboard. All assignments must be emailed to the instructor. They must be in Microsoft Word or PDF if attached, OR they may be typed in the body of the email (preferred).

Weekly reading assignments are uploaded on the web site. Students may read them on their computer monitor or download and print them. You must have readily available access to the web, email and broadband in order to take this course.

Technical support is available from CED Tech Help via email.

Online courses are more challenging because of the need for good time management and adherence to assignment due dates. If you find yourself getting behind, contact the instructor as soon as possible.

**Pdf's of course materials are available for download from the class web site:**

Blackboard WEB ADDRESS: <https://www.courses.maine.edu/>

**Grades:** Grade will be based on position-reaction papers, (30%) class project including primary research (40%) and a final take home exam based on class readings and student research (30%)

DUE DATES: All reaction papers must be emailed to me by Sunday noon of the week they are due.

Project: by week 6 you should email me the title and list of resources you will use in your project. By week 11 you should send me an outline and rough draft of your project. The Final project is due week 13.

FINAL: The exam will be given to you to do during finals week and is due by Friday of that week.

### **Academic Honesty**

Academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, and all forms of misrepresentation in academic work, and it is unacceptable at the University of Maine. As stated in the University of Maine's online undergraduate "Student Handbook," plagiarism (the submission of another's work without appropriate attribution) and cheating are violations of the University of Maine Student Conduct Code. An instructor who has probable cause or reason to believe a student has cheated may act upon such evidence, and will report the case to the supervising faculty member or the Department Chair for appropriate action.

### **Disability Accommodation:**

If you have a disability for which you may be requesting an accommodation, please contact Ann Smith, Director of Disability Services, at their new location in East Annex, 581-2319, as early as possible in the term.

### **Topics and Class calendar.**

#### **Week 1.**

Readings:

1. "Cultural Conservation of Place," author Setha M. Low, in Hufford *Conserving Culture*, pp. 66-77.
2. "Folklore and the Study of Environmental Attitudes" Author(s): Hong-Key Yoon and Edmunds V. Bunkse Source: *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (Dec., 1979), pp. 635-639 Published by: Taylor & Francis, Ltd. on behalf of the Association of American Geographers Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2563134>

Homework: Write a one page reaction to the following questions based on the readings: What does folklore have to do with the environment? What is the connection between people, place and natural resources?

#### Week 2. Theoretical approaches

Readings: "The Tragedy of the Commons: Twenty-two years later," authors David Feeny, Fikret Berkes, Bonnie J. McCay and James M. Acheson in *Human Ecology*: Volume 18, (1) March, 1990.

"Ethnobiology and Ethnoecology in the Context of National Laws and International Agreements Affecting Indigenous and Local Knowledge, Traditional Resources, and Intellectual Property

Rights. “ Darrel Addison Posey pp. 35-54 in *Indigenous Environmental Knowledge and its Transformations: Critical Anthropological Perspectives*. Ed. By Roy Ellen, et. al (Harwood, 2000)

Homework: One page reaction to the following question based on readings. What is the Tragedy of the theory of the Commons that the authors critique and what is the controversy about it? Briefly summarize how the recognition of indigenous environmental knowledge has impacted contemporary policy.

Week 3.

Readings: “Introduction” *Senses of Place*, Steven Feld and Keith Basso.

Homework: One page reaction to question based on readings: in your own words, what is your definition of *Sense of Place* and how might it shape environmental policy?

Week 4.

Readings: Peet, R. and M. Watts (1996). Liberation Ecology: Development, sustainability, and environment in an age of market triumphalism. *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, development, social movements*. R. Peet and M. Watts. New York, Routledge: 1-45.

Homework: One page reaction to the following question based on readings. How would you define Liberation Ecology? How might this approach shape environmental policy?

Week 5.

Readings: “Reflections on sustainability, population growth, and the environment”  
Albert A. Bartlett’ *Population & Environment*, Volume 16, Number 1 / September, 1994, pp 5-35.

Homework: One page reaction to the following question based on readings. What issues relate sustainability of culture and population growth? How might they impact environmental policies?

Week 6. Naming place

Readings: “Wisdom Sits in Places: Notes on a Western Apache Landscape,” Keith H. Basso in, *Senses of Place*, pp. 53-90.

Homework: One page reaction to question based on readings: What did you learn from this reading about how the Apache people construct their own sense of place? Can you identify policy implications from this article?

Week 7.

Readings: Constructing Life Stories: Glaciers as Social Spaces, in, *Do Glaciers Listen?: Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination*, author Julie Cruikshank, pp. 50-75.

Homework: One page reaction to question based on readings. Explain how a glacier can be a social space and how might global warming impact that social space?

Week 8.

Readings: "What are the alternatives to Global Culture?" in *Conserving Cultures*, author Harry Redner, pp. 147-218.

Homework: One page reaction to question based on readings. Do you agree or disagree with the author in his assessment of Global culture. Why?

Week 9.

Readings: "Listening for Different Stories," in *Do Glaciers Listen?: Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination*, author Julie Cruikshank, pp. 76-124.

Homework: One page reaction to question based on readings. The stories center around living and traveling in and around glaciers. What did you hear in these glacier stories that help you understand the indigenous perspective of the environment?

Week 10.

Readings: Place, People, and Folklore: An Isle Royale Case Study Author(s): Timothy Cochrane Source: *Western Folklore*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Jan., 1987), pp. 1-20

Homework: One page reaction to question based on readings. Describe, in your own words, the consequences to Isle Royale fishermen when their island became a National Park. How could public policies better utilize folklore in decision making?

Week 11.

Readings:

Folklore and Symbolism of Green Author(s): John Hutchings Source: *Folklore*, Vol. 108 (1997), pp. 55-63

Homework: One page reaction to question based on readings. In the United States green—both as a word with no color present and as a color is used as a symbol of non-polluting, healthy products. Green cars, green light bulbs, green cleaning products. In light of the article on folklore and symbolism, should green be the universal color of environmentalists? Why or why not? Provide some examples of how this color is being used in the U.S. Does the color convey the same concepts in other cultures? Give examples.

Week 12.

Readings:

The Concept of Ecotypes in American Folklore Author(s): Timothy Cochrane Source: *Journal of Folklore Research*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Jan. - Apr., 1987), pp. 33-55

Homework: One page reaction to the following question based on readings. The article reviews the controversial scholarship regarding the concept Ecotype. To what extent do you think there is an organic connection between the natural environment and folk narrative? Can you give examples to support your position?

## Week 13

Readings: Larry Danielson, "Tornado Stories in the Breadbasket: Weather and Regional Identity," in Barbara Allen & Thomas J. Schlereth eds., *Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures*, The University Press of Kentucky, 1990 pp. 28-39

The author identifies tornado stories as a key to regional identity in the "Tornado Belt:" Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri. He demonstrates that weather can play an important role in regional economy. What kind of weather stories might you find in other parts of the country? Do you have any of your own to share? Why do people tell them?

## Week 14

Readings: West & Brockington: An Anthropological Perspective on Some Unexpected Consequences of Protected Areas. *Conservation Biology* 20 (3) 2006.

Homework: One page reaction to question based on readings. How might the author's plan to collaborate before areas are protected work in actual practice to avoid some of the harmful effects of conserving ecosystems?

### **Class Research Project:**

Description: Using materials in the archives of the Maine Folklife Center and/or the American Folklife Center (many of these are online), Special Collections in the Fogler Library, and articles from academic journals as needed, explore a hypothesis about **environmental sustainability in the northeast region of the United States and Canada**. Develop a research project that includes interviewing one or more persons who have traditional knowledge about your topic. Prepare a 10 page paper based on your findings.

Some suggested topics:

- Traditional medicinal use of plants
- Traditional use of plants for material culture (ie. Boat building, baskets, etc.)
- Traditional resource-based occupations (lumbering, fishing, guiding, sports camping, farming, gathering wild food for sale (ie fiddleheads, blueberries)
- Traditional energy use (for transportation, to run machinery or for heating)
- Traditional cultural practices tied to place (ceremonies, etc.)
- Traditional recreational uses of resources

### **STYLE**

The paper can be submitted to me via email but it must follow the following guidelines:

Readable in Microsoft word or pdf form.

1 inch margins top, bottom, and sides

12 point font

Double spaced lines

References: (author, date, page #) at the end of a paragraph, followed by a References Cited that includes the following information:

Author first and last name, title of article, title of journal, volume, number and date of publication, page numbers.

***NOTE: If you choose a topic that is not on this list you must get approval from me before going forward with your research.***

Additional References:

Barbara Allen & Thomas J. Schlereth eds., *Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures*, The University Press of Kentucky, 1990 pp.59-73.

Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996)

Mary Hufford, ed. *Conserving Culture: A New Discourse on Heritage*. University of Illinois, 1994

Edward D. Ives, *George Magoon and the Downeast Game War: History, Folklore, and the Law* (University of Illinois Press, 1988); *Issues of Northeast Folklore* Volumes 1-34.

Pauleena M. MacDougall. *Northeast Folklore* volumes 35-43. Available in the library and at Maine Folklife Center

Lester W. Milbrath, *Envisioning a Sustainable Society: Learning our Way Out* (State University of New York Press, 1989)

Robert E. Stipe, *A Richer Heritage: Historic Preservation in the Twenty-first Century* (University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

Harry Redner, *Conserving Cultures: Technology, Globalization, and the Future of Local Cultures* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield), 2004

Kent C. Ryden Mapping *The Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing, and the Sense of Place*, University of Iowa Press, 1993.

Julie Cruikshank *Do Glaciers Listen?: Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, & Social Imagination* (Vancouver, Toronto: UBC Press and Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005).