

ENVIRONMENTAL ANTHROPOLOGY

William & Mary, Spring 2022, 3 Credits.

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TR, 2 - 3:20 | Washington Hall - Room 305

Office Hours:

Monday 2 – 3 PM on Zoom. <https://cwm.zoom.us/my/mdicenta>

Other hours and in-person meetings by appointment.

Land Acknowledgement

William & Mary acknowledges the Indigenous peoples who are the original inhabitants of the lands our campus is on today – the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway), Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Mattaponi, Monacan, Nansemond, Nottoway, Pamunkey, Patawomeck, Upper Mattaponi, and Rappahannock tribes – and pay our respect to their tribal members past and present.

Course Description

Environmental issues are not only understood physically and biologically, but they also entail economic, political, legal, ethical, symbolic, and socio-cultural dimensions. How do people define nature and culture? Can nature produce inequality? How do multi-species communities imagine, live, and create different environments? And how can anthropology help us understand and respond to environmental problems?

Environmental anthropology explores these questions by broadly interrogating how humans interrelate to biophysical and cultural processes in multiple ways and constructing relations through science, religion, politics, or value systems. Key themes and problems we will address include nature/culture, place/space, colonialism/development, conservation, toxicity, disasters, etc.

Since ethnographic inquiry will be central for your reading, research, and writing, you need to acquire a journal notebook (A5 is standard).

Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Differentiate environmental approaches and concepts in anthropology.
- Assess ethics, politics, and power in environmental research.

- Develop ethnographic observations and journaling.
- Engage in cross-cultural and intersectional conversations.
- Organize, examine, and discuss complex ideas to construct your own judgments.
- Investigate, teach, and present results individually and with others.
- Improve reading and writing skills.

Course Policies

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. If you have a legitimate reason for missing a class, you must email me as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements. Everybody gets a free pass for one absence during the semester. After that, I will deduct 0.5 points from your grade for each unaccounted absence.

COVID-related Planning

All of us will follow W&M requirements - vaccinations and boosters, indoor masking, as well as quarantine and isolation when ill. For those who have tested positive, W&M's requirements must be fulfilled before class can be attended in person, and, out of an abundance of caution, anyone with symptoms consistent with COVID- even if they don't have a positive test- should not come to class.

Please note that testing positive for COVID or any other temporary illness is not considered a disability as defined by ADA guidelines and is not under the purview of W&M's Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Thus, any questions should be addressed via email to me.

As soon as a student knows they will not be able to attend class in person (either because of having tested positive, having symptoms consistent with COVID, or other health matters), please email me. In that case, the instructor will activate our mode of accommodating absences for your situation. Since this is a very challenging time with the potential for quite complicated comings and goings, we need to operate on the basis of a trustful relationship; please try your very best not to miss classes for non-health related reasons.

COVID-related Accommodations

For student absences, we will use Zoom for synchronous remote learning. You should notify me about your absence at least one hour before class. We will also apply a buddy system. Buddies will share their notes, class handouts, and facilitate hybrid in-class discussion for absent students using Zoom or another platform approved by the instructor (e.g., Facetime).

We will shift the course to Zoom if more than five students plan to be absent. Please be mindful that for this plan to work, you need to notify me about your absence at least one hour before class.

Instructor absences generally will be addressed by shifting synchronous online instruction over Zoom. Take-home activities may be assigned in lieu of class; students will have 24 hours to submit their reports. I will notify students about alternative arrangements with at least a two-hour notice.

Honesty

The W&M Honor Code defines various forms of academic dishonesty and sanctions; you should make yourself familiar with those. All assignments must represent your work. Please, if you are using somebody else's words, cite them. Violation of this policy will result in a *minimum* penalty of a zero for that assignment.

Learning Assessments

I will provide feedback on your performance upon request. If you disagree with the evaluation of an assignment, let's talk about it, mistakes sometimes happen. However, the instructor will only accept revision requests within three working days after the evaluation. You will have to email the instructor with a written request that contains a well-reasoned argument. Please be aware that your grade might be adjusted upward or downward, following a careful review.

Late work

No late work will receive full credit without prior approval.

Safe space

You are strongly discouraged from using language that is racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, fatphobic, ableist, or otherwise hateful. Hateful ideas will be challenged. In addition, using language that is intended to hurt other students or deny their experiences will not be tolerated in any way. If people say things that make you feel unsafe (including me), please speak with me afterward. Additionally, there will be an open-ed document where you can anonymously post your needs for a safe and brave environment.

Brave space

The topics discussed in class can be personal and political, and discussions are likely to involve disagreements. When engaged in carefully, conflicts can be productive and insightful. When engaged carelessly, disagreement can result in hard feelings, extreme discomfort, and the closure of cognitive capacities. When you disagree, do so respectfully.

Student Accessibility Services

Students who need to make special arrangements for class assignments and examinations should consult the instructors as soon as possible. W&M accommodates students' diverse abilities following federal laws and university policy. Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a learning, psychiatric, physical, or chronic health diagnosis should contact Student Accessibility Services staff at [757-221-2512](tel:757-221-2512) or sas@wm.edu to determine if accommodations are warranted and to obtain an official letter of accommodation. For more information, see www.wm.edu/sas.

Assignments

➤ You can submit your assignments in English or Spanish

Participation: 20%

Participation is based on written and verbal components. Engaged participation will be valued, but also the capacity to help others speak and remain silent when taking up too much space. The bulk of your written and spoken participation must be grounded on readings— Please do not feign having read.

Journaling: You will spend 10/15 minutes of each class typing your thoughts on the readings/materials assigned that day. You will paste them into our collective journal.

Multispecies Making & Doing: 10% (April 7)

Your research group will be assigned a chapter from *'What Would Animals Say If We Asked the Right Questions?'* (Despret, 2007). You have read it and tell the story in a making & doing format. These include, but are not limited to, collages, comics, dance, theater, song composition, videos, artifacts, paintings, game design.

Research Project: 40 %

The research project is based on individual and team components. Your group will choose a broad EnviroAnth topic that enables collective and individual approaches.

Individual Work:

- **Annotated Bibliography: Due March 1 (11.59 PM). 10%.** You will search for three peer-reviewed academic articles related to your topic, summarize their argument and comment how they contribute to your project.
- **Participant Observation: Report due March 29 (11.59 PM). 10%.** You will spend at least 4 hours working on a project—a national park, a museum, a community organization, WM club, seed library, garbage pickers etc—that is related to your term topic. You will also submit your field notes, as well as a 2 page write-up that relates your observations to concepts from class.
- **Interview: Report due Apr. 19 (11.59 PM). 10%.** You will conduct a 30-minute interview with an “expert” in a field related to the topic of your term project. Experts include environmental scientists, frontline communities, farmers, garbage collectors, etc—anybody with special knowledge about a given ecological issue. You will submit a transcript of the interview, as well as a 2- page write-up that relates the interview to course concepts. (Plan your interview ahead!).

Teamwork:

- **Group Presentation. 10%.** Teamwork will be addressed in a series of activities, mostly in class. You will present your research collective at the end of the semester.

Final Essay 30%

You will compose a photo essay / blog post that addresses the topic covered in your research project. You will analyze it with the course material, reflections, positionality, interview, and/or participant observation. (Max. 1800 words excluding references). It is due May 10 (4:59 PM)

Best essays will be published in the blog www.afternatures.com

Extra Points

You will get extra point for presenting a short ethnographic insight in class (3-5 min).

<i>Note that your midterm grade will be based on participation and assignments.</i>

Important dates:

2/5	Add/Drop deadline
3/1	Annotated Bibliography due
3/28	Participant Observation Report due
3/29	Withdrawal deadline
4/7	Making & Doing Presentations
4/19	Interview report due
5/3-5	Group Presentations
5/10	Final Paper due (4:59 PM).

Grade breakdown by assignment

Assignment	%
Participation	20
Making & Doing	10
Research Project	40
Final Essay	30

Course Grade Breakdown

Letter	%	Letter	%
A	93 - 100	C	73 - 77
A-	90 - 92	C-	70 - 72
B+	88 - 89	D+	68 - 69
B	82 - 87	D	63 - 67
B-	80 - 81	D-	60 - 62
C+	78 - 79	F	59 and below

Reading Schedule

*Please, be aware: Some readings & dates might change to accommodate emerging issues or guests.
It is your responsibility to check the scheduled material. I will only upload articles and chapters into BB,
not blog posts and media (links in this document).*

Situating Nature-Cultures & EnviroAnth

Week 1: Introduction to the course

No Readings Assigned

Week 2: Modernities

Feb 1:

Watch in class [One Table Two Elephants](#)

Feb 3: Virtual Event with Kim TallBear 6.30 – 7.30. [Extra Point for attending]

Escobar - Territories of Difference: Place, Movements, Life.

Latour – We Have Never Been Modern (intro).

Week 3: Nature-Culture

Feb 8:

De la Cadena - Indigenous cosmopolitics in the Andes

Feb. 10: Ruderal Ethnography

Comaroff & Comaroff – Naturing the Nation

Stoetzer - Ruderal Ecologies

Week 4: #AgainstPopulation & the Environment

Feb. 15:

No Readings – Work in Groups

Feb. 17:

Rappaport – Ritual Regulation and Environmental Relations

Harding - Tragedy of the commons

Murphy – Against Population

Bio-Geo-Chemo Ethnographies

Week 5: Biopower and Environmental Advocacy

Feb. 22:

Foucault - Right of Death and Power over Life

Feb 24:

Fortun – Advocacy After Bhopal

Week 6: Geopower & Life/Non Life

Mar. 1: *Annotated Bibliography due.*

Povinelli – Do rocks listen?

March 3: *Guest Speaker*

Diana Pardo Pedraza – On Landmines and Suspicion

Kristina Lyons – [Vital Decomposition](#)

Watch: Duica – [War Ecology](#)

Week 7: Chemo-Ethnography

Mar 8:

Langwick – Politics of Habitability

Alaimo – [Transcorporeality](#)

Jaworski - [Chemical Intimacies](#)

Mar 10:

Liboiron-Pollution is colonialism. Ch. 1

[Pacific Salmon declines](#)

[Pollution doesn't go away](#)

Week 8: Spring Break

Multispecies Ethnographies

Week 9: Multi-species Ethnography I

Mar 22:

Despret – The Body we Care for.

Play and explore [Feral Atlas](#)

Mar 24:

Govindrajan – Animal Intimacies - Pig Gone Wild

[Revisiting the human](#)

Week 10: Multi-species ethnography II

Mar 29: *Participant Observation Report due*

Parreñas – Producing affect

Lozano - [Frogs](#)

Mar 31:

Chao – No Straight Lines in Nature

[Multispecies methodologies and elephants](#)

Week 11: More-than-human Colonialism

Apr. 5:

Dicenta – White Animals

Apr. 7: *Making & Doing presentations*

Risk, Disaster, & Anthropocenes

Week 12: Risk & Disasters

Apr. 12:

Beck – Risk Society (intro)

[Louisiana land, life and water](#) photo-essay

Apr. 14:

Douglas – Risk and Culture ch. 1

Scheper-Hughes – Katrina

Week 13: Anthropocenes

Apr. 19: *Interview Report due*

Hecht – Interscalar Vehicles for an African Anthropocene

Huckleberry – [Copper Mining Botswana](#)

Apr. 21:

De la Cadena - uncommoning nature

Kyle Whyte – Listen [EJ & Anthropocene](#)

Week 14: Work in Groups

Apr. 26:

Kanngieser & Todd. Environmental Kin Study

Apr. 28: Work in Groups

Week 15: Group Presentations