

## Anth 458 • Ethnobiology: People, Plants, and Animals

Spring 2008, University of Washington

T & Th 12:30-2:20; EEB 045

Dr. Denise M. Glover

Office: Denny M39

Office hours: Tues 2:30-3:30, or by appointment

Email: [dglover@u.washington.edu](mailto:dglover@u.washington.edu)

Phone: 206 543-4793 or 543-5240 (messages)

### Course description

This course is an introduction to the inter-disciplinary field of ethnobiology—the study of knowledge of and beliefs about the natural world among human groups (*ethnos*). Formed out of the studies of ethnosience in the discipline of anthropology, ethnobiology includes a variety of subject matters and theoretical approaches. We will discuss topics relevant to the field, including classification of natural kinds, subsistence, sustainability, resource management, and biopiracy, and will obtain an understanding of historical developments within the field. The course includes a lab component, where we will engage in hands-on exploration of important methodological techniques in ethnobiology, as well as several on-campus fieldtrips.

**Course webpage:** <http://courses.washington.edu/anth458s>

### Required texts (available at the University of Washington Bookstore)

Berkes, Fikret. *Sacred Ecology: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Resource Management*. Taylor & Francis. 1999.

Brightman, Robert A. *Grateful Prey: Rock Cree Human-Animal Relationships*. Canadian Plains Research Center. 2002.

Hunn, Eugene S. with James Selam and Family. *Nch'i-wána "The Big River": Mid-Columbian Indians and Their Land*. University of Washington Press. 1990.

Mintz, Sidney. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. Penguin Books. 1985.

Shiva, Vandana. *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge*. South End Press. 1997.

### Optional texts (Martin text available at the University of Washington Bookstore)

Martin, Gary. *Ethnobotany: A Methods Manual*. Earthscan. 2004.

Berlin, Brent. *Ethnobiological Classification: Principles of Categorization of Plants and Animals in Traditional Societies*. Princeton University Press. 1992.

### Additional reading materials on electronic reserve

**URL:** <https://eres.lib.washington.edu/eres/coursepass.aspx?cid=6260>

Agrawal, Arjun. 1995. "Dismantling the divide between indigenous and scientific knowledge." *Development and Change* 26: 413-429.

Berlin, Brent. 1992. "On the making of a comparative ethnobiology." Pp. 3-51 in *Ethnobiological Classification: Principles of Categorization of Plants and Animals in Traditional Societies*. Princeton University Press.

Bulmer, Ralph. 1967. "Why is the cassowary not a bird? A problem of zoological taxonomy among the Karam of the New Guinea Highlands." *Man* 2: 5-25.

Bye, Robert. 1986. "Voucher specimens in ethnobiological studies and publications." *Journal of Ethnobiology* 6(1): 1-8.

Castetter, Edward. 1944. "The domain of ethnobiology." *American Naturalist* 78: 158-170.

- Coe, Michael. 1964. "The chinampas of Mexico." *Scientific American* 211(1): 90-98.
- Diamond, Jared. 1966. "Zoological classification system of a primitive people." *Science* 151:1102-1104.
- Dyson-Hudson, Rade and Neville Dyson-Hudson. 1969. "Subsistence herding in Uganda." *Scientific American* 220: 76-84.
- Ellen, Roy. 1999. "Modes of subsistence and ethnobiological knowledge: between extraction and cultivation in Southeast Asia." In Douglas Medin & Scott Atran (eds) *Folkbiology*. MIT Press.
- Ellen, Roy. 1979. "Introductory essay." In Roy Ellen & David Reason (eds) *Classifications in Their Social Context*. Academic Press.
- Hunn, Eugene. 1982 "The utilitarian factor in folk biological classification" *American Anthropologist* 84: 830-847.
- Hunn, Eugene S., Darryll Johnson, Priscilla Russel, and Thomas F. Thornton. 2003. "Huna Tlingit TEK, conservation, and the management of a 'wilderness' park" *Current Anthropology* 44(5): 79-104.
- Iltis, Hugh. 1983 "From teosinte to maize: the catastrophic sexual transmutation." *Science* 222: 886-893.
- Posey, Darrell Addison. 1990. "IPR: What is the position of ethnobiology?" *Journal of Ethnobiology* 10:93-98.
- Salmón, Enrique. 2000. "Kincentric ecology: indigenous perceptions of the human-nature relationship." *Ecological Applications* 10(5): 1327-1332.
- Storm, Linda. 2004. "Prairie fires and earth mounds: the ethnoecology of Upper Chehalis prairies." *Douglasia* 28(3):6-9.
- Smith, Eric Alden & Mark Wishnie. 2000. "Conservation and subsistence in small-scale societies" *Annual Review of Anthropology* 29: 493-524.
- Turner, Nancy, M. B. Ignace and R. Ignace. 2000. "TEK and wisdom of aboriginal peoples in British Columbia." *Ecological Applications* 10(5): 1275-1287.

## Readings

You will read on average approximately 200 pages total per week. **It is essential that you keep up with the readings.** You will be expected to have all assigned reading **completed by Tuesday** of each week. If you come to class unprepared it will be a waste of time for your professor, fellow students and yourself. In addition, ten percent of your grade will be based on critical thinking notes of the reading (see below).

## Grading and Evaluation

Grades will be based on the following assignments:

Weekly critical thinking notes (8 assignments @ 5 points each)	40 points
Fieldtrip assignments (2 @ 15 points each)	30 points
Class participation	25 points
Mid-term exam	100 points
Poster (and presentation)	70 points
Term paper	135 points
	<hr/>
	400 points

## Weekly Critical Thinking Notes

Each week (except for weeks 1 & 10) you will be writing critically engaged notes based on the readings for the week. With these notes, you should actively engage with the readings by

asking questions and critically analyzing the positions and arguments of the authors. On Tuesday each week you will hand in your critical thinking notes for that week's reading (late notes will not be accepted; if you miss a day when notes are due you can email them on the due date, to show that you had them completed, but will need to bring a hard copy to the next class meeting). Each entry will be worth 5 points and will be graded on effort and ability to critically analyze the material. Weekly notes should be 2-3 pages (typed, double-spaced) in length and should be organized roughly into an essay format (that is, no stream of consciousness writing!).

### **Fieldtrip Assignments**

There will be several on-campus fieldtrips for the course and short assignments for each trip. These assignments will be designed to keep you focused and engaged during the fieldtrips, and to be reflective about the fieldtrip experience. Two assignments need to be handed in (you decide which two); each will be due the Tuesday after the fieldtrip for which they are written. Late assignments will receive a two-point per day deduction.

### **Class Participation**

It is important that you participate in class discussions. We will often spend time in small groups discussing the readings before we do so as an entire class. Please be considerate of each other and allow for all voices to be heard equally. Graduate students enrolled in the class will each sign up to lead one 30-minute class discussion for the quarter.

### **Mid-term Exam**

There will be a short-essay, in-class mid-term exam (May 8). This will require you to synthesize concepts, terminology, and case studies in relation to specific questions. A mid-term review sheet will be handed out before the exam for study purposes. Make up exams will only be considered under extenuating circumstances.

### **Poster (and presentation)**

An important portion of your grade will revolve around the research, production, and presentation of a poster. For this project, you are encouraged to work in teams of 3-5 people. Suggestions of poster topics will be handed out during the second week of the quarter. Part of your grade for this assignment (20 of the total 70 points) will include a written discussion of your role in the poster project, to be handed in after the in-class poster presentation.

### **Term Paper**

A major part of your grade for this course will consist of a 10 page (double-spaced) research paper on a topic chosen in consultation with your professor. Suggestions of research topics will be handed out during the third week of the quarter; a preliminary prospectus for the paper will be due May 8<sup>th</sup> (and will constitute 10 of the total 135 points for the paper). Graduate students enrolled for the class will be expected to write an 18-20 page research paper. Term papers will be due on the first day of finals week (June 9). Late papers will not be accepted.

## Grade Conversion Chart

4.0	A-D	100%	400pts					1.8	71	284	
4.0		98-100	400	2.9	B	83	332	1.7	70	280	
3.9	A	97	388	2.8		82	328	1.6	69	276	
3.8		96	384	2.7		81	324	1.5	C-	68	272
3.7		94	376	2.6		80	320	1.4		67	268
3.6		92	368	2.5	B-	79	316	1.3		66	264
3.5	A-	90	360	2.4		78	312	1.2	D+	65	260
3.4		89	356	2.3		77	308	1.1		64	256
3.3		88	352	2.2	C+	76	304	1.0		63	252
3.2	B+	87	348	2.1		75	300	0.9	D	62	248
3.1		86	344	2.0		74	296	0.8		61	244
3.0		85	340	1.9	C	73	292	0.7	D-	60	240
								0.6	E, nc		

## **Class schedule**

~~~~~

Week 1: April 1 (No class April 3—use class time for reading)

### **Introduction to Ethnobiology**

Readings: Castetter “The domain of ethnobiology”  
 Turner et al “TEK and wisdom of aboriginal peoples in British Columbia”  
 Hunn & Selam, chpts 1 & 2

Week 2: April 8 & 10

### **Theoretical & Methodological Approaches**

Readings: Berlin, “On the making of a comparative ethnobiology”  
 Ellen, “Introductory essay”  
 Agrawal, “Dismantling the divide between indigenous and scientific knowledge”  
 Brightman, chpt 1

Labwork: free lists, pile sorts and triads

Week 3: April 15 & 17

### **Classification & Nomenclature of Natural Kinds**

Readings: Diamond “Zoological classification system of a primitive people”  
 Hunn “The utilitarian factor in folk biological classification”  
 Bulmer “Why is the cassowary not a bird?”  
 Hunn & Selam, chpts 3 & 4

Labwork: MDS, computer analysis

Week 4: April 22 & 24

**Environmental Knowledge & Subsistence**

Readings: Dyson-Hudson et al “Subsistence herding in Uganda”  
Ellen, “Modes of subsistence and ethnobiological knowledge”  
Brightman, chpts 2-4

Fieldtrip: Tour of *This Place Called Home* (Burke Museum)

Labwork: GIS, Landsat

Week 5: April 29 & May 1

**Plant Domestication**

Readings: Coe, “The chinampas of Mexico”  
Bye, “Voucher specimens in ethnobiological studies and publications”  
Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*

Optional reading: Iltis, “From teosinte to maize”

Fieldtrip: UW herbarium visit

Lecture of interest: “Contemporary Indigenous Whaling in Canada & the U.S.” (7 pm,  
Walker-Ames Room, Kane Hall)

Week 6: May 6 & 8

**Ethnoecology and the Knowledge-Practice-Belief Complex**

Readings: Berkes, chpts 1-6  
Salmón, “Kincentric ecology”  
Brightman, chpts 6 & 7

**Mid-term exam (May 8)**

Week 7: May 13 & 15

**Sustainability & Resource Management**

Readings: Smith & Wishnie “Conservation and subsistence in small-scale societies”  
Hunn et al “Huna Tlingit TEK, conservation, and the management of a  
‘wilderness’ park”  
Berkes, chpts 7 & 8

Labwork: plant pressing

Week 8: May 20 & 22

**More about Plants & Animals**

Readings: Balick & Cox (chpts 2 & 4)  
Hunn & Selam, chpt 5  
Brightman, chpts 9-11

Fieldtrip: UW Medicinal Herb Garden tour

Week 9: May 27 & 29

**Biopiracy & Intellectual Property Rights**

Readings: Shiva, *Biopiracy*  
Posey "IPR: What is the position of ethnobiology?"  
Hunn & Selam, chpt 7

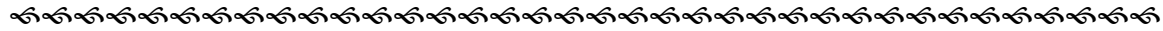
Fieldtrip: Tour of Montlake Fill/Union Bay Natural Area

Week 10: June 3 & 5

**Poster presentations & Wrap-up**

Readings: Berkes, chpts 9 & 10  
Hunn & Selam, chpt 8

**Term papers due June 9<sup>th</sup> (in my mailbox)**



*In the interest of effective learning, this syllabus is subject to change.*

If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz, 543-8924 (V/TDD). If you have a letter from Disabled Student Services indicating you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please bring a copy of the letter to my office hours so we can discuss accommodations.