

ANTHROPOLOGY 499: SENIOR SEMINAR IN ANTHROPOLOGY
SPRING 2018 (CLASS 9942)
MONDAY & WEDNESDAY 2:45-4:05 PM, BI 0152

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Office hours: Wednesdays, 9:30 to 11:30 am or by appointment. (**NOTE: The best way to reach me is to come to office hours. The next best way is by email. However, please be aware that I receive a large volume of student email, so it may take several days before I respond.**)

Course Material: Course readings will be posted on Blackboard. In addition, students will be expected to independently identify, read, and comment on relevant material for each topic; more on this below.

Prerequisites: Students must be senior-level Anthropology majors who have completed or are currently enrolled in all required introductory courses for the Anthropology major (AANT 104, 108, 110, and 220).

Course Description: The senior seminar is a four-field capstone course in Anthropology. In this course we will explore how the human experience has been affected by climate change at multiple temporal and geographic scales, and how we in turn have had an impact on our local and global environment. The assignments and activities emphasize reading, written analysis, and oral discourse.

The course will be organized and conducted as a seminar, where each week we will investigate a different topic related to the interaction between humans and climate. The seminar is a setting to exchange information, sharpen analytical abilities, and develop communication skills. The goal is to foster critical and creative thinking, and the seminar format is designed to help individuals to reach their own understanding of a topic. Therefore, you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the weekly topics and ask questions. Read and critique each assigned reading and be prepared to share your views, findings, and questions.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- 1) read, synthesize, and critique anthropological literature
- 2) understand and critique methodological approaches and theory
- 3) analyze multiple perspectives in debates
- 4) present ideas and analyses in both written and spoken form
- 5) apply these skills to current events, issues, and news

Grading: Final grades will be given as A-E. Each student's grade will be based on class participation, leading discussion, written assignments, and a final presentation. More details are given on the next page.

Academic Integrity: All graded work must be completed in accordance with the university's Undergraduate Academic Regulations policy on Standards of Academic Integrity:

http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html

Course Materials and Website

Required Readings: There is no assigned textbook for this class. However, there will be required readings made available through Blackboard.

Blackboard: Readings will be made available on the Blackboard page for this course in a folder called "Readings." Inside are folders for each week, each of which contains a list of the required readings, links to any required external websites, and PDFs for any other required readings. There is also a link to "Supplemental Readings Posts" where students will be expected to upload weekly assignments (see below). In addition, the syllabus and any announcements will also be posted to Blackboard.

Course Requirements

Class participation and discussion: Active participation and regular attendance are essential for a successful seminar. Grading will be based upon the information volunteered and presented, considering both the content of the discussion and nature of questions asked. For each seminar, all students will be asked to reflect upon the readings and engage with the material from informed anthropological perspectives. This requires that everyone read all of the assigned readings for every class. I reserve the right to incorporate quizzes or additional writing assignments into this portion of the grade if it becomes apparent that people aren't doing all of the required reading.

Supplemental readings and critiques: For each weekly topic, every student is also expected to identify a short supplemental reading related to the topic. These may be articles from newspapers, popular science or other magazines, scholarly journals, or other academic or professional media sources (generally excluding personal blogs, social media, and online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia). Prior to Monday at 11:59 pm for the week of that topic, students are expected to upload a weblink or PDF of their supplemental reading to Blackboard along with a brief write-up: one paragraph summarizing how the reading relates to the week's topic, and an additional paragraph or two providing a considered critique of the positions presented in the reading. The readings and write-ups will be available to all members of the class and will provide the basis for discussion on the second day (Wednesday) of each topic.

Team-led topics: I have selected the first several topics for the semester and associated readings (see the course schedule at the end of this syllabus). In the second part of the semester, the class will be divided into five groups of two or three students each, and each group will consult with me to choose a topic and assigned readings which will be posted on Blackboard. Each group will lead discussion for both days of their topic.

Book analysis (1,500 to 2,000 words): Each student will choose a scholarly (university press) or popular press book related to some aspect of human-climate interactions to analyze from an anthropological perspective. All proposed books must be approved by me by **March 7**. Submit the details (title, author, year, brief overview of topic), to Blackboard. This means that you should search for a book of interest to you and have access to it by **March 7**. Keep in mind that Interlibrary Loan can take a few days to a week or more to deliver a book. Final drafts of your analysis must be uploaded to Blackboard by 11:59 pm on the first day of finals, **May 11**.

Book analysis presentation: At the end of the semester, each student will give a 12-minute presentation on their book analysis to the class, followed by five minutes to respond to questions from the class. The use of visual aids such as PowerPoint or handouts is encouraged but not required.

Grading:

Class participation and discussion:	25%	Book analysis:	15%
Supplemental readings and critiques:	30%	Book analysis presentation:	15%
Team-led topic:	15%		

Your final grade is based on your overall percentage according to standard cutoffs. Below are the minimum percentages required for each grade:

A: 93.33%	A-: 90%	B+: 86.67%	B: 83.33%	B-: 80%	C+: 76.67%
C: 73.33%	C-: 70%	D+: 66.67%	D: 63.33%	D-: 60%	E: below 60%

Course Policies

The following policies are included to provide clear guidelines on issues that students often face throughout the semester.

Attendance and Assignment Completion: Regular attendance and the timely submission of assignments are essential for success in the course. Please arrive to class on time and ready to participate. Excused absences will be granted only 1) with *proof* of dire emergency or illness, 2) with advance notice of a compelling time conflict *in some cases* (see web link below), or 3) due to religious observance. Please note that missing class for any reason, other than for those excused absences listed above, may result in a low class participation grade (which accounts for a large percentage of your final grade). If you anticipate missing a class meeting or deadline, please let me know as far in advance as possible. Contact the Office for Undergraduate Education with documentation in the case of serious illnesses, family emergencies or other events that contribute to extended absences or missed assignments. Please refer to the “Attendance and Timely Compliance with Course Requirements” section of the university’s Undergraduate Academic Regulations for more details (http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html). Be aware that the University Health Center will provide medical excuses only under very specific situations (http://www.albany.edu/health_center/medicalexexcuse.shtml).

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who need special accommodations should notify me and have appropriate documentation on file with the Disability Resource Center (<http://www.albany.edu/disability/index.shtml>). I will be happy to accommodate your needs with sufficient advance notice.

Late Assignments: In general, I will not accept assignments late. **If** for some reason I do agree to accept an assignment late, I will assess a late penalty. Also, if you miss class for any reason you are still responsible for keeping up with what happens in class. This applies to the content of the class, handouts, and announcements about class policies, events, deadlines, etc. In particular, I reserve the right to modify assignments and deadlines, and you will be held to those changes regardless of whether you were in class for the announcement or not. Announcements and amendments to this syllabus will be posted on Blackboard, but it is easy to miss other pertinent information if you are absent from class.

Grades: The grade you receive, either on an individual assignment or as your final grade, is not subject to negotiation. However, I will be happy to talk with you to go over why you received a particular grade.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you are struggling in the course, **please come for help during the semester** when there is still time for me to help you. Take advantage of my office hours or make an appointment with me. **Do not wait until the course is over** and ask me to change your grade because you are trying to graduate, you are on academic probation, or you have had a tough time with your personal life this semester. By then it is too late for me to help you.

Cell Phones and Laptops: Please show respect for the other members of the class and silence your phones before you enter the classroom. You are welcome to bring a laptop, tablet, e-reader, *etc.* to class for taking notes and accessing electronic copies of reading assignments downloaded from Blackboard, but please limit use to course-related activities. Please silence all speakers before class begins.

Conduct and Civility: Civil conduct is important for ensuring a productive learning environment. Debate about ideas is allowed and encouraged, but attacks on individuals, including your classmates, is not conducive for learning.

Academic Integrity: Students who violate university policy on academic integrity are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of a failing grade for the course, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion from the University. Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to,

cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor), or the attempt to commit such an act. For more information, refer to the section “Standards of Academic Integrity” in the Undergraduate Academic Regulations (http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html).

In written assignments, make sure you do your own work, except where collaboration is permitted or required. In research, properly credit the work of others through the accurate citation and documentation of sources from which you borrow ideas or language. To do otherwise is to commit plagiarism. The library provides resources on practicing academic integrity (<http://library.albany.edu/infolit/integrity>). If you have specific questions about how this may apply to your own assignments, please talk to me about them as soon as possible.

COURSE SCHEDULE & READINGS

Week 1

W 1/24 Introduction

Week 2

M 1/29 Topic: Climate change and human evolution

Blackboard:

- (2010) *Understanding Climate’s Influence on Human Evolution*. The National Academies Press. (Just the brief report – the first four pages of the document.)
- Behrensmeier AK. (2006). Climate change and human evolution. *Science*. 311: 476-478.
- Campisano CJ, *et al.* (2017). The Hominin Sites and Paleolakes Drilling Project: High-resolution paleoclimate records from the East African Rift System and their implications for understanding the environmental context of hominin evolution. *PaleoAnthropology*. 311: 1-43.

W 1/31 Additional discussion

Week 3

M 2/5 Topic: Glaciation, sea level change, and the peopling of the Americas

Blackboard:

- (n.d.). Quaternary glaciation. In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved January 16, 2018, from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quaternary_glaciation
- Goebel T, *et al.* (2008). The Late Pleistocene dispersal of modern humans in the Americas. *Science*. 319: 1497-1502.
- Reich D, *et al.* (2012). Reconstructing Native American population history. *Nature*. 488: 370-375.

W 2/7 Additional discussion

Week 4

M 2/12 Topic: Disappearance of the Ancestral Puebloans from settlements in the Southwest

Blackboard:

- Watkins JE. (2014). “Anasazi” no more. In: *The World of Indigenous North America*. Ed: Robert Warrior. pp: 51-66.
- Diamond J. (2006). The Ancient Ones: The Anasazi and their neighbors. In: *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. pp: 136-156.

W 2/14 Additional discussion

Week 5

M 2/19 Topic: Human-mediated(?) extinction in Madagascar and the tensions of ecotourism

Blackboard:

- Godfrey LR, Jungers WL. (2003). The extinct sloth lemurs of Madagascar. *Evolutionary Anthropology*. 12: 252-263.
- Serva M, *et al.* (2012). Malagasy dialects and the peopling of Madagascar. *Journal of the Royal Society Interface*. 9: 54-67.
- Vuola M, Pyhälä A. (2016). Local community perceptions of conservation policy: rights, recognition and reactions. *Madagascar Conservation & Development*. 11: 77-86.

W 2/21 Additional discussion

Week 6

M 2/26 Topic: Modern sea level rise and its impact on island nations

Blackboard:

- Albert S, *et al.* (2016, May 6). Sea-level rise has claimed five whole islands in the Pacific: first scientific evidence. *The Conversation* [Website]. <https://theconversation.com/sea-level-rise-has-claimed-five-whole-islands-in-the-pacific-first-scientific-evidence-58511>
- Campbell J, Warrick O. (2014). *Climate Change and Migration Issues in the Pacific*. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

W 2/28 Additional discussion

Week 7

M 3/5 Anthropogenic climate change and resource conflicts

Blackboard:

- Cook J, *et al.* (2013). Quantifying the consensus on anthropogenic global warming in the scientific literature. *Environmental Research Letters*. 8: 024024.
- IPCC. (2014). Summary for Policymakers. In: *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* [Core Writing Team, R.K. Pachauri and L.A. Meyer (eds.)].
- Parker L. (2016, July 14). What You Need to Know About the World's Water Wars. *National Geographic* [Website]. <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2016/07/world-aquifers-water-wars/>

W 3/7 Additional discussion (**Book selection deadline**)

Week 8

M 3/12 NO CLASS (Spring Break)

W 3/14 NO CLASS (Spring Break)

Week 9

M 3/19 Book project discussion

W 3/21 Watch *Before the Flood*

Week 10

M 3/26 Student Group 1

W 3/28 Additional discussion

Week 11

M 4/2 Student Group 2

W 4/4 Additional discussion

Week 12

M 4/9 Scientific conference discussion

W 4/11 Explore your local environment

Week 13

M 4/16 Student Group 3

W 4/18 Additional discussion

Week 14

M 4/23 Student Group 4

W 4/25 Additional discussion

Week 15

M 4/30 Student Group 5

W 5/2 Additional discussion

Week 16

M 5/7 Book analysis presentations

W 5/9 Book analysis presentations

Exam PeriodM 5/11 **Book analysis due**