



ANTHROPOLOGY OF CONSERVATION
ANTH 654
TH: 5:30-8:00
LOCATION: ONLINE

Prof C. Anne Claus
claus@american.edu, 202-885-6797
Anthropology Department, Hamilton 301
Office hours: M 2:15-5:00, book a time at <https://calendly.com/caclaus/15min>
* Office hours this fall are all online (via Zoom) or on the phone.

Course Description: This graduate seminar approaches the practices of conservation from an anthropological perspective, bringing together social theory, ethnographic case studies, and interviews with conservation practitioners in order to examine the ways that environmental conservation remakes place, space, and bodies. In what ways are environmental conservation organizations implicated in sconatural disasters? What kinds of contributions can the analytical perspective of anthropologists make to conservation practice? What do changing conservation paradigms indicate about who has agency and responsibility for environmental stewardship?

We will ask these questions over the course of the semester as we read ethnographies that are organized into five broad categories. The first section of the course consists of central questions and debates in the field that relate to conservation geographies: north/south dimensions, local/global disjunctions, and scale-making. The second section focuses on conservation agents, including “communities,” indigenous peoples, and international organizations. The third section of the course interrogates conservation outcomes, including displacement and enclosure, shifting perceptions, and conservation impacts at scale. The fourth and final section of the course addresses conservation applications, encompassing the crafting of anthropologically-informed conservation on the ground as well as the topics of your own research projects. Throughout the course we interrogate common themes in the chosen ethnographies, including conceptions of nature, regimes of natural resource management, the creation of environmental affect, eco-politics, and the ethnography of conservation organizations.

This class aims to address both the theory and practice of conservation. In our readings for the class we will focus on the insights that anthropology provides to critically assess the context and substance of conservation practice. We will also have the opportunity to learn more about the daily practices of conservationists who work in conservation organizations and funding agencies in DC. We will have guest speakers over the course of the semester, and we will actively engage in preparing a series of questions for each of these speakers as a class.

Seminar format: Classes will be 2 hours and 30 minutes long, usually structured as short lectures on the context and significance of the readings followed by student-led discussion of the most salient points. Critically engaging with the work of other students is integrated into this class by design, and students will commit to reading the work of others for discussion and feedback, in an atmosphere of constructive critique, engagement, and peer support. There will be one short break during the class session.

Required texts:

The following books can be obtained new or used from the campus bookstore or an online bookseller. If you have difficulty purchasing the books, please contact the instructor. These books are also on 2-hour reserve at the library. All other course readings will be available on Blackboard or in class.

- Goldman, Michael. *Imperial Nature: The World Bank and Struggles for Social Justice in the Age of Globalization*. Yale Agrarian Studies Series. New Haven, Conn; London: Yale University Press, 2005.
- Hussein, Shafqat. *The Snow Leopard and the Goat: Politics of Conservation in the Western Himalayas*. University of Washington Press, 2019.

- Kimmerer, Robin Wall. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Milkweed Editions, 2015. ***We will only read 30-50 pages from this book for class but you may still want to buy it if it sounds compelling to you. For class you can read anything you'd like from it. I have uploaded a few sections to Course Reserves in case you'd rather not acquire the text and just want to read what I have selected.
- Neumann, R P. *Imposing Wilderness: Struggles Over Livelihood and Nature Preservation in Africa*. Univ of California Pr, 2001.
- Russell, D, and C Harshbarger. *Groundwork for Community-based Conservation*. Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2003.
- Satsuka, Shihō. *Nature in Translation: Japanese Tourism Encounters the Canadian Rockies*. Duke University Press, 2015.
- Suzuki, Yuka. *The Nature of Whiteness: Race, Animals, and Nation in Zimbabwe*. University of Washington Press, 2017.
- Tsing, Anna. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005
 - or *The Mushroom at the End of the World*, Princeton University Press, 2015.
- West, Paige. *Conservation Is Our Government Now: The Politics of Ecology in Papua New Guinea*. New ecologies for the twenty-first century. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

Grading

Major assignments and their percentage of student grades are as follows:

Commentary/discussion leader (x3)	20%
Class participation	20%
Reading responses	20%
Final paper	40%

- A: Superior, original, thoughtful work in completion of all requirements;
- B: Very good work in completion of course requirements;
- C: Satisfactory work in completion of course requirements;
- D: Unsatisfactory or incomplete work in course requirements and/or a failure to meet minimum attendance requirements;
- F: Failure to meet minimum course standards for assignments, participation, and attendance.

Requirements: There are four requirements for the course:

Participation:

I expect that students will come to each class fully prepared to discuss that week's assigned readings in depth. Active, ongoing, engaged classroom participation counts for 20% of your grade. If you cannot attend a particular class, let me know in the first two weeks of the semester (see more about this below).

We will also have a class Slack group. This is an informal space for you (and me) to pin articles, follow up on class discussions, link the readings to one another, etc. This is an additional place where we can continue talking about the really fascinating topics that we likely won't be able to finish discussing in class. Participation in Slack conversations is voluntary, and not graded. Follow this link to join and feel free to create new channels: https://join.slack.com/t/anth654/shared_invite/zt-gtg3jpec-oIpIXmm9cq~JLvA5A0EMMA

Leading discussion:

In teams of two, students will take turns leading class discussions (each student will do this three times). We will circulate a sign-up sheet during the first class. This will require meeting before class to coordinate your plans with each other, and I encourage you to meet with me before class so that I can give you guidance and have a sense of what you are planning to talk about. Good discussions are often those that use innovative formats and/or bring in current events that relate to the theme of the class, but it is most important to focus discussion on what you see as the critical issues concerning the topic and allow the class to analyze the material that we have all read in preparation for the class. These are *not* book reviews, but should be approached as critical discussions. These three discussion sessions will count for 20% of the final grade.

Reading responses:

Students will be required to write nine one-page papers (getting two 'passes' out of the eleven lecture days) on the class readings for that week. These papers are meant to be very succinct summaries and discussions of the readings, containing about 500 words in several paragraphs. Part of the work is making them short! Each paper should include: (1) a statement of the theoretical point or issue that you believe is the most significant in each reading (try for one sentence per reading) and in the set of readings as a whole; (2) how the readings are relevant to environmental politics and processes or if there are a series of articles, a comparison and contrast of the authors' views on the subject of the lecture; (3) how the readings fit into your own experience and views, what you agree/disagree with and why; and (4) what you might see differently and how as a result of these readings.

These must be posted on the class website by noon on the day of class. Together these nine papers will count for 20% of the grade.

Final Paper:

Students will also be required to write an extensive, in-depth research paper. This paper can take one of two forms:

1. A long research paper, written in traditional academic style. It should be 5,000-6,500 words (not including references). Thesis chapters or article drafts are encouraged.
2. A medium length research paper, written in traditional academic style, and a shorter article based off the research paper that is written for a popular audience. The research paper should be around 4000 words (not including references). The popular article should be either an essay (1500-2000 words) or a commentary (1000-1500 words), written for submission (after the semester ends) to *Edge Effects*, a graduate-run online environmental journal based out of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. See more info here about each of these categories and the parameters they set around their submissions: <https://edgeeffects.net/submissions/>

In both cases your paper(s) will be written in three stages: first, a short proposal (one paragraph or an outline) that is discussed with me during office hours; second, a draft that will be circulated and then workshopped in class, and finally the completed paper(s), due and presented in the last class session (If you choose option #2, you will workshop a largely finished academic paper, rather than the reduced and revised popular piece of writing, and you can present whichever paper you wish). It's worth noting that the main student reflection about their final papers is that they wish they had started writing earlier. Late submissions are graded down. Guidelines on format will be distributed on our class website.

I encourage you to be creative with your research topic. This could be a library or field-based research project. You could write a chapter of your thesis, or a literature review for a future grant proposal, etc. Feel free also to use the many DC resources available online for this project like the Smithsonian Institution, AU's campus, or the zoo. (A project that considers the zoo might ask: How are human/environment interactions described at the zoo? Does each 'region' treat those relationships in similar ways? You could reflect on the messages about conservation that are at the zoo. Do they enforce or subvert usual narratives? Who is blamed in the disappearance of wildlife? How are zoos justified through the text in the exhibits? Etc.)

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Readings: All assigned films, readings, and assignments are due the day they are listed in the syllabus. You are expected to have completed the readings/assignments before class in order to attain the level of class discussion desired. Do not come to class unless you have completed them. Recommended/optional readings are for your information if a particular aspect of the lecture interests you, and are to be used as resources for discussants and in preparing final papers.

I: Introduction

Week 1 (8/27): Introductory lecture, class overview.

- Chapin, Mac. "A Challenge to Conservationists." *Worldwatch*, 2004.

- (optional) Orlove, Benjamin S, and Stephen B Brush. "Anthropology and the Conservation of Biodiversity." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 25 (1996): 329-352.

Week 2 (9/3): Nature philosophies

- Cronon, William (1996). The Trouble with Wilderness or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature. *Uncommon Ground*.
- Todd, Zoe. "Refracting the State through Human-Fish Relations: Fishing, Indigenous Legal Orders, and Colonialism in North/Western Canada." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society*. Vol 7:1 pp 60-75. Available at <https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/30393/23034>
- Raffles, Hugh. "Yearnings," In *Insectopedia*. Vintage Press, 2011. Pp 343-382.
- (optional) Ingold, Tim. "Building, Dwelling, Living," In *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. Psychology Press, 2000.

II: CONSERVATION GEOGRAPHIES

Week 3 (9/10): North/South dimensions

- Neumann, R P. *Imposing Wilderness: Struggles Over Livelihood and Nature Preservation in Africa*. Univ of California Pr, 2001.
- (optional) Lahsen, Myanna. *Transnational Locals: Brazilian Experiences of the Climate Regime*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2004.
- (optional) <https://www.wilderness.org/articles/blog/why-we-must-teach-ugly-side-public-lands-history-tool-help>

Week 4 (9/17): Scale-making

- **Choose one of these books:** Tsing, Anna. *The Mushroom at the End of the World*. Princeton University Press, 2015. OR Tsing, Anna. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. "ON NONSCALABILITY the Living World Is Not Amenable to Precision-Nested Scales." *Common Knowledge* 18, no. 3 (2012): 505-524.
- (optional) Harwell, E. E. 2000. Remote sensibilities: discourses of technology and the making of Indonesia's natural disaster. *Development and Change* 31, 307-40.

III. CONSERVATION AGENTS

Week 5 (9/24): Indigenous environmentalisms

****guest speaker*

**no discussion leader this week*

- Ludlow, Francis et al. "The Double Binds of Indigeneity and Indigenous Resistance." *Humanities* Vol 5 (3), 2016. Available at this link: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2812339
- Li, Tania Murray. "Articulating Indigenous Identity in Indonesia: Resource Politics and the Tribal Slot." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 01 (2000): 149-179.

- Conklin, B.A. & L.R. Graham. 1995. The Shifting Middle Ground: Amazonian Indians and Eco-Politics. *American Anthropologist* 97(4): 695-710.
- Kimmerer, Robin Wall, selections from *Braiding Sweetgrass*. Pick around 30-50 pages that seem compelling to you (or read what is on our Course Reserves: Learning the Grammar of Animacy pp 48-61; Maple Nation: A Citizenship Guide pp 167-174; In the Footsteps of Nanabozho: Becoming Indigenous to Place pp 205-216).
- USAID. "Policy on promoting the rights of indigenous Peoples." Last updated Aug 7, 2020. Available here: <https://www.usaid.gov/indigenous-peoples/usaid-policy-on-indigenous-peoples>
- (optional) Kawharu, Merata. Kaitiakitanga: A Maori Anthropological Perspective of the Maori Socio-Environmental Ethic of Resource Management." <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20706951?seq=1>
- (optional) Hathaway, Michael. China's Indigenous People? How Global Environmentalism Unintentionally Smuggled the Notion of Indigeneity into China. *Humanities* Vol 5, issue 54 (2016).

Week 6 (10/1): Conservation Communities

- Suzuki, Yuka. *The Nature of Whiteness: Race, Animals, and Nation in Zimbabwe*. University of Washington Press, 2017.
- (optional) Walley, Christine. *Rough Waters : Nature and Development in An East African Marine Park*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- (optional) Brosius, J P, A L Tsing, and C Zerner. Introduction in *Communities and Conservation: Histories and Politics of Community-based Natural Resource Management*. Altamira Pr, 2005.

Week 7 (10/8): Translators

- Satsuka, Shiho. *Nature in Translation: Japanese Tourism Encounters the Canadian Rockies*. Duke University Press, 2015.
- (optional) Fairhead, J, and M Leach. "False Forest History, Complicit Social Analysis: Rethinking Some West African Environmental Narratives." *World Development* 23, no. 6 (1995): 1023-1035.

*****Upload your 300 word outline/abstract of your final paper to the class by 4:00 p.m. today.**

*****Your mid-semester assessment is due this Friday.**

IV: CONSERVATION OUTCOMES

Week 8 (10/15): International Aid

- Goldman, Michael. *Imperial Nature: The World Bank and Struggles for Social Justice in the Age of Globalization*. Yale Agrarian Studies Series. New Haven, Conn; London: Yale University Press, 2005.
- (optional) Milking the Rhino. David Simpson, 2008. Film, 83 min.

*****Upload revised 500 word outline/abstract of final paper to website and make an appointment to discuss it during office hours this week**

Week 9 (10/22): Livelihoods

- West, Paige. *Conservation Is Our Government Now: The Politics of Ecology in Papua New Guinea*. New Ecologies for the Twenty-first Century. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.
- (optional) Agrawal, A. "Environmentality - Community, Intimate Government, and the Making of Environmental Subjects in Kumaon, India." *Current Anthropology* 46, no. 2 (2005): 161-190.

Week 10 (10/29): Shifting perceptions

*****Guest speaker**

- Hussein, Shafqat. *The Snow Leopard and the Goat: Politics of Conservation in the Western Himalayas*. University of Washington Press, 2019.

Week 11 (11/5): Final paper workshop

***We will workshop copies of your final papers in class today (**drafts of UP TO 3500 WORDS due by Wednesday 11/4 at 5:00 to the class website**).

V: CONSERVATION APPLICATIONS

Week 12 (11/12): Conservationists

***no discussion leaders this week**

- Taylor, Dorceta. "Diversity and the Environment: Myth-making and the status of minorities in the field." *Equity and the Environment: Research in Social Problems and Public Policy*. Volume 15, 89-147, 2008 *or Taylor, Dorcetta. Ch 5., "People of Color" in *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement*. Duke University Press, 2016.
- Claus, C. Anne. "Conservation Social Scientists at Work (working title)." Paper under review, 2020.
- Haenn, Nora. "The Middle-Class Conservationist."
- (optional) NYT. "Sierra Club Says it Must Confront the Racism of John Muir." 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/22/us/sierra-club-john-muir.html?action=click&algo=bandit-story&block=more_in_recirc&fellback=false&imp_id=945464497&impression_id=bbf31e10-cd0e-11ea-9a14-673e6310ff3b&index=0&pgtype=Article®ion=footer&req_id=691045734&rface=more-in-us-news

Week 13: (11/19): Creating anthropologically-informed conservation

*****Guest speaker**

***no discussion leaders this week**

- Russell, D, and C Harshbarger. *Groundwork for Community-based Conservation*. Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2003.
- (optional) Film: *When Lambs Become Lions*. <http://www.whenlambs.com/> "In the Kenyan bush, a small-time ivory dealer fights to stay on top while forces mobilize to destroy his trade. When he turns to his younger cousin, a conflicted wildlife ranger who hasn't been paid in months, they both see a possible lifeline.

Director Jon Kasbe followed the subjects over a three-year period, gaining an extraordinary level of access and trust on both sides of the ethical spectrum as he became part of their everyday lives. The result is a rare and visually arresting look through the perspectives and motives of the people at the epicenter of the conservation divide." *AU doesn't have rights to screen this film but if you're interested in watching it, it's available on Amazon, Youtube, and other sites for a \$4 rental.*

- (optional) Blaikie, P M. *The Political Economy of Soil Erosion in Developing Countries*. Longman London; New York, 1985 (Chapter 1, pp 1-11).

**Week 14 (11/26):
NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Week 15 (12/3): Final paper presentations

*****Upload your final paper(s) and a revised abstract to the class website before the last class meeting.**

Week 16 (12/7):

FINAL EXAM PERIOD: Thurs 12/10, 5:30-8:00. Course reflection due at your individual video conference.

Course Policies:

Attendance and participation

Attendance and participation are important in this class. Each day's readings should be completed before coming to class. Please bring electronic or paper copies of the relevant readings and your notes to class for reference. Come prepared to raise questions and discuss ideas with the class. Active and thoughtful participation is expected of every student. If you are shy or have other concerns about class participation, please come and see the instructor during office hours to discuss strategies.

If you anticipate the need to miss class for religious holidays, approved participation in University activities, or other reasonable outside commitments you should inform me during the first two weeks of class. Many students have legitimate reasons to miss a class over the course of the semester. If you miss more than that you will be participating less, missing important lecture content, and your grade will likely suffer. If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes from another student and then come and talk to me if you have questions.

Writing Submissions

Written assignments must be single spaced, 12 pt font, with 1 inch margins on all sides. All assignments must comply with the generally accepted rules of academic writing, style, and citation (for guidance see the MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing <http://thewritesource.com/mla.htm> or the American Anthropological Association style guide: http://www.aaanet.org/pubs/style_guide.htm). Presentation and clarity are

important; I recommend spending 80% of your effort writing and 20% on editing your assignments before turning them in.

Discussion commentary assignments must be uploaded to the class website 8 hours before that class. Your final paper is due on the last day of class, following the separate instructions for paper formatting and submission on our class website.

Respectful engagement

You may disagree with statements made by others in class or things you encounter in the readings. Understanding different interpretations is part of what anthropology is about, and respectful disagreement can be a productive way of thinking through difficult issues. This class is a safe space for sharing diverse viewpoints. Don't be afraid to talk, and always be respectful of others.

Tech policy

We will be online this semester because of the pandemic. Various studies¹ suggest that taking notes with pen and paper results in better recall and retention than note taking with a laptop or tablet, think about it! (This should go without saying but, no phones during class time.) Audio or video recording of the class is not allowed without the express permission of the instructor.

Late Work

Timely completion of the assignments is important. Unexcused late work will be marked down by half a letter grade for every day it is late. Excuses will be granted for emergency situations only.

Contacting me

I am happy to discuss course readings, lectures, and assignments with you, please "visit" me in office hours or make an appointment! You can also get in touch with me via phone or email, though please note that I generally do not respond to phone messages or emails received after 5:00 p.m. until the following work day.

Course Content

I reserve the right to change the content and schedule of this course syllabus during the semester.

Important Information

Accommodations

If you qualify for learning or other ability accommodations, please notify the instructor with a letter from the Academic Support and Access Center (885-3360,

¹ Pam A. Mueller and Daniel M. Oppenheimer. The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking. *Psychological Science* June 2014 vol. 25 no. 6 1159-1168.

Carrie B. Fried, In-class laptop use and its effects on student learning, *Computers & Education*, Volume 50, Issue 3, April 2008, Pages 906-914.

Yamamoto, Kevin, Banning Laptops in the Classroom: Is it Worth the Hassles? *Journal of Legal Education*, Vol. 57, 2008.

www.american.edu/ocl/asac/) as soon as possible so that we can make the proper arrangements.

Academic Integrity

American University holds its students to the highest academic standards, and violations to academic integrity like plagiarism, inappropriate collaboration, dishonesty in examinations or assignments, using your own previously submitted work, and fabrication of data are unacceptable. By enrolling at AU and registering for class you have acknowledged your commitment to the Academic Integrity Code found here: <http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.cfm> I am required to report violations of academic integrity to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, whose policy it is to fail students for the course. Please talk to the instructor or a reference librarian if you are unsure of what plagiarism is.

Resources

AU has many resources designed to help students with difficult academic and personal circumstances. Academic Support Services include time management, reading, note taking, and test-taking strategies, among other things; and in 2013 over 7,000 students used AU counseling services. These resources can generally be found at the Office of Campus Life's Academic Support and Access Center (www.american.edu/ocl/asac). Please come and see the instructor if you are having trouble locating any of these resources.

Emergency Preparedness

In the event of a weather or health related event, please note that AU policies state that "Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard...students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies."