

College of Social Sciences / Environmental Studies Department
ENVS 117, Human Ecology, Spring 2023

Instructor: Dr. Will Russell
Office Hours: Monday 1:30-2:30 and by appointment.
Email: will.russell@sjsu.edu
Class Schedule: Monday 10:30AM - 1:15PM
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Course Description

Diversity and similarity of human adaptation, cultural evolution, cultural change, and environmental modification in African, Asiatic, Oceanic, and Latin American cultural groups. Emphasis: Traditional non-western conservation practices and their lessons for the modern-day resource manager.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of the field of human ecology through exploration of the ways in which climate change will uniquely affect indigenous communities in the United States and Pacific Rim in regard to sovereignty and traditional ways of life. *Students will accomplish this through written and oral analysis of assigned texts.*
2. Articulate an understanding of traditional knowledge and environmental justice in the context of climate change, while drawing parallels with other environmental issues. *This will be accomplished through written and oral analysis of assigned texts and the Indigenous Roots Research project.*
3. Synthesize connections between impacts of climate change on indigenous cultures and traditional ways of life and a range of environmental sectors including natural resources, fisheries and wildlife, marine and freshwater environments and other ecosystems. *Students will accomplish this through written and oral analysis of assigned texts.*
4. Demonstrate the ability to write a logical analytical paper using good writing style and construction supported by appropriate research. (Dept. PLO 1) *This will be accomplished through the Indigenous Roots Research project.*

Texts and Articles

We will be using a variety of other books, articles, and videos for this class - linked on Canvas. The instructor reserves the right to add new materials to any module with one week's notice.

LaDuke, W. (2017). *All our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life*. Haymarket Books. This book is available as an e-book through the MLK library. You will need to sign into the library to access the book: (<https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.libaccess.sjlibrary.org/lib/sjsu/detail.action?docID=4548443>)

Course Overview and Organization

This course will be taught in person, but will also require the use of Canvas. Readings, discussions, and assignments will be required weekly. In class meetings will include participation in discussions and small group activities.

Assignments and Grading Policy

Please read the following assignment descriptions carefully. Failing to comply with the specific directions given below will result in a loss of credit points for each assignment. Please note that all assignments will be due by 11:59pm (PST) on the date due, and **no late work will be accepted!** Work may be turned early, however.

Weekly Reading Discussion Posts

Post a 200-300 word reaction to the day's readings to the 'Discussions' section in Canvas. The Reaction should address the discussion question posted by the instructor for that day, and include quotes (with page numbers) from the readings to support your ideas. In addition, post at least two 'responses' to other students' posted reactions. For full credit, responses will encourage dialog by challenging assumptions and asking questions.

Culture Share

During class time - share a piece of art, a song, a children's book, a poem, a story, etc. from a traditional culture that you have a personal connection to, and connect it to your chosen culture's relationship to nature.

Traditional Roots Research Project

Objectives: 1) Trace your roots to region with a **traditional culture** that you feel a personal connection to, describe how the **indigenous people** of this region live (or lived), their cultural practices, their effect on the environment, and how these things have changed over time. 2) Choose two or three practices of the culture you have selected and describe how they could be used to inform modern industrial culture.

Background: For the first hundred-thousand or so years of human existence we all lived in traditional cultures. Some cultural groups were nomadic while others were settled in a single location; Some were hunter-gatherers' others practiced small scale agriculture. What they had in common was an intimate knowledge of nature (**TEK**) based on their reliance on natural systems. The length of time since the traditional practices were lost varies significantly between cultural groups. For some, there has long history since the traditional culture was lost or changed. Examples: 1) Traditional cultures in Mesopotamia (in the geographic area currently known as Iraq) gave way to largescale agriculture 5,000 years ago under the Akkadian Empire. 2) The Celtic Stonehenge building cultures of the Island of Anglia (currently

known as England) were invaded by the Roman empire over 2,000 years ago resulting in genocide and significant cultural transition. For other locations the history since traditional practices were lost has been very short, or even non-existent. Examples: 1) The genocide of the indigenous cultures of California began with the Spanish missions in the mid 1700s, and was nearly complete by 1900 under Anglo/Americans rule. 2) The Sentinelese people on North Sentinel Island near Sri Lanka in the Indian Ocean are “**uncontacted**,” and are currently still living as a traditional culture. While doing your research consider all aspects of the traditional culture including art, religion, and social structure, as well as sustainable resource practices. Describe how cultural transitions (such as largescale agriculture or industrialization) have changed the people’s relationship with the Earth, and have impacted the environment.

Methods: Use any information available to determine which **traditional culture** that you want to focus on. If your family has a diversity of origins (as many of ours do) choose any one origin story that you wish learn more about. If you are not able to narrow your origin down to a specific cultural group you can start with a country (on continent) and then choose any **traditional culture** within that region to research, or alternately you can select any **traditional culture** that you find interesting to research. Once you have selected a traditional culture to focus on, search the primary academic literature for research articles and books on the subject. Both Google Scholar and the MLK Library provide excellent search engines. These will be the basis of your report. A minimum of five academic source citations is required for your report. Supplement the primary literature with other sources such as non-academic articles, websites, films, etc. A minimum of five non-academic source citations is required for your report, resulting in a minimum of ten total source citations.

Deliverables:

Written report: 2,000-2,500 words, double-spaced, formatted and cited in APA. The essay should include a title page, introduction, body paragraphs, conclusions and literature cited section with a minimum of twenty references as described above introduction. In the body paragraphs include a summary of the **history and description** of your selected traditional culture, **as well as its’ impacts on the environment**, and **how their practices have changed over time**. Describe **your personal connection to this culture**, and include **two or three cultural practices** and describe how they could be used to inform, and improve, our current industrial culture.

Article Summary

Choose an academic journal article that you have found in relation to your “Traditional Roots” research project and summarize it for the class in a 5–10-minute presentation. Include a brief article summary, including the main point of the paper and the publication details (author, journal title, date published). In addition, be sure to describe the culture that you are researching and why you have selected it. What makes it a “Traditional Culture?” What could modern industrial society learn from this culture? PowerPoint is not required, but may be used to present images if desired. *Pro-tip: do not use PowerPoint to present notes or your presentation outline*. No written report is required. Your grade will be based on your article choice, your preparedness, and your ability for follow the presentation guidelines above.

Class Participation

1. Participation in discussions – Participation does not mean being verbose. In many cases allowing or encouraging others to speak is more valuable to the group dynamic.

Providing the group your insights in an engaging and respectful manner. Statements are always more interesting if they are backed up by logic and evidence.

2. Presentations – As a presenter it is your job to make your subject informative and entertaining. Please be professional and creative!
3. Respect and Decorum - All members of this class will work to insure a positive learning environment for everybody. The subject matter of this course will include topics related to gender, race, and ethnicity; and it is essential that we are able to dialog about these subjects in a manner is thoughtful and respectful to everyone in our community.
4. Attendance – It is important to attend class unless you are feeling ill or have an emergency. If you are feeling ill, or feel like you might be getting sick, please do not come to class. If you need to miss class, email me to let me know what you can't be there (will.russell@sjsu.edu).

Grading

Your grade in this course will be based on your essays, discussion postings, and presentations, with 90-100 % =A; 80-89 % =B; 70-79 % =C; 60-69 % =D; and less than 60 % = F:

Assignment	% Grade
Weekly Reading Discussion Posts	20%
Culture Share	20%
Article Summary	20%
Traditional Roots Written Report	20%
Class Participation	20%
Total	100%

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

Plagiarism

Plagiarism includes (see: <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-7.pdf> for more information):

Campus Policy in Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. [Presidential Directive 97-03](#) requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessible Education Center](#) (AEC) to establish a record of their disability.

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Tentative Course Schedule Fall 2020

The instructor reserves the right to alter the schedule and add materials. Please check Canvas for any updates.

Date	Topic	, Readings	Assignments Due
1/30	The History of The Humans	Syllabus	Class Introductions
2/6	Human Ecology	1. LaDuke, Intro:1-6 (<i>textbook</i>). 3. Are Hunter-Gatherers the Happiest Humans to Inhabit Earth? (<i>link on Canvas</i>)	<i>Discussion Post</i> <i>Article Summaries</i> <i>Culture Share</i>
2/13	Philosophy of Traditional Cultures	1. Black Elk (<i>pdf on Canvas</i>) 2. Tunuri and the Blue Deer: children's book video (<i>link on Canvas</i>)	<i>Discussion Post</i> <i>Article Summaries</i> <i>Culture Share</i>
2/20	The Neolithic Revolution	1. Shard. D. 1974. The Neolithic Revolution (<i>pdf on Canvas</i>). 2. A Brief History of Slavery (<i>pdf on Canvas</i>). 3. Hunter-gatherers to farmers- worst mistake in human history? (<i>link on Canvas</i>)	<i>Discussion Post</i> <i>Article Summaries</i> <i>Culture Share</i>
2/27	Impacts of Colonialism	1. How our colonial past Altered the Ecobalance of an Entire Planet. (<i>link on Canvas</i>) 2. Colonialism, The Hidden Cause of Our Environmental Crisis(<i>link on Canvas</i>) 3. *Pachamama - Animated Film (on Netflix)	<i>Discussion Post</i> <i>Article Summaries</i> <i>Culture Share</i>
3/6	Impacts of industrialization on Traditional Practices	1. LaDuke, Ch 1:11-23 (<i>textbook</i>) 2. First Daughter and the Black Snake: (Film linked on Canvas).	<i>Discussion Post</i> <i>Article Summaries</i> <i>Culture Share</i>
3/13	Traditional Blunders	Collapse: Easter Islands 1. Wuerthner 2. Diamond, Ch. 2	<i>Discussion Post</i> <i>Article Summaries</i> <i>Culture Share</i>
3/20	Traditional Forest Practices	1. Shiva and Bandyopadhyay 1986 (<i>link on Canvas</i>). 2. Indigenous fire practices once shaped the Northwest — and they might again. <i>link on Canvas</i>).	<i>Discussion Post</i> <i>Article Summaries</i> <i>Culture Share</i>
3/27	Traditional Farming Practices	1. Buffalo Bird Woman's Garden (Ch I and II) 2. Rethinking Indigenous Australia's agricultural past (<i>link on Canvas</i>)	<i>Discussion Post</i> <i>Article Summaries</i> <i>Culture Share</i>
4/3	Spring Recess		

Date	Topic	, Readings	Assignments Due
4/10	Traditional Fishing Practices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ween and Colombi 2013 (<i>pdf on Canvas</i>). 2. 'It Takes Our Purpose': With No Salmon, Yurok Tribe Struggles with Identity. (<i>link on Canvas</i>) 	<p><i>Discussion Post</i> <i>Article Summaries</i> <i>Culture Share</i></p>
4/17	Traditional Herding Practices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Sami People- Reindeer Herding and Cultural Survival in the Far North (<i>pdf on Canvas</i>). 2. Conservation policies threaten indigenous reindeer herders in Mongolia (<i>pdf on Canvas</i>). 3. Maasai and Barabaig Herders Struggle for Land Rights in Kenya and Tanzania (<i>link on Canvas</i>). 	<p><i>Discussion Post</i> <i>Article Summaries</i> <i>Culture Share</i></p>
4/24	Traditional Uses of Fire	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What western states can learn from Native American wildfire management strategies. (<i>link on Canvas</i>) 2. 'Fire is medicine': the tribes burning California forests to save them. (<i>link on Canvas</i>) 	<p><i>Discussion Post</i> <i>Article Summaries</i> <i>Culture Share</i></p>
5/1	Racism and Human Ecology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ethnic Cleansing and America's Creation of National Parks (<i>pdf on Canvas</i>) 2. Black Radical Ecology (<i>link on Canvas</i>) 	<p><i>Discussion Post</i> <i>Article Summaries</i> <i>Culture Share</i></p>
5/8	Reassertion of Traditional Knowledge in the Modern World	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. LaDuke, Ch 9:187-200 2. Buen Vivir: The Rights of Nature in Bolivia and Ecuador (<i>link on Canvas</i>). 3. Application of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Practices of Indigenous Hawaiians to the Revegetation of Kaho'olawe (<i>pdf on Canvas</i>) 	<p><i>Discussion Post</i> <i>Article Summaries</i> <i>Culture Share</i></p>
5/15	TBD		Traditional Roots Essay