

Syllabus

Course Description

Course Title	Environmental Anthropology
Course Code	47209
Course Title Additional	
Scientific-Disciplinary Sector	M-DEA/01
Language	English
Degree Course	Master in Critical Creative Practices
Other Degree Courses (Loaned)	
Lecturers	Prof. Dr. Elisabeth Tauber, Elisabeth.Tauber@unibz.it https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/design-art/academic-staff/person/10555
Teaching Assistant	
Semester	Second semester
Course Year/s	1
СР	6
Teaching Hours	30
Lab Hours	0
Individual Study Hours	120
Planned Office Hours	18
Contents Summary	Based on their interests and focus, students select courses in areas Make & Intervene and Observe, Analyse & Apply, to which the course in Environmental Anthropology belongs. The course's aim is to integrate perspectives of ecological and environmental anthropology into perception and analysis of ecosocial themes, particularly in the local alpine context. Additionally, the course will prepare students for the application of ethnographic methods and engagement with scientific texts. The critical reflection on concepts such as human – non-human relationships, ecological and social 'transformation' and dominant modes of



production and living, and the exploitation of humans and nature, Contents Summary

exclusion and growth compulsion going along with it, through a global comparative lens will lead to new understandings on how to combine anthropological discourses on the Anthropocene with innovative design approaches. The course leads through ethnographic examples of culturally diverse understandings of social-ecological worldviews.

Course Topics

Environmental anthropology has traditionally employed a longue durée perspective on human-environment interactions, spanning from Boas's cultural diffusion theory to Steward's cultural ecology. We will draw upon this foundational discourse to contextualize contemporary debates within the European Alps, examining Cole and Wolf's Hidden Frontier as a key case study.

However, this class will also expand this perspective by incorporating indigenous, people of color, and female voices to critically examine the environmental and social violence inherent in colonialism, power structures, expertise hierarchies, and the relational processes that shape environmental claims. Moving beyond restrictive nature/culture binaries, we will engage with critical intersectionality frameworks to develop a political stance for reconceptualizing environments.

Above all, our approach prioritizes exploration of questions over definitive answers by engaging with works that extend beyond the traditional "canon"—particularly contributions from women, people of color, indigenous authors, and other scholars whose work speaks to or bridges difference across multiple dimensions of environmental experience.

Students will develop critical analytical skills for examining environmental and social issues through anthropological lenses, preparing them to engage with urgent ecological questions of our time while understanding the cultural dimensions of environmental problems and solutions.

Learning Objectives:

Understand key theories and methods in environmental anthropology

Analyze human-environment relationships across different cultural contexts

Critically examine environmental challenges from anthropological perspectives

	Develop ethnographic skills for studying environmental issues Apply anthropological frameworks to contemporary ecological problems.
Keywords	Environment, culture, colonialism, capitalism, violence, Europen Alps, history, indigenous voices.
Recommended Prerequisites	none
Propaedeutic Courses	none
Teaching Format	Frontal lecture, group work, presentations in class, discussion and exercise circles.
Mandatory Attendance	Highly recommended.
Specific Educational Objectives and Learning	Knowledge and understanding
Outcomes	Knows ecocritical theories and their applications in visual arts and design
	have specific knowledge of artistic and design techniques that
	promote environmental sustainability;
	Understand the processes of interaction between artistic practices
	and natural contexts, analysing them while considering the
	connections with other fields of knowledge, such as philosophy,
	sociology and environmental sciences.
	Applying knowledge and understanding
	Conceive and implement artistic and design projects that respond to contemporary environmental challenges, using sustainable materials and ecological techniques;
	Develop initiatives that involve local and global communities,
	promoting greater awareness and action towards environmental sustainability;
	Collaborate with scientists, activists and other professionals to
	integrate interdisciplinary knowledge into artistic and design
	projects;
	Making judgements
	Collect and interpret cultural and material data from the fields of
	art, design, technology and spatial and curatorial practices,
	demonstrating the ability to place events, works and production



	operations in the historical context and current trends. Grasp the authority and evaluate the reliability of the various available sources. reflect and express an independent judgement, including on social, ethical and political-cultural issues. Interpret specific facts and events, within subject of their field of study. Communication skills
	Writing scientific and technical articles and reports with clarity and effectiveness; Presenting projects and ideas verbally in a professional and convincing manner.
	Learning skills
	The strengthening of the critical and operational autonomy of students. The development of their ability to choose, compare and adapt to new knowledge and technologies.
Specific Educational Objectives and Learning Outcomes (additional info.)	
Assessment	 4 reading minutes and preparations for discussion (is considered part of the oral exam) 1 presentation in class 30% 1 final paper 30% oral exam 40% non-attending students 4 reading minutes and preparations for discussion (is considered part of the oral exam) 1 critical film review 30% 1 final paper 30% oral exam 40% N.B. – ALL STUDENTS TAKING THE EXAM AS NON-ATTENDING STUDENTS MUST AGREE UPON THE CONTENT WITH THE LECTURER.
Evaluation Criteria	Criteria for the evaluation of the reading minutes, presentation in

class, final paper and oral exam will consider the ability to	
accurately apply course concepts and methods, the attempt to express original opinions and analyses, and the logical structure exposition and argumentation.	of
Required Readings Bird Rose, Deborah 2004 Reports from a Wild Country. Ethics f	r
Decolonisation. University of New South Wales Press.	
Cole, John and Eric R. Wolf 1974 The Hidden Frontier: Ecology	
and Ethnicity in an Alpine Valley, New York: Academic Press.	
Mathews, Andrew 2020 Anthropology and the Anthropocene:	
Criticisms, Experiments, and Collaborations in Annual Review of	
Anthropology, Vol. 49: 67-82.	
Schneider, Almut 2022 Land's Constraints and Possibilities-Hig	-
Altitude Farmers in the Eastern Alps. C&AFFE Culture, Agriculture	e,
Food and Environment. The Journal of Culture and Agriculture	
https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/cua	.122
Swanson, Heather Anne; Marianne Elisabeth Lien and Gro B.	
Required Readings	
Ween 2018 Domestication Gone Wild Politics and Practices of	
Multispecies Relations. Duke University Press	
Tauber, Elisabeth 2024 Walking on Alpine Grass - Grass	
Socialities and their Global Connections. Perspectives From Th	
Alpine Anthropocene. Ethnos, DOI:	
10.1080/00141844.2024.2362697	
Todd, Zoe 2016 'An Indigenous Feminist's Take on the Ontolog	al
Turn: 'Ontology' is just another word for colonialism'. Journal of	
Historical Sociology 29(1): 4-22.	
Yancey Orr, J Stephen Lansing, and Michael R.Dove 2015	
Environmental Anthropology: Systemic Perspectives in Annual	
Review of Anthropology, Vol. 44. 153-68.	

Supplementary Readings	Álvaro Fernández-Llamazares, Julia E. Fa, Dan Brockington,
	Eduardo S. Brondízio, Joji Cariño, Esteve Corbera, Maurizio
	Farhan Ferrari, Daniel Kobei, Pernilla Malmer, Guadalupe Yesenia
	H. Márquez, Zsolt Molnár, Helen Tugendhat & Stephen T.
	Garnett 2024 A baseless statistic could harm the Indigenous
	Peoples it is meant to support. Nature nr. 633: 32-35.
	Kimmerer, Robin Wall 2014 The "Honorable Harvest": Lessons
	From an Indigenous Tradition of Giving Thanks. ALLcreations.org
	The Kino-nda-niimi Collective 2014 The Winter We Danced. Voices
	from the Past, the Future, and the Idle No More Movement. ARP
	Books. Winnipeg.
	Tsing, Anna, Jennifer Deger, Alder Keleman Saxena and Feifei
	Zhou 2021 Feral Atlas. The-More-Than-Human Anthropocene.
	Stanford University Press https://www.feralatlas.org/
	Viveiros de Castro, E. (1998). Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian
	Perspectivism. The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute,
	Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 469-488
	More reading will be announced in class
Further Information	
Sustainable Development	No poverty, Zero hunger, Good health and well-being, Clean water
Goals (SDGs)	and sanitation, Affordable and clean energy, Decent work and
	economic growth, Partnerships fot the goals, Sustainable cities and
	communities, Responsible consumption and production, Climate
	action, Life below water, Life on land, Peace, justice and strong
	institutions, Reduced inequalities