Culture and the Environment  
L48 Anthropology 361  
M-F 1-2:45 PM  
McMillan 101

Instructor: Natalie Mueller  
Office: McMillan 344  
Office hours: M & W 3-4 pm, or by appointment  
Email: ngmueller@gmail.com

Description
We will explore the many ways that human societies have engineered landscapes and modified  
energy flows to meet their cultural, economic, and political objectives. We will critique the idea  
that some behaviors and environments are "natural," while others are not. We will especially  
focus on the relationship between food production and power. This is a reading and discussion  
intensive seminar.

The course separated into three parts:

1) Unit 1: Theoretical perspectives on human ecology: the intersection of cultural  
change and biological evolution, Malthusianism, Marxism, cultural, historical,  
political, and economic approaches.

2) Unit 2: History of human ecologies: Beginning with the first humans, we will review  
hunting and gathering, the domestication of plants and animals, the origins of  
ariculture, the origins of state from an environmental perspective, and end with a  
discussion of traditional ecological knowledge and a survey of local subsistence  
economies from around the world.

3) Unit 3: Modern human ecologies: Beginning with the reunion of Old and New World  
societies and ecosystems in the 15th century, topics will include colonial and slave-  
based economies, state interventions in food production, the development of  
industrial agriculture, the Green Revolution, the international politics of food  
production, GMOs, urban ecology, and alternative food production.

Requirements
25% Attendance & Participation  
25% Research Presentation  
25% Quizzes 1 & 2  
25% Exam

Attendance and Participation
Attendance at all classes is mandatory except in cases of illness, emergency, or  
pressing responsibility (ex. a job interview, your wedding). If you need to miss class, you are  
responsible for getting notes from one of your classmates - I don't give out lecture notes.  
Part of every class will be dedicated to discussion of the readings. To help you budget  
your time, the total pages of reading per class are shown on the course schedule, below. It is  
very important that you come to class having done the reading. Once a week, you will be  
assigned to lead discussion. On these days, you will come prepared to give a short summary of  
the content of the readings (5 min), and propose a few questions for discussion.

Research Presentations
Everyone will give a presentation on their independent research at some point during the  
semester. We will schedule presentation times during the first week of class. This is an  
opportunity to explore topics that I have covered in more depth, or to branch out in a direction
that interests you. Presentations should be about 15 minutes long and include a clear research topic or question. You are expected to do outside reading of academic sources (books, peer-reviewed journals) for your presentation. Part of your grade will be based on a bibliography of sources that you consulted in your research.

**Quizzes and Exams**

Quizzes and the exams will include multiple choice, true false, short answer, and short essays. You will be tested on material covered in lecture and on the content of the readings. The exam is cumulative, but will focus on material from Unit 3. Please check your schedules and make sure you will be able to make it to exam days.

**Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings; Exams; Activities</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-Jul</td>
<td>Cultural &amp; Biological Evolution</td>
<td>Spencer 1857</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-Jul</td>
<td>Malthusianism vs. Marxism</td>
<td>Malthus 1798, Chap 2; Ross 1998</td>
<td>5, 23: 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-Jul</td>
<td>Cultural Ecology, Historical Ecology</td>
<td>Steward 1941</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-Jul</td>
<td>Human Behavioral Ecology; Political Ecology</td>
<td>Hudson-Dyson and Smith 1978; Butt 2012</td>
<td>21, 10: 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-Jul</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-Jul</td>
<td>Hunting and gathering</td>
<td>Sahlins 1970</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-Jul</td>
<td>Domestication</td>
<td>Kelly 1995; Smith 2007</td>
<td>19,12: 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-Jul</td>
<td>Food production and the origins of the state</td>
<td>Scott 2009, Chap 3</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-Jul</td>
<td>Peasant Food Potluck</td>
<td>Cook!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-Jul</td>
<td>Traditional ecological knowledge, local subsistence systems</td>
<td>Cronon 2002, Chaps. 2-3</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-Aug</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Aug</td>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>Erickson 2008</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Aug</td>
<td>Colonialism</td>
<td>Cronon 2002, Chaps. 4-5</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Aug</td>
<td>Slavery</td>
<td>Carney 2009</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Aug</td>
<td>Industrial agriculture</td>
<td>Foster and Magdoff 2000, Pollan Chap. 2</td>
<td>14, 25: 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-Aug</td>
<td>Urban ecology</td>
<td>Steinberg 2002, Chap 10, Pollan Chaps. 4-5</td>
<td>15, 34: 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-Aug</td>
<td>Food production and the state in the 20th century</td>
<td>Becker 1996, Chaps. 5-6</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-Aug</td>
<td>Environmental inequality in America</td>
<td>Hurley 1997, Pollan Chaps. 6-7</td>
<td>32, 19: 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-Aug</td>
<td>International politics of food production, the Green Revolution</td>
<td>Kloppenberg 2004</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-Aug</td>
<td>The Organic Industry</td>
<td>Pollan 2006, Chap. 9</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-Aug</td>
<td>Genetically modified organisms</td>
<td>Stone 2002</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16-Aug | Alternative food production in the 21st century | Pollan 2006, Chap. 10 | 22
17-Aug | Review | None |
18Aug | | Exam |

**Required books**

Cronon, William  

Pollan, Michael  

**Course Bibliography (Access these readings through Blackboard)**

Carney, Judith Ann and Judith Ann Carney  
2009  *Black rice: the African origins of rice cultivation in the Americas.* Harvard University Press. (excerpts)

Erickson, Clark  

Foster, John Bellamy and Fred Magdoff  

Hurley, Andrew  

Kelly, Robert L  
1995  *The foraging spectrum: Diversity in hunter-gatherer lifeways.* Smithsonian Institution Press Washington, DC.

Kloppenburg, Jack Ralph  
2005  *First the seed: The political economy of plant biotechnology.* Univ of Wisconsin Press, Madison. (excerpts)

Malthus, Thomas Robert  
2013  *An essay on the principle of population* 1. Cosimo, Inc. (excerpts)

Ross, Eric B and Corner House  
Sahlins, Marshall David  

Scott, James C  
2009  *The art of not being governed: An anarchist history of upland Southeast Asia*. Yale University Press, New Haven. (excerpts)

Smith, Bruce D.  

Spencer, Herbert  
1857  *Progress: Its law and cause*. Humboldt, New York. (excerpts)

Steward, Julian H.  