Ecological Anthropology AnthSci 164/264 Winter Quarter 2005
Tu Th 1:15-2:45

Essential Course Information
Instructor: Rebecca Bird
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Consultation hours: Tuesday 3-4, Wednesday & Thursday 11-12
Course web page: http://www.stanford.edu/~rbird/page3.html
Required work: 3 10-page research papers due by March 10; 10 1-2 page summaries of the
electronic readings, one due at the beginning of each week; 1 10-20 minute Powerpoint
lecture/discussion presentation.

Course Objectives
Ecological Anthropology is a synthetic field of study that aims at a systematic understanding of
variability in culturally-inherited human behavior and its relationship to specific social and physical
environments. In my course, we take four ideas as fundamental: 1) that humans and environments
interact dynamically in the process of adaptation, 2) that both subsistence and non-subsistence
related cultural traits and behaviors can be adaptive, 3) that to understand the interaction between
culture and ecology we must incorporate study of individual behavior and decision-making within a
cultural and environmental context and 4) culturally inherited behaviors become adapted to their
environments (physical and social) through a number of processes, including individual learning,
cultural evolution, and natural selection on individual decision-making. The topics we will focus
on this year include subsistence variability, subsistence intensification, feasting and ritual, nutrition
and disease, warfare, indigenous resource management, and resource conservation/environmental
degradation. We will examine some specific case studies on the socio-environmental dynamics of
subsistence variability in the Great Basin, Australia, East Africa, and Amazonia; agricultural
intensification in New Guinea; the ecology of feasting and ritual in the Pacific Northwest; the
ecology of nutrition and disease in Africa; warfare in Amazonia; resource management in Australia;
and resource conservation and environmental degradation worldwide.

Required Reading
A free electronic course reader is available on the course website at
http://www.stanford.edu/~rbird/page3.html. The course reader page is a secure site so you will
need to log in using your Stanford ID and password after you click on the course reader link. After
you do this, you will be directed to the download page which provides bibliographic information on
each paper. To download a paper, click on the PDF link associated with it. You must have Adobe
Acrobat Reader installed on your computer to read these files. You will also find links to the
syllabus and details on the assignments, as well as any course announcements.

You also have three required books:
Steward, Julian (1938/1997) Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups
Rappaport, Roy (1984) Pigs for the Ancestors
Smith, Eric A (1991) Inujjuamiut Foraging Strategies

These should be available in the bookstore.
# Schedule of Lectures

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Session/Topic</td>
<td>References</td>
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<td>17 Feb</td>
<td>Discussion/Presentation: Disease/Nutritional Ecology Topic TBA</td>
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<td>10 Mar</td>
<td>Discussion/Presentation: Conservation topic TBA</td>
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Required work and assignments

Student presentations. The course will be organized into a combination of lecture and student-led presentations and discussions. Beginning in February, each week I will present some general and theoretical cases of interest to ecological anthropologists. This lecture will be followed by student-led presentations and discussion of particular case studies which both elaborate upon and describe in detail some of the principles we learned in the beginning of the week. Since we have many more students here than available presentation days, you will work in teams with each of you being responsible for one component of the lecture period. All of you are responsible for facilitating at least ten minutes of discussion following your presentation (which should be in Powerpoint, Keynote or other electronic display format). I will give you more details and guidelines on your presentations later.

3 10-page research papers. As part of your work in the class, in addition to your in-class presentations, you are responsible for completing three 10-page research papers which should be associated with each of your three required ethnographic works (Steward’s Basin Sociopolitical Groups, Rappaport’s Pigs for the Ancestors, and Smith’s Inuit Foraging Strategies). I expect undergraduates to complete their papers on a topic which I will suggest; while graduate students should choose their own research topic. I am open, however, to undergrads proposing their own research topics—but all who propose their own topic must get approval ahead of time based on a one-page outline with bibliography. I will provide more details on paper format and topics in class. Please note that there are no due-dates for the research papers. You may choose to turn in your papers at any point during the quarter. However, if you do turn in a paper AFTER March 1, I will NOT have time to comment extensively. All papers are due by March 10, at the end of class. No late papers will be accepted.

Reading Summary/Reaction piece. Finally, you are also required to turn in a summary/reaction piece for each of the required electronic readings. Write about half a page (a good paragraph) for each reading that describes briefly the paper’s aims, focus, and importance (what it contributes to our understanding of theory or empirical real-world problems) and your assessment of its strengths and weaknesses. These summary pieces are due at the beginning of class each Tuesday. For the first week’s readings, you will turn in your summary pieces for both the first and second week on Tuesday the 11th of January. There will be a total of 10 summary pieces due, the length of which will vary as the number of readings per week varies.

Grading
I will be grading your work in this class on a letter grade scale. Each assignment will receive a letter grade (A+ to F) with the exception of your summary pieces. If you turn in at least 90% of your required summary pieces (9/10) you will receive an A for that assignment.