

# Anthropology 4903: Seminar in Ethnobiology

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:30-1, Wednesdays, 10:30-12:30

Fall Semester 2007

*This seminar is an intensive course in ethnobiology, the study of the interrelations between humans and the natural world. Ethnobiology includes ethnobotany, the study of human-plant relationships, and ethnozoology, the study of human-animal relationships. In a broad sense, ethnobiology can be understood from ecologic, cognitive, and symbolic perspectives. Human knowledge of natural resources entails sensing, recognizing, naming, and classifying living things. Ethnobiology is a discipline very capable of connecting scientific methods to systems of knowledge and belief in human cultures. Lecture topics and accompanying readings have been selected to expose you to the full scope of ethnobiological theory, methodology, and praxis. I hope to provide you with a “toolkit” to envision and conduct your own research in the days to come. Please keep me informed about your thoughts on the course this semester—I welcome your office visits and email!*

## **Textbooks:**

Ellen, Roy (editor). 2006. *Ethnobiology and the Science of Humankind*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Etkin, Nina (editor). *Eating on the Wild Side: The Pharmacologic, Ecologic, and Social Implications of Using Noncultigens*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.

Ford, Richard (editor). 2001. *Ethnobiology at the Millennium: Past Promise and Future Prospects*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Gillespie, Angus and Tad Tuleja (editors). 1987. *American Wildlife in Symbol and Story*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press.

Minnis, Paul (editor). 2000. *Ethnobotany: A Reader*. Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press.

Philo, Chris and Chris Wilbert (editors). 1999. *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places: The Geography of Human-Animal Relations*. Taylor and Francis, New York.

## **Course Format:**

- Mondays and Wednesdays are reserved for lectures and videos, and Fridays will be designated for group discussions of the weekly readings.

## **Attendance:**

- Regular attendance is absolutely critical in an upper-level seminar. Your presence in class is necessary (1) to achieve a good grade and (2) to ensure my success as your instructor!

## **Assignments and Grading:**

- Microthemes.—You will be assigned three microthemes (short, 3-4 page essays), each worth 15% of your grade. Microthemes will entail a synthesis of the reading assignments, in particular the linkages between them. You are also encouraged to develop your own ideas as they relate to lecture topics (e.g., “What do you think?”). Microtheme topics will be assigned least one week before they are due.
- Discussion lead.—You will also be responsible for leading the class discussion for one topic of your choice as designated in the course outline below. Discussion leaders will bring a list of questions and points of interest, designed to facilitate dialogue and debate with reference to the assigned readings. Note: this is not a mere summation of the material; the goal is to lead the class in the exchange of ideas. Your performance as discussion chair will be worth 15% of your grade. You are free to choose which topic you would like to chair, and assignments will be made on a first come, first serve basis. Discussions will begin on Week Three, so choose early!
- Field trip.—A Saturday afternoon excursion to Cherokee Nation has been planned during November. Here we will learn how ecological resources and Cherokee traditions, such as rivercane basketry, mask making, and storytelling, are intertwined and understood from an ethnobiological perspective.

Participation on this journey will constitute 15% of your grade. If you are unable to attend, please advise, and you will be able to write an additional microtheme instead.

- Finally, the remaining 40% of your grade will be based on a final paper project, of 10-15 pages in length. Your topic should address an original research concept deemed relevant to ethnobiology as a discipline. Paper topics will be discussed, developed, and approved in advance. The last three class sessions will be devoted to project presentations (around ten minutes in length). Details on potential paper topics are forthcoming.
- Your semester grade will be based on the following percentages:

Microthemes (3 @ 10% each)	30%
Discussion Lead:	15%
Field Trip Participation	15%
Final Paper:	40%
	100%

The following grading scale will be used to determine your semester grade:

- A: 90–100%
- B: 80–90%
- C: 70–80%
- D: 60–70%
- F: below 60%

#### **Other Concerns:**

- Students who have special conditions as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act and who need any test or course materials furnished in an alternate format should notify me immediately. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of these students.
- You are expected to observe the University's standards for academic honesty. Any student suspected of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Provost's office.

#### **Inclement Weather Policy:**

In the case of inclement weather, please call my voice mail at 575-3855 for announcements about possible class cancellations. You are also welcome to call me at home at 442-5509. The bottom line is this: when roads become icy, please do not attempt to drive or walk to campus.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **WEEK 1: August 20-24**

#### **Introduction to Ethnobiology**

Readings from *Ethnobiology at the Millennium*—

Introduction: Ethnobiology at the Crossroads, by R. Ford

Readings from *Ethnobiology and the Science of Humankind*—

Introduction, by Roy Ellen.

### **WEEK 2: August 27-31**

#### **Ethnobiological Classification: Foundations**

Papers on reserve—

Chapter 1 of *Ethnobiological Classification*, by B. Berlin

Form or Function: A Comparison of Expert and Novice Classification of Marine Fishes, by  
Boster and Johnson

### **WEEK 3: Sept. 3-7**

#### **Linguistic Ethnobiology**

Readings from *Ethnobotany: A Reader*—

The Pragmatics of Folk Classification, by Morris

Alternatives to Taxonomic Hierarchy, by Hunn and French

Readings from *Ethnobiology at the Millennium*—

An Ethnozoological Perspective on the Ethnobiological Enterprise, by E. Hunn

Readings from *Ethnobiology and the Science of Humankind*—

The First Congress of Ethnozoological Nomenclature, by Berlin.

### **WEEK 4: Sept 10-14**

#### **Ethnobiological Methods**

Readings from *Ethnobiology at the Millennium*—

In the Field with People, Plants, and Animals: A Look at Methods, by C. Fowler

Papers on reserve—

Considerations for Collecting Freelists in the Field, by M. Quinlan

Some Field Methods in Medical Ethnobiology, by Berlin and Berlin

### **WEEK 5: Sept 17-21**

#### **Resource Perception and Cognitive Ecology**

Readings from *Ethnobotany: A Reader*—

Factors Influencing Resource Perception among the Huastec, by J. Alcorn

Readings from *Eating on the Wild Side*—

Agriculture and the Acquisition of Medicinal Plant Knowledge, by Logan and Dixon

Papers on reserve—

A Sensory Ecology of Medicinal Plant Therapy in Two Amazonian Societies, by G. Shepard.

Persistence of Botanical Knowledge among Tzeltal Maya Children, by Zarger and Stepp.

Human Taste and Cognition in Tzeltal Maya Medicinal Plant Use, by D. Casagrande

### **WEEK 6: Sept 24-28**

#### **Exploring Plant Foods and Drugs in the Americas**

Readings from *Eating on the Wild Side*—

North American Food and Drug Plants, by D. Moerman

The Health Significance of Wild Plants for the Siona and Secoya, by W. Vickers

Papers on reserve—

The Role of Weeds in Pharmacological Research, by J. R. Stepp

Plants in the Folk Medicine of the Texas-Mexico Borderlands, by C. Kimber

### **WEEK 7: Oct 1-5**

#### **Natural Resources and Health Belief Systems**

Readings from *Ethnobiology and the Science of Humankind*—

The Interface between Medical Anthropology and Ethnobiology, by Waldstein and Adams

Papers on reserve—

The Hòzhò Factor: The Logic of Navajo Healing, by B. Toelken

Herbal Medicine among the Lumbee Indians, by E. Croom

Folk Medicine in New Jersey's Pine Barrens, by D. S. Cohen

**WEEK 8: Oct 8-12**

**Afro-Caribbean Ethnomedicine and Ethnobiology**

Papers on reserve—

Herbal Mixtures in the Traditional Medicine of Eastern Cuba, by Cano y Vapalto

Concepts and Treatments of Intestinal Worms in a Rural Caribbean Village, by Quinlan et al.

Invisible Hospitals: Botánicas in Ethnic Health Care, by Jones et. al

**WEEK 9: Oct. 15-19**

Fall break: No Class

**WEEK 10: Oct 22-26**

**Symbolic Ethnozoology: Understanding Human-Animal Relationships**

Readings from *American Wildlife in Symbol and Story*—

The Turkey, by T. Tuleja

The Alligator, by J. Mechling

The Fox, by M. Hufford

Paper on reserve—

Emotionality and Ethnozoological Cognition, by Nolan et al.

**WEEK 11: Oct 29-Nov 2**

**Ethnozoology in the Postindustrial World**

Readings from *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places*:

Constructing the Animal Worlds in Inner-City Los Angeles, by Wolch et al.

Fantastic Mr. Fox? Representing Animals in the Hunting Debate, by M. Woods

What's a River Without a Fish? Symbol, Space, and Ecosystem in the Waterways of Japan,  
by Waley

**WEEK 12: Nov 5-9**

**Ethnobotany and Cultural Conservation in the Rural US**

Reading *Wild Harvest in the Heartland: Ethnobotany in Missouri's Little Dixie*

**WEEK 13: Nov 12-16**

**Social Ecology and Biodiversity**

Papers on reserve—

Where Biological and Cultural Diversity Converge: Safeguarding Endemic Species and Languages on the Colorado Plateau, by Nabhan et al.

Weaving Ecological Knowledge into the Restoration of Basketry Plants, by D. Shebitz

Mountains and Biocultural Diversity, by Stepp et al.

Undermining Modernity: Protecting Landscapes and Meanings among the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia, by Hornberg.

**WEEK 14: Nov 19-23**

**(Field Trip to Cherokee Nation, TBA)**

Thanksgiving break

**WEEK 15: Nov 26-30**  
**Final Presentations**

**WEEK 16: Final Presentations on Monday, December 3, only. (December 5 is 'Dead Day').**

**\*\*Final papers due in my mailbox (Old Main 330) on Thursday, December 6th, by noon.\*\***

Suggested and Reserve Readings:

Most available online, but hardcopies can be found in Old Main 332.

- Alcorn, Janice B. 1981. Factors Influencing Resource Perception Among the Huastec: Suggestions for Future Ethnobotanical Inquiry. *Journal of Ethnobiology* 1(2):221-230
- Berlin, Brent. 1992. *Ethnobiological Classification: Principles of Categorization of Plants and Animals in Traditional Societies* (Chapters 1 and 2). Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Boster, James S. and Jeffrey C. Johnson. 1989. Form or Function: A Comparison of Expert and Novice Judgements of Similarity Among Fish. *American Anthropologist* 91:866-889.
- Brady, Erika. 1990. Mankind's Thumb on Nature's Scale: Trapping and Regional Identity in the Missouri Ozarks. Pp. 58-73 in *Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures*, edited by Barbara Allen and Thomas Schlereth. The University Press of Kentucky, Lexington.
- Casagrande, David G. 2000. Human Taste and Cognition in Tzeltal Maya Medicinal Plant Use. *Journal of Ecological Anthropology* 4:57-69
- Cano, J.H. and G. Volpato. 2004. Herbal Mixtures in the Traditional Medicine of Eastern Cuba. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 90:293-316..
- Clement, D. 1998. The Historical Foundations of Ethnobiology. *Journal of Ethnobiology* 18(2).
- Cohen, D. 1990. Folk Medicine in New Jersey's Pine Barrens. *Journal of American Folklore* 41.
- Croom, Edward. 1990. Herbal Medicine among the Lumbee Indians. In *Herbal and Magical Medicine: Traditional Healing Today*, edited by J. Kirkland. Duke University Press, Durham.
- Hornberg, A. 2005. Undermining Modernity: Protecting Landscapes and Meanings among the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia. In *Political Ecology Across Spaces, Scales, and Social Groups*, edited by S. Paulson and L. Gezon. Rutgers University Press, Rutgers.
- Hunn, Eugene. 1982. The Utilitarian Factor in Folk Biological Classification. *American Anthropologist* 84:830-847.
- Johns, Timothy. 1994. Ambivalence to the Palatability Factors in Wild Food Plants. In *Eating on the Wild Side*, edited by Nina L. Etkin. The University of Arizona Press, Tucson.
- Jones, D. 2001. Invisible Hospitals: Botánicas in Ethnic Health Care. In *Healing Logics: Culture and Medicine in Modern Health Belief Systems*, edited by Erica Brady. Utah State University Press, Logan.
- Kimber, C. 1998. Plants in the Folk Medicine of the Texas-Mexico Borderlands. In *Baseball, Barns, and Bluegrass: A Geography of American Folklife*, edited by G. Carney.
- Logan, Michael H. and Anna R. Dixon. 1994. Agriculture and the Acquisition on Medicinal Plant Knowledge. Pp. 25-45 in *Eating on the Wild Side*, edited by Nina L. Etkin. The University of Arizona Press, Tucson.
- Nabhan, G. P., P. Pynews, and T. Joe. 2002. Where Biological and Cultural Diversity

Converge: Safeguarding Endemic Species and Languages on the Colorado Plateau. In *Ethnobiology and Biocultural Diversity*, edited by John R. Stepp, Felice Wyndham, and Rebecca Zarger. University of Georgia Press, Athens.

- Nolan, Justin M. 2007. *Wild Harvest in the Heartland: Ethnobotany in Missouri's Little Dixie*. Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, MD.
- Nolan, Justin M. Katlin Jones, K. Wade McDougal, Matthew McFarlin, and Michael Ward. 2006. The Lovable, The Loathsome, and The Liminal: Emotionality in Ethnozoological Cognition. *Journal of Ethnobiology* 26(1):126-138.
- Quinlan, Marsha B. 2005. Considerations for Collecting Freelists in the Field: Examples from Ethnobotany. *Field Methods* 17(3):1-16.
- Quinlan, Marsha B., Robert J. Quinlan, and Justin M. Nolan. 2002. Ethnophysiology and Herbal Treatments of Intestinal Worms in a Rural Caribbean Village. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 80(1):75-83.
- Shebitz, Daniela. 2005. Weaving Traditional Ecological Knowledge into the Restoration of Basketry Plants. *Journal of Ecological Anthropology* 9: 51-68.
- Shepard, Glenn. 2004. A Sensory Ecology of Medicinal Plant Therapy in Two Amazonian Societies. *American Anthropologist* 106:252-266.
- Stepp, John Richard. 2004. The Role of Weeds as Sources of Pharmaceuticals. *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 92:163-166.
- Stepp, John Richard, et al. 2005. Mountains and Biocultural Diversity. *Mountain Research and Development* 25(3):223-2270
- Toelken, B. 2001. The Hòzhò Factor: The Logic of Navajo Healing. In *Healing Logics: Culture and Medicine in Modern Health Belief Systems*, edited by E. Brady. Utah State University Press, Logan.
- Zarger, R. K. and J. R. Stepp. 2004. Persistence of Botanical Knowledge among Tzeltal Maya Children. *Current Anthropology*, 45(3):413-418.