

Fall 2017

HUMA 2621 Culture and Environment

Course Instructor: **Ma Jianxiong**

E-mail: hmjxm@ust.hk

Time & Venue: **Friday, 10:30-12:20; Room 2306**

Tutorial: **Wednesday, 18:00-18:50; LTK**

Office Hours: **Thursday, 14:30-17:30**

Office: Room 3342

TA: **Lin Zhuyun**

E-mail: zlin@connect.ust.hk

Office Hours: **Monday, 16:00-17:30**

Office: Room 3001

Course Objectives

This course aims to study the impacts of cultural mechanisms on the management of resources, population size and health practices in different cultural settings. In addition to examining the relationship between "culture" and the "environment", we shall survey the complex adaptive systems integrating technologies, social organization and ideology, and understand how these institutions shape the environment and cultures for different people in the world.

Intended Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course, students should be able to

1. Comprehend interactions between environmental and cultural settings in our daily life;
2. Develop an anthropological understanding of socio-cultural institutions and their environment in human societies;
3. Develop environmental awareness in our daily life.

Teaching Approach

In this course, we shall emphasize the cultural and ecological strategies of adaption developed by different societies in various environmental settings. In tutorials, we will examine various case studies. Students' participation in lectures and tutorials are emphasized to accelerate their intellectual development.

Assessment

Students are expected to attend all lectures, tutorials and exams. Continual assessment counts for 50% of the marks. Of this 50%, 30% is based on two quizzes, while the remaining 20% comes from tutorial presentations and participation. The final exam counts for 50%.

Textbook and Main References

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing. 2015. *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*. Princeton University Press.

Erik Mueggler. 2011. *The Paper Road: Archive and Experience in the Botanical Exploration of West China and Tibet*. University of California Press.

Course content and teaching components:

September 1. Week 1. Introduction

Readings:

Bates, Daniel G. and Fred Plog. 1991. *Human Adaptive Strategies*. Chapter 1. Pp. 2-32.

No tutorial this week (In Add/Drop period).

September 8. Week 2. Concepts in the Study of Human Adaptive Strategies

Readings:

Scott, James C. 2009. "State Evasion, State Prevention: The Culture and Agriculture of Escape". In *The Art of Not Being Governed*. Chapter 6. Pp. 178-219.

No tutorial this week (In Add/Drop period).

September 15. Week 3. Environmental Determinism and Origins of Cultural Ecology

Readings:

Diamond, Jared. 1998. A natural experiment of history. In *Guns, Germs and Steel The Fate of Human Societies*. London: Vintage. Chapter 2. Pp. 53-66.

No tutorial this week (In Add/Drop period).

September 22. Week 4. Production and Consumption in Societies of Different Types

Readings:

Bodley, John H. *Anthropology and Contemporary Human Problems*. Chapter 3. Pp.89-120.

Tutorial: September 20. Organization of presentation teams.

September 29. Week 5. Hunting and Gathering (the Bushmen)

Readings:

Lee, Richard B., 1969, "Kung Bushman Subsistence: An Input-Output Analysis". In Andrew P. Vayda Ed., *Environment and Cultural Behavior*. New York: The Natural History Press. Pp. 47-76.

Tutorial: September 27. Presentation for Anna Tsing, "Mushroom", Chapter 1-5, Pp. 1-84.

October 6. Week 6. Horticulture (The Lahu)

Readings:

Du, Shanshan. 2002. “‘Husband and wife do it together’: Unifying Gender in Labor”, in *“Chopsticks Only Work in Paris”: Gender Unity and Gender Equality among the Lahu of Southwest China*. New York: Columbia University Press. Pp. 79-106.

Tutorial: October 4. Presentation for Anna Tsing, “Mushroom”, Chapter 6-11, Pp. 85-163.

October 13. Week 7. Maritime and Tropical Foragers (Fishman communities); Quiz A.

Readings:

Weiner, Annette B. 1988. *The Trobrianders of Papua New Guinea*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. Pp1-31 & Pp. 139-167.

Tutorial: October 11. Presentation for Anna Tsing, “Mushroom”, Chapter 12-16, Pp. 164-226.

October 20. Week 8. Pastoralism (The Mongol)

Readings: Morris Rossabi, 2012. “Life on the steppes” & “Chinggis Khan emerges”, in *The Mongols: A very short introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. 1-60.

Tutorial: October 18. Presentation for Anna Tsing, “Mushroom”, Chapter 17-20, Pp. 227-288.

October 27. Week 9. Labor Intensive Agriculture (The Pearl River Delta)

Readings:

Ruddle, Kenneth and Zhong, Gongfu. 1988. “Historical Development of the [Dike-pond] System”, in *Integrated Agriculture-aquaculture in South China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1. Pp.14-28.

Tutorial: October 25. Film: *Children of the 7 Headed Snake*. New York: Filmmakers Library. 1999.

November 3. Week 10. Mechanized, Capital-Intensive Agriculture

Readings: Bodley, John H. 2012. “Commercial Factory-Food Systems”, in *Anthropology and Contemporary Human Problems* (6th. Ed.). Lamham, MD: AltaMira Press. Pp.179-213.

Tutorial: November 1. Presentation for Eric Mueggler, “The Paper Road”, Introduction, Chapter 1-2, Pp. 1-86.

November 10. Week 11. Ritual and Magic (Chinese *Fengshui*); Quiz B.

Readings:

Bruun, Ole, 2008. "Chapter 3, *Feng Shui* in the context of Chinese popular religion." *In An Introduction to Feng Shui*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 49-83.

Tutorial: November 8. Presentation for Eric Mueggler, "The Paper Road", Chapter 3-4, Pp. 87-146.

November 17. Week 12. Ecology and People

Readings:

Harris, Marvin. 1975. "Mother Cow", in *Pigs Wars and Withes: The Riddles of Culture*, New York: Vintage Books. Pp. 11-32.

Tutorial: November 15. Presentation for Eric Mueggler, "The Paper Road", Chapter 5-6, Pp. 147-210.

November 24. Week 13. Conclusion

Readings:

Bodley, John H. 2008. *Anthropology and Contemporary Human Problems*. Chapter 2. Pp. 225-268.

Tutorial: November 22. Presentation for Eric Mueggler, "The Paper Road", Chapter 7-9, Pp. 211-290.

Tutorial: November 29. Final reviewing.