

Fall 2025

## **HUMA 2621 Culture and Environment**

Course instructor: Ma Jianxiong

### **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%, 20% is based on assessments of two quizzes while the remaining 30% comes from tutorial presentations (20%) and participation (10%). The final exam counts for 50%.

### **Course content and teaching components:**

**September 6. Week 1. Introduction**

**September 13. Week 2. Concepts in the Study of Human Adaptive Strategies**

**September 20. Week 3. Environmental Determinism and Origins of Cultural Ecology**

**September 27. Week 4. Production and Consumption in Societies of Different Types**

**October 4. Week 5. Hunting and Gathering (the Bushmen)**

**October 18. Week 6. Horticulture (The Lahu)**

**October 25. Week 7. Maritime and Tropical Foragers (Fishman communities);**

**November 1. Week 8. Pastoralism (The Mongol)**

**November 8. Week 9. Labor Intensive Agriculture (The Pearl River Delta)**

**November 15. Week 10. Ritual and Magic (Chinese *Fengshui*);**

**November 22. Week 11. Mechanized, Capital-Intensive Agriculture**

**November 29. Week 12. Urban Ecology and Urban Sustainability & Conclusion**