Syllabus

Cultural Ecology

Cultures, Environments, and Paths to Sustainability GRG 331K / ANT 324L 37475 / 31265

Professor Gregory Knapp, gwk@utexas.edu Office hours WF 11-12, in CLA 3.712 Class Meets MWF 1-2, room CLA 1.102

This course examines the human trajectory in progressively gaining control over resources and transforming planet earth into a meaningful human home. It is an advanced introduction to human-environment relationships, with a special emphasis on the theories and works of cultural geographers, ecological anthropologists, and environmental historians. Lectures and discussions examine selected strategies employed by humans to cope with the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities presented by different natural environments, especially foraging and farming. The course will also provide an introduction to political ecology and issues surrounding sustainable development and alternative futures.

The course has a Writing Flag. It can be used to meet the core requirements for the Sustainability (Environmental Resource Management) and Cultural Geography tracks in the Geography major, and the upper division course requirements in the Anthropology major.

<u>Prerequisites</u>: Upper Division Standing

Course Website (Blackboard): https://courses.utexas.edu/

Required textbooks:

All course readings will be on Blackboard.

Summary of Grading:

Grading will be based on 10 short commentary papers (3 points each, 30%), two longer essays with re-writes (15 and 25 points respectively, 40%), co-proctoring for a week (10%), and class participation and attendance (20%).

COMMENTARY PAPERS. The ten short (150-250 word) commentary papers should be sent to the professor by email by 5 pm on the assigned days; usually these will be Sundays. Papers should also be printed out and brought to class on Monday. Students' commentaries will be used in classroom discussions, including peer groups proctored by students. Instructions for your short essays will be provided along with reading lists at least a week in advance of each assignment.

Failure to attend, participate, and/or submit papers on time will result in deductions from the 3 points given for each essay, as will significant problems in the essays themselves. Your commentaries may be shared with other students for peer review and/or discussed in class.

PROCTORING. Students will be assigned as co-proctors for most weeks of class. Proctors will help design class activities, including peer discussions and debates. Proctoring will provide 10 per cent of your course grade. As a proctor, you will be given the class commentaries and will be responsible for designing course activities for the week (other than the professor's lecturing).

PAPERS. There will be two course papers. The first paper will be worth 15 points and is due March 4. The second paper will be worth 25 points; the topic is due April 8, first draft April 15, and final draft May 3. Detailed instructions will be provided on Blackboard.

Participation points will be based on your constructive involvement in class activities, including attendance. Attendance will be taken promptly at 1 pm every class day via a sign up sheet, short quiz, or your submission of an exercise. More than two unexcused absences will result in debits of points.

Grading will be on the plus minus system, as follows. Scores and totals will not be rounded up or down.

93-100 A

90-92.99 A-

87-89.99 B+

83-86.99 B

80-82.99 B-

77-79.99 C+

73-76.99 C

70-72.99 C-

67-69.99 D+

63-66.99 D

60-62.99 D-

Below 60 F

Last Day to Drop Without Possible Academic Penalty

January 17 is the last day of the official add/drop period; after this date, changes in registration may require the approval of the department chair and usually the student's dean. January 30 is the last day to drop with a possible refund.

Writing Flag

This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience

with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and you may be asked to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. Writing Flag classes meet the Core Communications objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Writing Center

I strongly encourage you to use the Undergraduate Writing Center, FAC 211, 471-6222: http://www.uwc.utexas.edu/). The UWC offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. These services are not just for writing that has "problems": Getting feedback from an informed audience is a normal part of a successful writing project. Using methods that preserve the integrity of your work, they help you develop strategies to improve your writing and become a more independent writer.

Concision

This course may require shorter essays than you are used to. The two term papers are comparable in length to typical newspaper articles, blog entries, or presentations at professional meetings. Concision is a virtue; you should strive to be able to make a point in a limited space.

Classroom Policy on Electronic Devices and Behavior

Electronic Devices. Cell phones, MP3 players, and other such devices must be turned off and stowed during class. Laptops and tablets may be allowed if needed to consult course readings, but otherwise may not be used. Please be prepared to take notes with pad and pen.

Lectures and other class activities may not be recorded in any way without prior permission. Online materials may not be copied or distributed without prior permission.

Students will arrive on time, minimize unscheduled personal breaks, and stay until the class ends. Discussion will often include controversial issues. Expression of differing opinions and debate will be encouraged. Please respect the right of persons to disagree with you, and avoid ridicule, or ad hominem attacks. You often will learn more from those who disagree with you than from those who agree with you.

Accommodations for Special Needs

The University makes reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Any student who requires special accommodations must obtain a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). Present the letter to the professor at the beginning of the semester so that needed accommodations

can be discussed. The student should remind the professor of any testing accommodations no later than five business days before an exam. For more information, visit http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/.

Religious Holidays

By UT Austin policy, students must notify the professor of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If the student must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, the professor will give the student an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students

Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, students are responsible for reading their email for university and course-related information and announcements. Students are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to their email address. Students should check their e-mail regularly and frequently—daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-sensitive. Students can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating their e-mail address at http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If students are worried about someone who is acting differently, they may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone their concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal.

Emergency Evacuation

Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building. Students requiring assistance in evacuation must inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

U.T. Learning Center

You may find assistance with specific strategies to help you study effectively at the Learning

Center. The Center for Learning offers a range of services to become a better student through assistance in one-on-one tutoring, academic counseling, and other classes. For more information see http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

If you use words or ideas that are not your own you must cite your sources. Otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, the student may refer to the Web Site of the Student Judicial Services, Office of the Dean of Students (http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/).

Tentative Schedule

Classes will consist of lectures and discussions, including peer discussions in small groups. The reading assignments and paper topics for each week will be provided on Blackboard as the semester proceeds.

Week One, Jan 14, 16, 18. Introduction

Week Two, Jan 23, 25. Visions of Human Nature Jan 21 No class, MLK holiday

Discussion assignment one due January 22.

Week Three, Jan 28, 30, Feb 1. Studying Complexity.

Discussion assignment two due Jan 27

Week Four, Feb 4, 6, 8. Islands and Ecosystems; Decision Making for Sustainability

Discussion assignment three due Feb 3

Week Five, Feb 11, 13, 15. Human Origins.

Discussion assignment four due Feb 10

Week Six, Feb 18, 20, 22. Foraging past and present

Discussion assignment five due Feb 17

Week Seven, Feb 25, 27, Mar 1. Domestication and Agriculture

Discussion assignment six due Feb 24

Week Eight, Mar 4, 6, 8. Foraging in Context; no proctors

Paper 1 due in class March 4; presentations by students. March 8 available for presentations but attendance not required.

March 9-17 spring break

Week Nine, Mar 18, 20, 22 Cities and Civilization

Discussion assignment seven due March 17 (may turn in March 8 if wish to leave break free)

Week Ten, Mar 25, 27, 29 Population Growth and Agricultural Intensification

Discussion assignment eight due March 24

Week Eleven, Apr 1, 3, 5. Modernization and Its Environmental and Demographic Impacts

Discussion assignment nine due March 31

Week Twelve, April 8, 10, 12: Farming in Context; discussion by students

Paper 2 topic due April 8 in class for discussion in informal groups

Week Thirteen, April 15,17,19. Farming in Context. Presentations by Students. No proctors.

Paper 2 first draft due April 15

Week Fourteen, April 22, 24, 26. Cultural Ecology of Modernization

Discussion assignment 10 due April 21

Week Fifteen, April 29, May 1, May 3. Conclusions. No proctors.

Paper Two final draft due May 3