UNIVERSITY OF MARY WASHINGTON -- NEW COURSE PROPOSAL

Electronically submit this completed form with PDF attachments to the Chair of the College Curriculum Committee.

**COLLEGE (check one):**  Arts and Sciences  Business  Education

Proposal Submitted By: Laura Mentore  Date Prepared: September 19, 2012

Course Title: Environment and Development Narratives

Department/discipline and course number*: ANTH 365

*This course number must be approved by the Office of the Registrar before the proposal is submitted.

Number of credits proposed: 3  Prerequisites: Anth 101

Will this be a new, repeatable “special topics” course? (Do you want students to be able to take this new course more than once if the topic changes?)

NO  X  YES

Date of first offering of this new course: FALL SEMESTER, year 2013

Proposed frequency of offering of the course: Once a year, or every other year at a minimum

List the faculty who will likely teach the course: Laura Mentore

Are ANY new resources required?  NO  X  YES

Document in attached impact statement

This new course will be (check all that apply):

- Required in the major
- General Elective
- Elective in the major  X
- General Education**

**AFTER the new course is approved, a separate proposal must be sent to the General Education Committee.

Catalog Description: This course focuses on the sub-fields of environmental anthropology and the anthropology of development. It examines cross-cultural theories of nature, space and relationality, with a focus on the interface between indigenous societies and Western discourses and practices pertaining to conservation and socioeconomic development.

**COURSE HISTORY**

Was this course taught previously as a topics or experimental course?  YES  X  NO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Number and Title of Previous Course</th>
<th>Semester Offered</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anth 371CC: Anthropology of Environment and Development</td>
<td>Fall 2010, Fall 2012</td>
<td>15, 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHECK HERE if the proposed course is to be equated with the earlier topics or experimental offerings. This means that students who took the earlier “topics” course will only be able to take the new course if they made a C- grade or lower in the earlier course.

NOTE: If the proposed course has not been previously offered as a topics or experimental course, explain in the attached rationale statement why the course should be adopted even though it has not been tried out.

**REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS:**
1. Rationale Statement (Why is this course needed? What purposes will it serve?)
2. Impact Statement (Provide details about the Library, space, budget, and technology impacts created by adding this new course. Include supporting statements from the Library, IT Department, etc. as needed.)
3. Sample Syllabus

Department Chair Approval: Debra Schleef  Date: Oct. 15, 2012

CCC Chair Approval: Bradley Hansen  Date: 20 Oct. 2012

UCC Chair Approval:  Date:
Rationale Statement for Anth 365: Environment and Development Narratives (previously listed as Anth 371 Special Topic: Anthropology of the Environment and Development)

This course focuses on two significant and burgeoning fields of inquiry in anthropology: the study of cultural practices and beliefs concerning the environment, and the study of the proliferating policies, discourses and practices collectively known as “development”. While many anthropology programs offer courses in environmental anthropology and courses in the anthropology of development, this course is unique in its focus on the relationship between the two. The course has emerged through Professor Laura Mentore’s research interests in the current phase of development initiatives sweeping across the Global South, which seeks to meet socioeconomic development goals through environmental conservation schemes. Historically these two agendas have been perceived (by the Global North) as conceptually incompatible: to develop, a nation or people must consume natural resources and transform them into economic wealth. To protect the environment, it is necessary to intervene into the consumption of natural resources. Yet in recent years, largely as a result of global climate change and the restructuring of carbon offset programs, environmental conservation has become more directly linked to development, under the auspices of “sustainability”.

This course traces the emergence of the new development discourses and their ideological underpinnings (how the West constructs nature and space, how it imagines tropical rainforest societies, etc). It also focuses heavily on the indigenous societies being impacted by this new wave of conservation-as-development schemes. The objective there is to expose students to the ways in which cultural difference manifests as different needs/wants, different environmental philosophies, and different attitudes towards the power relations that typically accompany development schemes.

The course was first taught in Fall 2010 (Professor Mentore’s first semester at UMW) and is currently being taught for the second time, as a Special Topics (Anth 371) course. The course is popular due to the many students in anthropology and other majors who are keen to learn more about these increasingly prevalent topics. The course is particularly relevant for the increasing numbers of students who plan/aspire to pursue careers in fields related to development, foreign aid, NGOs, environmental conservation, etc. Thus far they have seemed very eager to gain more critical perspectives on development and are actively seeking ways to apply anthropology within these arenas.

In the near future, I plan to approach the Environmental Science and Geography programs about the possibility of cross-listing the course.

This course will not impact the requirements of the Anthropology major. It will simply add another upper level elective to the curriculum.
Anthropology of the Environment and Development  
(Anth 371CC)  
Monroe Hall, Room 240  
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00-12:15

Course Description
This course provides an in-depth study of the sub-disciplines of environmental anthropology and the anthropology of development. We will examine how these two sub-fields have emerged in recent decades out of enduring themes in anthropology, including the nature-culture dialectic, the relationship between society and environment, theories of space and place, the relationship between power and knowledge, and theories of social inequality, change and progress. Some of the central tenets in this course are: (1) no environment is “natural” or given from the outset but rather, all environments are socially imagined and produced spaces (2) the notion of development has an identifiable political history linked to the hegemony of Euro-American notions of progress and the problematic assumption that the desire to “improve” is a universal human trait (3) the economic and climatic challenges of the 21st century are bringing about new interfaces between agendas that were previously considered irreconcilable: namely environmental conservation and

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9-11am
socio-economic development. With such issues in mind, the course will focus on some of the many overlapping concerns of environmental and development anthropology, for example: cultural ecology, eco-politics, indigenous cosmologies, conservation, the NGO sector, governmentality, indigenous social and environmental movements, the Global South, and “first-world/third world” dynamics.

The first part of the course will focus on the social and historical construction of nature in the Euro-American imagination—that is, the objectification of particular kinds of places, persons, things, landscapes, images, disasters, inequalities, processes and sentiments as “natural” or “in the nature of things”. At the heart of this construction, at least since the Enlightenment-inspired philosophers such as Rousseau, are several deep-seated and unresolved paradoxes. Whilst “human” has long been thought of as separate from and superior to “nature” by virtue of its capacities for reason and culture, the notion of an innate “human nature” continues to be foundational in much of Western science and philosophy. Is “nature” something we need to return to, or progress away from? Do some humans live “closer to nature” than others? The invention of nature and its ramifications for how we view ourselves, others, and the world at large is something we cannot possibly cover in 15 weeks. But through our readings, discussions and various class projects, you should become able to identify the main anthropological genres and debates on the topic, as well as reflect more deeply on the profound impact of the concept of nature on your own society, everyday life and sense of self. How does nature influence the way we think about our lifestyle choices such as the foods we eat, the clothes we wear, and the activities we define as either “work” or “leisure”? How does it influence our understandings of gender and sexuality?

A number of the readings describe non-Western societies and their understandings of the relationships between humans and so-called nature. Do indigenous systems of agriculture, hunting, gathering and animal husbandry pose a challenge to the nature-culture dichotomy, or prove it? Do ecological and climatic conditions necessarily determine a people’s material culture and social organization? Is it fair to expect indigenous societies and “third-world” countries to have the will to protect and conserve their environments given that “first-world” countries achieve their wealth and power largely by exploiting the environment and natural resources? What happens when indigenous environments or resources are commoditized—either as raw materials for industrial manufacture or as eco-tourist destinations?

In the latter portion of the course, we will focus on how economic and political ideologies of development and their various incentives and constraints impact the relationship between societies and environments. We will critically examine improvement or “development” schemes from a cross-cultural perspective. What is (or could be) the role of anthropology in various kinds of development and conservation-as-development schemes? Can and should anthropologists use the knowledge they acquire through ethnographic fieldwork to try and “improve” conditions at their fieldsite, or would this amount to imposing a foreign ideology? Is the role of the anthropologist to “translate” between indigenous worldviews and NGOs/government worldviews? Can anthropology be useful in discerning between changes that local informants may need or want vs. what development agencies think they need or want? What ethical questions might arise when one’s anthropological research suggests that a people’s traditional relationship with their environment is incommensurable with conservation and/or development schemes being brought to their region?
Course Requirements and Expectations:

ATTENDANCE OF ALL CLASSES IS REQUIRED

DOING THE READINGS BEFORE CLASS IS REQUIRED

MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSIONS IS REQUIRED

I will do some lecturing and will clarify/explain things from the readings. I will also draw from my own research to expand upon topics covered in the readings. But for the most part, I’d like for our class time to consist of talking openly as a group—always respecting each other’s opinions but also not being afraid to disagree and debate. There truly is no single right or wrong answer—especially in an anthropology course. It’s all about how well-informed you are, how critically you think, and what kinds of connections you’re able to make between different ideas and sources.

Above all, “meaningful participation” means taking responsibility for your learning. It means being an active rather than passive reader (not just moving your eyes across the pages but thinking about the authors underlying argument and theoretical bent, taking notes and formulating questions in the process of reading). It also means bringing those thoughts and questions with you into the classroom. Look for connections between the materials we cover and your own life experiences and things you see around you. Another very important component to this course is making connections between what we cover in this class and what you’ve learned in other courses. I really don’t want to have to take attendance, or give quizzes to enforce doing the readings, but I will if it is deemed necessary.

This is my ideal scenario: I hold you all to a high standard as far as doing the readings, thinking about the issues, getting involved and bringing questions/topics to the class discussions. If you rise to the occasion (which I’m sure you will), we can have a more laid back approach to class time and you can have a good deal of input as far as designing the course assignments and so forth.

Assignments:
Attendance and Meaningful Participation in Class (20%)
Observation and Analysis Activities (8% each, 24% total)
Group Research Project and Presentation (28%)
Final Paper (28%)

You are expected to follow the University of Mary Washington Honor Code on all assignments. Please review the Honor Constitution online at: www.umw.edu/studentaffairs/docs/umw_honor_constitution.pdf.

Grading System:

Grades will be based on the following system:

A = 100-93   B = 86-84   C = 76-74   D = 64-60
A- = 92-90   B- = 83-80   C- = 73-70   D- = 59-55
B+ = 89-87   C+ = 79-77   D+ = 69-65   F = below 55
*Note: There is no provision for extra credit in this course*

**Students in Need of Accommodations:**

The Office of Disability Services has been designated by the University of Mary Washington as the primary office to guide, counsel, and assist students with disabilities. If you receive services through that office and require accommodations for this class, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss your approved accommodations. I will hold any information you share with me in strictest confidence and will make every effort to support you however I can. If you have not made contact with the Office of Disability Services and you have accommodation needs, please do not hesitate to contact them. The Office of Disability Services is located at 203 George Washington Hall (phone: 540-654-1266/email: ods@umw.edu)

**Readings:**

~The following required texts are available at the UMW Bookstore~

*Environmental Anthropology: A Historical Reader*, by Michael Dove and Carol Carpenter (Blackwell Publishing 2008)


*All other readings will be available in .pdf format on Canvas.*

** Please print out the readings rather than attempting to read them on your computer. I strongly recommend that you print them all at once and keep them in a binder along with your notes.

**Class Schedule:**

**Section 1: The Production of Nature and the Nature-Culture Dialectic**

*Tuesday, August 28*
Introductions and Review of Syllabus

*Thursday, August 30*
pp. 1-5 and pp. 89-117 in *Environmental Anthropology: A Historical Reader*

New Course Proposal Cover Sheet (July 2012)
Activity 1: Collect as many examples as you can of the word "nature" or "natural" in the world around you. Make some notes on what you think the word is trying to convey in that particular context, who the target audience is, and how you yourself interpret the word when reading it. Ask others what the word means to them and record their responses. If possible, bring your samples (or photos of them) to class along with your write-up (1-2 pages typed). The write-up should consist of 2 main sections, one based on observations and other data (questions and responses) and another based on your interpretations/analysis of your data. Due September 6th.

Tuesday, September 4

Thursday, September 6

Presentations for Activity 1

Tuesday, September 11
“Images of Nature in Gimi Thought” by Gillian Gillison, In Nature, Culture and Gender (eds. Carol MacCormack and Marilyn Strathern), available on Canvas

Thursday, September 13
pp. 6-12 and pp. 118-153 in Environmental Anthropology: A Historical Reader

Section 2. Cultural Ecology and Ethnoecology

Tuesday, September 18
pp. 12-16 and pp. 155-180 in Environmental Anthropology: A Historical Reader

Thursday, September 20
pp. 16-19 and 181-201 in Environmental Anthropology: A Historical Reader

Activity 2: Spend time in a social space designed to facilitate interaction between humans and animals (a dog park, a farm, the zoo...). Bring a journal with you. Take notes on how people interact with the animals. What are they doing? What are they saying? Do the animals have names? What social traits are bestowed onto animals? Are the animals fed and/or cared for in other ways? How are people acting around and towards the animals? Record as much detailed information as possible on human-animal interaction at your site. Ask people questions that will shed light on how they understand the animals and their interaction with them. Make notes on how human-animal interactions at your site speak to the relationship between society and ecology (1-2 pages typed). Due September 25th
Tuesday, September 25
pp. 26-32 and pp. 241-253 in Environmental Anthropology: A Historical Reader

Presentations for Activity 2

Section 3: Political Ecology, Conservation and Indigenous Rights

Thursday, September 27
The Shifting Middle Ground: Amazonian Indians and Eco-Politics” by Beth Conklin and Laura Graham, available on Canvas

Tuesday, October 2
Conservation is our Government Now...

Thursday, October 4
Conservation is our Government Now...

Tuesday, October 9
Conservation is Our Government Now...

Thursday, October 11
Conservation is Our Government Now...

Activity 3: Spend time in a social space that revolves around commemoration or remembrance of one kind or another (remembrance of persons, events, places, etc.). Take detailed note of how the space is designed and laid out, how it is meant to be used, what people are doing/saying, and generally how the space is culturally defined. Are there rituals that help to define the space? Are their taboos? What about our notions of life, death, loss, change, the passage of time can be gleaned from an anthropological study of this space? Due October 18th.

Tuesday, October 16
NO CLASS- FALL BREAK

Thursday, October 18
“Land, People and Paper in Northwest Amazonia”, by Peter Gow, In The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Space and Place (eds. Eric Hirsch and Michael O’Hanlon), available on Canvas

Presentations for Activity 3

Section 4: Theories of Environment, Space, Landscape:

Tuesday, October 23
The Perception of the Environment... Tim Ingold

Thursday, October 25
The Perception of the Environment... Tim Ingold

New Course Proposal Cover Sheet (July 2012)
Tuesday, October 30
The Perception of the Environment... Tim Ingold

Thursday, November 1
“How the Line Became Straight” from Lines: A Brief History by Tim Ingold, available on Canvas

Activity 4: Drawing from Ingold’s social analysis of the line, document an example from either UMW campus or the Fredericksburg area where human beings appear to have intentionally organized space into “straight lines”. Visual mediums such as a short video segments, a series of photos, and/or sketches are ideal methods of documentation. How do people move through, up or across these lines? Do people adhere to or deviate from the intended straightness of the line? Ask people what they think about how the space is organized. Make notes reflecting on the social purpose and meaning of your “straight line(s)”. Bring what you've documented along with your notes (1-2 pages typed) to class. Due November 8th.

Section 5: Schemes to Improve the World, and their Regimes of Truth/Power

Tuesday, November 6
The Perception of the Environment... Tim Ingold

Thursday, November 8

Presentations for Activity 4

Tuesday, November 13
Bewitching Development...

Thursday, November 15
Bewitching Development...

Tuesday, November 20
Bewitching Development...

Thursday, November 22
NO CLASS- THANKSGIVING BREAK

Tuesday, November 27
Bewitching Development...

Thursday, November 29
Group Presentations

Tuesday, December 4

New Course Proposal Cover Sheet (July 2012)
Group Presentations

Thursday, December 6
Final Discussion, Hand out topics for final paper