

070.279 – Ecological Anthropology

Anand Pandian*

Department of Anthropology, Johns Hopkins University
Spring 2015, Fridays 1:30-3:50 PM, 400 Gilman Hall

This course explores questions of nature, ecology and environment from an anthropological perspective, drawing on case studies from around the globe. Topics include the urban ecology of cities such as New York and Baltimore, indigenous livelihoods in Siberia and South America, nuclear and environmental politics in the United States, and relations between human beings and diverse non-human organisms.

Materials – The five required books (Gandy, Willerslev, Bessire, Masco, and Kirksey) are available at the campus bookstore. Regular “field visits” (both local and cinematic) will complement these texts. You are asked to acquire a dedicated notebook for your field observations. A course blog has been created at jhuecoanth.blogspot.com to share whatever we are learning regarding the urban ecology of Baltimore.

Requirements (and % of overall grade) – The class will be taught as a seminar; attendance at all class sessions is required, as is active participation in discussion (20%). By midnight each Thursday, you will post a brief (<100 words) reaction to the week’s reading on Blackboard, broaching a topic for discussion (10%). You will write two essays (3-4 pp 1.5x space) on our readings (20% each), and keep a notebook recording your observations of our field visits (10%). Finally, you will help develop a group project on a topic in the ecological anthropology of Baltimore city, to propose, present, and write up in stages (20%).

Resources – To explore the field and develop your class projects, take a look at the *Anthropology and Environment Society* homepage (www.aaanet.org/sections/ae/), the online anthropology database *Anthrosource* (www.anthrosource.net), as well as these scholarly journals: *Conservation and Society*; *Cultural Anthropology*; *Environment & Society*; *Environmental History*; *Human Ecology*; *Nature & Culture*; *Society and Natural Resources*; and *Society and Space*. On Baltimore, resources include the extensive website for the Baltimore Ecosystem Study (www.beslter.org); organizations such as Blue Water Baltimore and the People & Parks Foundation; and the Baltimore Office of Sustainability.

Policies – (1) *Email*. You will receive periodic notices and instructions concerning coursework on your JHU email account; you are responsible for ensuring receipt of these messages.

(2) *Attendance*. Unexcused absences from class will compromise your grade, so please ensure that your name is recorded during each session on the class attendance sheet.

(3) *Electronic devices*. Use of such devices is distracting and disallowed during class sessions. If this expectation will pose any significant problems for you, please talk to me about this individually.

(4) *Disability*. Any student with a disability who may need accommodations in this class should obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services.

(5) *Assignments*. Late assignments will be marked down 10% per day.

(6) *Academic integrity*. The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. In this course, you must be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition.

Schedule

January 30

Introduction

Field visit: “Front Room: Dario Robleto,” Baltimore Museum of Art

* Office hours Tuesdays 1:30-3:30 PM, Macaulay 111 / pandian@jhu.edu

- February 6 **Nature and Society**
 Matthew Gandy, *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City*
 (MIT Press, 2003)
 David R. Holden, "Wyman Park: A Fractured Legacy Update," 2011
 Field visit: Wyman Park Dell
- February 13 **Nature and Modernity**
 Gandy, *Concrete and Clay*, continued
 Field visit: Baltimore Museum of Industry
First papers due in Macaulay 404 by 4pm on Monday, February 16
- February 20 **Body and Soul**
 Rane Willerslev, *Soul Hunters: Hunting, Animism and Personhood among
 the Yukaghirs* (University of California Press, 2007)
 Field visit: "Yukaghir Stories," Rane Willerslev, 1998
- February 27 **Matter and Spirit**
 Willerslev, *Soul Hunters*, continued
- March 6 **Indigenes and Others**
 Lucas Bessire, *Behold the Black Caiman: A Chronicle of Ayoreo Life*
 (University of Chicago Press, 2014)
 Field visit: "From Honey to Ashes," Lucas Bessire, 2006
- March 13 **Fantasy and Reality**
 Bessire, *Behold the Black Caiman*, continued
Second papers due in class
- March 27 **Nation and Environment**
 Joseph Masco, *The Nuclear Borderlands: The Manhattan Project in
 Post-Cold War New Mexico* (Princeton University Press, 2006)
 Field visit: "Atomic Café," Jayne Loader et al, 1982
- April 3 **Protection and Destruction**
 Masco, *The Nuclear Borderlands*, continued
 Field visit: "1945-1998," Isao Hashimoto, 2003
Group project proposals due in class
- April 10 **Humans and Nonhumans**
 Eben Kirksey et al, *The Multispecies Salon* (Duke University Press, 2014)
 See also www.multispecies-salon.org
 Field visit: JHU laboratory, TBD
- April 17 **"Ecological" Anthropology**
 Kirksey et al, *The Multispecies Salon*, continued
 Field visit: Wyman Park
- April 24 No class
- May 1 Group project presentations
 Submit field notebooks
- May 8 *Group projects due*