

Spring 2021

Culture, Humankind, and the Environment

Anthropology 070:302
Environmental Studies 381:371:01
(prerequisites: Anthropology 101 or permission of instructor)

Class meets Mondays and Thursdays 9:15-10:35am
Synchronously on Zoom

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“Wild”fire destroys Paradise, California, November 2018

Course summary

We are living a geological era characterized by human domination of the planet and the end of nature. Or, at least, some humans and some technologies have been converting the earth into a giant house, farm, and factory. The course will examine precedents and break-points in this long trajectory. The control of fire, agriculture, and European colonialism figure prominently in this history. So do less tangible forms of culture: the notion of wilderness, white supremacy, and the meaning of technology itself. We will also examine movements of reform and revolution seeking to combat pollution and related practices of exploitation. Climate change – where we end the course – is profoundly reconfiguring nature, politics, and the future of humanity.