Environmental Anthropology:  
Ethnography of Landscape  

Anthropology 542 / Geography 606  
(16:070:542:01) (16:450:606:03)

The class meets Mondays 9:15-12:15  
Ruth Adams Building, Room 302 (Douglass)

Professor David M. Hughes  
Office: Biosciences Building room 201  
Office hours: Tuesdays 2-5pm, Thursdays 10-12 noon, or by appointment  
Phone: 848-932-9299  
Email: dhughes@aesop.rutgers.edu

Course description
This course attempts to move the background into the foreground. All ethnography – except that of virtual space – unfolds on a landscape. How should the methods of writing anthropology, geography, history and related fields grapple with the diversity, flows, and impermanence of terrain? In the past, of course, scholars have ranged from environmental determinism to cultural constructivism. This course will explore a middle ground, holding human imagination and biophysical nature in productive tension. Throughout, we will devote attention to makes a good ethnography: how, in other words, the “flashlight” of concept and comparison best illuminates the dark crevasses of lives you encounter in the field.

Reading
The recommended reading is only available through regular library check-out. All of the required reading available as hard or electronic copies through the library system. I have scanned and posted reading when copyright laws permitted. Readings not scanned – invariably large portions of books – are available in the Douglass Library as hard-copy reserves. You are also welcome, of course, to purchase those books. Graduate students no longer seem to patronize the university books store since you all find better deals at Amazon or at used book sites (eg. Advanced Book Exchange, http://www.abebooks.com). Below, I have listed the books in question and the lowest price on Advanced Book Exchange or Amazon – whichever is cheaper - as of October 2013.

Presentation
Each student will take charge of a week of the course. He or she will be responsible for contributing thematic questions and summaries and critiques of some or all of the recommended reading.

Final paper
By 9 May, each student will submit a term paper or equivalent writing project in hard copy. Prior to that deadline, each student will circulate an electronic copy to the class by 29 April. In pairs, students will comment on each other’s paper and engage in general discussion of the papers on 5 May.

Grading
The grade rests on (1) in-class participation, (2) the presentation of reading material during one of the seminars, (3) the presentation of another student’s draft final paper at the end of the course, and (4) the student’s own final paper.
Syllabus

Week 1: introduction (27 January)
Place naming exercise

Basic Ideas

Week 2: What is landscape to the European (3 February)

Recommended

Week 3: Landscape imagined otherwise (10 February)

Recommended:

Week 4: The problem of nature (17 February)

Recommended

The colonial cascade

Week 5: Location and difference (24 February)

recommended

Week 6: Exploring islands (3 March)

Recommended
Week 7: Space and time measured (10 March)


**Recommended**


---

Spring break

---

Week 8: Working (24 March)


**Recommended**


Week 9: Plastic meanings (31 March)

Recommended

Week 10: Matter in space (7 April)

Recommended

Week 11: Infrastructure (14 April)
Recommended

**Care**

Week 12: Good to feel with (21 April)

Recommened

Week 13: the arrogance of stewardship (28 April)

Recommened

**Week 14: Paper presentations (5 May)**

By 9 May, each student will submit a term paper or equivalent writing project in hard copy. Prior to that deadline, each student will circulate an electronic copy to the class by 29 April. In pairs, students will comment on each other’s paper and engage in general discussion of the papers on 5 May.