Peoples and Cultures of the Amazon

ANTH 411c/611c

Fall 2015

9:30 – 10:45am, Tuesday & Thursday

Ansari Business Bldg., room 205

Dr. Louis C. Forline
Office Hours: Tuesday, 1 – 3pm
Ansari Business Bldg. Room AB511
Phone: 775-682-7840
e-mail: forline@unr.edu

Course Description

This course is designed to give students an introduction to the Amazon region and its peoples and cultures. In these terms, we will cover the prehistory and history of the region to understand the current makeup of the peoples residing in the Amazon. The Amazon covers nine different countries and while this course will give more emphasis to the Brazilian Amazon, we will also cover other parts of this region in order to appreciate the wide gamut of peoples living in this area. Regional ecology will also be studied to understand local and regional adaptations and we will also be examining global mechanisms that currently impinge upon these societies and their transformations. Thus, geopolitical factors and historical forces also bear an influence on local communities as they are linked up to the mechanisms of globalization. As this course intends to provide both a local and regional perspective we will be focusing on the indigenous and peasant communities of the Amazon, mixed blood populations and newly arrived settlers to obtain a global and comparative view of this area. This entails looking at rural and urban peoples and the dynamics that play out among them in a local, regional and global context. Each society has a unique culture but also contains elements that are subject to historical change and contact with other traditional communities and members of mainstream society. Images of the Amazon will also be presented to discuss the merits of these projections and how they are perceived in this multilayered scenario.

There will be three main texts for this course in addition to other readings which will be provided online through Webcampus and e-reserves, and class handouts. Class will be conducted through lectures, discussions, and films. Students will be expected to come to class and be prepared to discuss these readings and assigned topics for this course. In addition to class attendance and readings students will have three exams and one class presentation.
Core Objectives

CO 11 – In this Core Objective, students will apply and evaluate modes of academic inquiry, creative expression, or results of research to problems in historical and contemporary global contexts. Students will articulate connections among local, national, and international contexts and evaluate the ways that historical and contemporary global influences affect their current situations.

Students will acquire an appreciation of the origins and variation encountered in Amazonian societies and its peoples. Thus, they will gain a comprehensive overview of the Amazon region’s prehistory, colonialism and current trends. In these terms, this course will enable students to discuss and engage with issues pertaining to Amazonia and embark on future inquiries regarding this region. As such, students will learn about the inequities that emerged among indigenous peoples and European colonizers during the last 500 years, miscegenation, class relations, and how Amazonia is viewed within the framework of the world’s political economy in this global day and age. Students will also gain a fine tuned view of the different “Amazonias” as this region embraces nine different countries with different perspectives, histories and traditions.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to, orally and in writing:

1) articulate and evaluate connections among local, national, and international contexts pertaining to Amazonia’s past and present.

2) analyze multiple connections between Amazonian peoples, past and present, and how they are situated nowadays within the context of globalization.

3) demonstrate how local and global contexts of ideas or events affect understandings of contemporary and/or historical ideas, events, or issues pertaining to Amazonia.

4) critically examine how geopolitics affect current Amazonian societies.

Required texts:


Course Schedule

Week 1 (August 25 & 27)
Course Objectives
Prehistory
Origins of Region & Regional Ecology

Read Wilson, Chapter 3 (e-reserve)
Read Viveiros de Castro on course website

Week 2 (September 1 & 3)
Life Prior to European Arrival
Images of Amazon from perspective of local, regional and global contexts
First inhabitants

Read Roosevelt (handout)
Begin reading Whitehead (e-reserve)
Begin reading Nugent (a chapter, week by week)

Week 3 (September 8 & 10)
Colonial Encounters, their impacts, and how they linked Amazonia to region-wide and global ventures
Voyages of discovery

View film on reserve @ Knowledge Center (The Mission)
Read Francisco de Orellana on first travels through region and discuss imaging of Amazon warriors (handout)
Begin Reading Raffles book (a chapter, week by week)

Week 4 (September 15 & 17)
Class presentations begin
Linguistic groups and Culture Areas
Diversity of present-day inhabitants, examining mosaic of region-wide identities
Reflections on diversity, past and present, and how this was impacted by European colonization

Read Steward (e-reserve)
Begin Reading Cunha book (a chapter, week by week)
Week 5 (September 22 & 24)

Indigenous peoples and nation building
Reflections on indigenous peoples as exiles, allies and rebels
Syncretic nature of blended traditions and ambiguous nature of racial & ethnic categories, examining insider and outsider views of miscegenation
Read Treece (handout)

Week 6 (September 29 & October 1)

EXAM 1 – covering weeks 1 - 5
Myth and history
Engaging with indigenous history as told by first nation peoples

Read Ireland (handout)

Week 7 (October 6 & 8)

Traditional ethnographies
Social Organization & Cosmology
Understanding descriptive imaging, internal worldviews and social relations

Read Steward Handbook (e-reserve)

Week 8 (October 13 & 15)

Social Organization & Cosmology contd.
Embracing altered social relations vis-à-vis inter-ethnic contact, patron-client relations, compadrio, aviamento, and organization of regional labor force as linked with global economy

Read Rival text (Webcampus)

Week 9 (October 20 & 22)

Modernization
Reflecting on impact of frontier expansion, national building, and settlement

Begin discussion Euclides da Cunha & Nugent books

See Adrian Cowell film Decade of Destruction

Week 10 (October 27 & 29)

Politics of development
Impacts and fallout of Amazonian rubber boom
Reflecting on evolution of Amazonian peasantry

Read Read Julio Arana (handout)
Week 11 (November 3 & 5)

Indigenous rights past and present
Reflecting on subordination and challenges of identity politics and how this dynamic is viewed from a local, regional and international dimension

Read AC de Souza Lima & Oliveira articles

Week 12 (November 10 & 12)

Miscegenation, reemergence and new identities
Plight of indigenous peoples today
Reflecting on self-representation and engagement with mainstream society

Read Jonathan Hill (e-reserve)

Week 13 (November 17 & 19)

EXAM 2 – covering weeks 6 - 12

Indigenous peoples and the environment
Amazonia and globalization
Reflecting on indigenous resource management and image of “ecologically noble savage”

Read Forline, Posey, Balee (course website & handout)

Week 14 (November 24 & 26) – Nov. 26, Thanksgiving – no class

Future of the Amazon region
Reflecting on rural-urban trends and regional development

Read Rainforest cities (handout)

Week 15 (December 1 & 3)

Future (contd.)
Reflecting on mutual partnerships and global engagement

Read Buclet text (handout)

Week 16 (December 8)

Course wrap-up
Reflecting on emerging economies and world political economic scenario

View Justin Rowlatt BBC documentary on impact of BRICS on Amazonia
Final Meeting (December 15)

Day scheduled for LAST EXAM – covering weeks 13-16 (12:30 – 2:30pm)

Course Requirements and grading: The requirements of the course are as follows:

Undergraduate students: you will be evaluated on class presentations and in-class exams. Students will make a Power Point presentation of an article assigned by the instructor. These should be 10-minute presentations, followed by a 5-minute discussion regarding your article. Exams will cover material covered in class lectures, films, readings, and class presentations and will consist of a combination of definitions, matching, and essay questions.

1 article presentation (25% – 100 points)
3 tests (75% - 300 points)
400 points total

Graduate students: in addition to these course requirements, graduate students will prepare a term paper of 12 – 15 pages, selecting a topic with the instructor. For questions on style and format, consult the AAA website style guide: http://www.aaanet.org/publications/style_guide.pdf. Thus, grading for graduate students will be as follows:

1 article presentation (20%)
3 tests (60 %)
1 term paper (20 %)
500 points total

Grading Scale: The grading scale for the course will be as follows:

- 94-100 A
- 90-93   A-
- 87-89   B+
- 83-86   B
- 80-82   B-
- 77-79   C+
- 73-76   C
- 70-72   C-
- 67-69   D+
- 63-66   D
- 60-62   D-
- 59 and below  F
**Academic Dishonesty** includes cheating on exams, plagiarism on papers, and signing the role sheet for another student. None of these will be tolerated and any can result in a failing grade for the course and the implementation of other university disciplinary procedures.

**A Word To The Wise:** Attendance in this class is required for you to do well and attendance sheets will be filled out in each class. Keep up with the reading assignments and if you must miss class, please notify me ahead of time. Written excuses are required for absences and make up exams will be given at the discretion of the instructor. Makeup exams will be scheduled at the end of the semester.

Student athletes and others involved in university sanctioned activities must see me during the first week of class to discuss and resolve conflicts of schedule. Written verification is required. See university policy on student absences and religious holy days below.

**Office Hours, Phone Calls and E-mail:** I will be in my office during the office hours indicated above. You do not need to make an appointment during these hours and are welcome to come in and talk about anything. If you need to see me but cannot do so during these times, we can try to arrange an appointment for another time. If you wish to telephone, please do so during office hours and please do not leave messages at other times unless it is really important. In general, e-mail is preferred over phone calls (I usually check my e-mails several times a day) but I would prefer to handle anything that requires discussion in person. Please do not leave phone messages requesting me to phone you (I usually get a machine when this happens) unless it is very urgent and alternatives such as coming in to office hours and e-mail will not work. Personal and confidential matters will be discussed through messages on Webcampus in compliance with FERPA regulations.

**Special Needs or Disabilities or Other Problems:** The department of anthropology is committed to equal opportunities in education for all students, including those with physical or learning disabilities. If you have a disability for which you will need to request accommodations, please contact me or the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building, Suite 100, tel. 748-6000) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations. In addition, students who anticipate other problems involving work or family that might affect attendance or completion of any of the other requirements of the course are strongly encouraged to discuss them with me at the beginning of the semester.

**Academic Success Services:** Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (784-4433 or www.unr.edu/mathcenter/), Tutoring Center (784-6801 or www.unr.edu/tutoring/), and University Writing Center (784-6030 or http://www.unr.edu/writing_center/). These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.
**Statement on Audio and Video Recording:** Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may be given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded. I also ask that you turn off all cell phones and electronic devices before coming to class. You can use your laptop and iPads as long as they are for taking notes or making a quick consultation on an issue we are discussing in class.

**Student Absences:** By NSHE policy there are no official absences from any university class. It is the personal responsibility of the student to consult with the instructor regarding absence from class. In the event that a student misses a class because of an official university function or event or because of serious personal issues, the Office of the Vice President for Student Services may, at its discretion, send an explanation to affected faculty. The instructor shall make the final determination on whether the missed work can be done at a time other than during the regularly scheduled class period.

**Religious Holy Days:** It is the policy of NSHE to be sensitive to the religious obligations of its students. Any student missing classes, quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holy days should, whenever possible, be given an opportunity during that semester to make up the missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holy day absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor in advance in writing, if the student intends to participate in a religious holy day which does not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. This policy shall not apply in the event that administering the assignment at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the institution which could not reasonably have been avoided.

**Extra Credit:** There is an opportunity to gain extra credit. If you attend any campus lecture, you can give me a brief 1-2 page write-up of this event. You can score up to 3 points on your write-up, depending on how well you prepare it. In this manner you can earn a total of 15 extra points; that is, by attending 5 different lectures. This total will be added on to the total number of points summed up in your tests, book reports, and term paper. After adding on this extra credit to your total number of points, I will then figure your average.

**Films to see outside class (ON RESERVE IN LIBRARY)**

*Spanish-Luso Colonization & Missionization*

*The Mission*

DVD 0752

*Amazonian Rubber Boom*
Fitzcarraldo
V06612