

Course title: Cultural Ecology and Development				
Course code: NRE 127	No. of credits: 3	L-T-P distribution: 32-10-0	Learning hours: 42	
Pre-requisite course code and title (if any):				
Faculty: Dr Swarup Dutta	Department: Department of Natural Resources			
Course coordinator (s): Dr Swarup Dutta	Course instructor (s): Dr Mala Narang Reddy			
Contact details:				
Course type	Compulsory	Core	Elective	
Course offered in	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3	Other
Course Description				
<p>The course intends to build ethno-scientific perspective of human-environment relationship. This course critically analyzes dynamic features of human societies and their use of natural resources, both in the historical and the contemporary situations. The course familiarizes students with community practices and their worldview on culture and environment. The course seeks to build different perspectives and understanding of the inter-relationships between cultural practices, environment and livelihoods in a socially relevant context.</p> <p>Primary thrust of the course is to address relationship between culture and natural resource. For example, are natural resource management practices a consequence of or a cause of culture? Are these relationships similar at different times and in different places? Should any development in this context be regarded as a measure of evolutionary “success”? To organize the various answers to these questions, the course is divided into three parts (A) Theories and Concepts in Cultural Ecology (B) Community Resource Management and Culture and (3) Control, Conflict and Development. To build scientific perspective, part A focuses on theories of various cultural ecologists, while part B expose students to extend their knowledge of different community based practices and part C exposes students on the challenges and constraints in development.</p>				
Course objectives				
<p>The course provides an introduction to human-environmental interactions from anthropological perspectives. In this course, we are concerned with both human adaptability – integrating social and biological approaches – and with cultural and political ecology. This course critically analyzes dynamic features of human societies and their use of natural resources, both in the historical and the contemporary situations. It familiarizes students with community practices and their worldview on culture and environment. The course seeks to build different perspectives and understanding of the inter-relationships between cultural practices, environment and livelihoods in a socially relevant context.</p> <p>In this course we will engage in questions like: Are natural resource management practices a consequence of or a cause of culture? Are human-nature relationships similar at different times and in different places? How do different cultures differ and coincide in their understandings and engagements with nature? Are human cultures uniformly destructive in their relationships with the natural environment? Have some cultures developed subsistence patterns that do not degrade the environment? What is the nature of environmental conflict?</p>				

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Course content

SNo	Topic	L	T	P
1.	Part A. Theories and Concepts <i>Human-Nature Interference</i> Adaptation and Evolution, Human Biological Ecology (adaptation through biological means) and Cultural Ecology (adaptation through cultural means)	2		
2.	<i>Theories on Culture-Environment Relationship</i> Environmental Determinism, Possibilism, Cultural Evolution (Unilinear, Universal and Multilinear)	2		
3.	<i>Human Ecology</i> The Concept and Method of Cultural Ecology, Cultural Materialism, Political Ecology, Ethno-ecology, Systems Ecology	4		
4.	Part B. Community Resource Management and Culture <i>Cultural Ecology and Community</i> Modes of production and Modes of Resource Use (hunting/ gathering, horticulture, pastoralism and agriculture)	2	2	
5.	<i>Cultural Ecology and Social Organization</i> Tribes and Castes	4	2	
6.	<i>Cultural Ecology and Religion</i> Sacred Groves	2	2	
7.	<i>Traditional Ecological Knowledge</i> Resource Management Practices	4	2	
8.	Part C. Control, Conflict and Development Early Environment and Community Debate (forest and community)	6	2	
9.	Ecological Change, Development and Social Tension; Critical review of community based practices in India (The Case of Large Dams in India and two other case studies)	6		
	Total	32	10	

Evaluation criteria

- Assignment 1: 30%
- Assignment 2: 40%
- Final Exam: 30%

Learning outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students would be able to:

1. recognize and appreciate human cultural variation and ingenuity in terms of unique

- adaptations to varied bio-physical environments
- 2. discuss environmental problems from an anthropological perspective
- 3. apply anthropological knowledge of diverse human adaptations to contemporary environmental problems

Pedagogical approach

Materials

Required text

1. Gadgil M. and Guha R. (1992) *This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
2. Guha R. (ed.), *Social Ecology*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.
3. Ramakrishnan P.S. (2001) *Ecology and Sustainable Development*, National Book Trust.
4. Steward J. (1955) The Concept and Method of Cultural Ecology, in *Theory of Culture Change*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press.
5. Sutton M.Q. and Anderson E.N. (2004) *Introduction to Cultural Ecology*, Altamira Press, Rowman& Littlefield, Distributor, New York.

Suggested readings

1. Baviskar A. (2004) *In the Belly of the River: Tribal Conflicts Over Development in the Narmada Valley*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
2. Bennet J.W. (1975) Ecosystem Analogies in Cultural Ecology, in Steven Polgar (ed.), *Population, Ecology and Social Evolution*, Mouton Publisher, The Hague.
3. Burman B.K.R. (1982) Transfer and Alienation of Tribal Land in Buddhadeb Chaudhuri (ed.), *Tribal Development in India: Problems and Prospects*, Inter-India Publications, New Delhi.
4. Dabholkar D. (1993) *Oh Mother Narmada: On the Hot Trail of a Controversy*, Willey Eastern Limited, New Delhi.
5. Gadgil M. and Malhotra K.C. (1994) The Ecological Significance of Caste, in Guha R. (ed.), *Social Ecology*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.
6. Gadgil M. and Vartak V.D. (1994) The Sacred Uses of Nature in *Social Ecology* by Guha R., Oxford University Press, Delhi.
7. Hardesty D.H. (1977) *Ecological Anthropology*, University of Nevada, Reno.
8. Harris M. (1992) The Cultural Ecology of India's Sacred Cattle, *Current Anthropology*, 7, 51-66.
9. James A. (1973) Ecological Anthropology and Anthropological Ecology in Honigmann J. (ed.), *A Handbook of Social and Cultural Anthropology*.
10. Mencher J.P. (1994) Ecology and Social Structure: A Comparative Analysis, in Ramchandra Guha (ed.), *Social Ecology*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.
11. Rappoport R.A. (1973) The Sacred in Human Evolution in Morton H. Fried (ed.), *Exploration in Anthropology: Readings in Culture, Man and Nature*, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York, pp.403-420.
12. Shiva V. et al. (1991) *Ecology and the Politics of Survival: Conflicts over Natural Resources in India*, United Nations University Press, Sage Publications, New Delhi.
13. Vadya A.P. (1973) An Ecological Approach in Cultural Anthropology in Morton H. Fried (ed.), *Exploration in Anthropology: Readings in Culture, Man and Nature*, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York, pp.249-253.

Case studies

Websites

Journals

1. International Journal of Ecology and Development

Additional information (if any)

Student responsibilities

Attendance, feedback, discipline, guest faculty etc