
ANTH 399.8/ARKY 328.2
The Roots of the Anthropocene
GFC Hours 3-0
Winter 2024

Prerequisite(s): None.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines relationships between humans and earth systems from the combined perspectives of anthropology, archaeology, and paleoecology. The class is designed to be accessible for any student with interest in the environment, and there are no prerequisites. Subject matter focuses on the long term, and specifically on contexts where the actions of past communities structure environmental processes that we take for granted in the present as “natural”. The first part of the course focuses on environmental philosophy and will engage the concept of the Anthropocene, which has emerged as a central topic in the environmental sciences. Students will trace the development of the concept in reference to the assumed division of nature and culture that is embedded in most western trajectories of environmental thought. We will assess the question of “when?” the Anthropocene begins, and consider archaeological and paleoecological objections to the assumption that human impact in earth systems is a recent phenomenon. The second part of the course will consist of three case studies of environmental processes that have deep human histories that stretch back to the Paleolithic. This year, case studies will include: 1) The sediment load and flooding of the Huang He/Yellow River, China, 2) anthropogenic soils and global impact of Amazonian “dark earths”, and 3) anthropogenic fire and biodiversity in the Mesolithic and Neolithic of Central Europe. The final part of the course turns to the present, and we will adopt a “cybernetic” perspective towards diversity in human-environment systems and global change. We will differentiate between runaway systems, which are not responsive and careen between inner contradictions, and creative systems where biodiversity and other stabilities grow around responsive human behaviours.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The Department of Anthropology and Archaeology is committed to student knowledge and skill development. Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Develop a comprehensive knowledge of the concept of the Anthropocene and its links to trajectories of environmental thought
- Examine case studies of environmental processes that have been shaped by human actions since the Paleolithic
- Build an understanding of the deep history of human agency in environmental processes, and why it matters in contemporary environmental crises

READINGS AND TEXTBOOKS:

There is no course textbook but there will be required readings and articles. All assigned readings are available through digital access via the University of Calgary Library. There will typically be 2 peer-reviewed article length readings per lecture, and a schedule/list will be posted through D2L.

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY and EQUIPMENT:

Students must have access to a computer with an internet connection and updated browser to access D2L, a microphone and camera to participate in online guest lectures, and a word processor or other basic software which will be needed for assignments/exams.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Quiz 1	Jan 25	25%
Quiz 2	Feb 15	25%
Quiz 3	Mar 14	25%
Quiz 4	April 2	10%
Assignment	April 9	15%

Quiz format: Questions will be drawn from the lecture, course readings, and from films shown or assigned in class. Quiz questions are designed to require analysis and synthesis of concepts, and example questions will be demonstrated in lecture prior to Quiz 1. All quizzes will be noncumulative and will be administered online via D2L. Prior to each quiz, specific instructions will be provided on required preparation, question format, pre-prepared responses, and materials that can be consulted during the exam including course notes. Questions will be a mix of multiple choice and written short/long answer questions.

Assignment: This will consist of a short writing assignment on topics addressed in the final section of the course. Details and rubrics of the assignment will be released in class.

Missed work: Students may provide supporting documentation for an exemption/special request. This may include, but is not limited to, a prolonged absence from a course where participation is required, a missed course assessment, a deferred examination, or an appeal. Students are encouraged to submit documentation that will support their situation. The decision to provide supporting documentation that best suits the situation is at the discretion of the student.

Missed examinations/tests cannot be made up without the approval of the instructor. Students who miss a test/exam have up to 48 hours to contact the instructor to ask for a makeup test/exam. It is at the instructor’s discretion if they will allow a make-up exam. Students who do not schedule a makeup test/exam with the instructor within this 48-hour period forfeit the right to a makeup test/exam. A makeup test/exam will differ significantly in form and/or content from a regularly scheduled test/exam. Once approved by the instructor a makeup test/exam must be written within two weeks of the missed test/exam on a day/time scheduled by the instructor. Makeup tests/exams may differ significantly in format and/or content) from the regularly scheduled test/exam. For example, a makeup test may have a different balance of multiple choice and written questions. Once approved by the instructor a makeup test/exam must be written within two weeks (or one week etc.) of the missed test/exam on a day/time scheduled by the instructor.

Students may be asked to provide supporting documentation for an exemption/special request. This may include, but is not limited to, a prolonged absence from a course where participation is required, a missed course assessment, a deferred examination, or an appeal. Students are encouraged to submit documentation that will support their situation. Supporting documentation may be dependent on the reason noted in their personal statement/explanation provided to explain their situation. This could be medical certificate/documentation, references, police reports, invitation letter, or a statutory declaration, etc. The decision to provide supporting documentation that best suits the situation is at the discretion of the student. Students cannot be required to provide specific supporting documentation, such as a medical note. Falsification of any supporting documentation will be taken very seriously and may result in disciplinary action through the Academic Discipline regulations or the Student Non-Academic Misconduct policy.

Reappraisal of Graded Term Work: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-2.html>

Reappraisal of Final Grade: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-3.html>

Department of Anthropology and Archaeology Grading Scheme:

A+	95 – 100%	B+	80 – 84.9%	C+	67 – 70.9%	D+	55 – 58.9%
A	90 – 94.9%	B	75 – 79.9%	C	63 – 66.9%	D	50 – 54.9%
A-	85 – 89.9%	B-	71 – 74.9%	C-	59 – 62.9%	F	< 50%

Extra credit work is not available in this class. You do not need to pass each course component

to earn a passing grade in the class.

Land Acknowledgement

The University of Calgary, located in the heart of Southern Alberta, both acknowledges and pays tribute to the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7, which include the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprised of the Siksika, the Piikani, and the Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta (Districts 5 and 6).

Acknowledgment and Respect for Diversity

The Department of Anthropology and Archaeology views diversity of identity as a strength and resource. Your experiences and different perspectives are encouraged and add to a rich learning environment that fosters critical thought through respectful discussion and inclusion.

COURSE POLICIES

Please include the term ANTH 399 or ARKY 328 in the subject line of all emails.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit <https://live-ucalgary.ucalgary.ca/student-services/access>. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor or the Department Head. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Student-Accommodation-Policy.pdf>

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Academic integrity is the foundation of the development and acquisition of knowledge and is based on values of honesty, trust, responsibility, and respect. We expect members of our community to act with integrity. The University Calendar includes a statement on the principles of conduct expected of all members of the university community (including students, faculty, administrators, any category of staff, practicum supervisors, and volunteers), whether on or off university property. This statement applies in all situations where members of the university community are acting in their university capacities. All members of the university community have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with the principles of conduct statement, which is available at: www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

The University of Calgary is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect.

Academic dishonesty is not an acceptable activity at the University of Calgary, and students are **strongly advised** to read the Student Misconduct section in the University Calendar at: www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-3.html. Often, students are unaware of what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism. The most common are (1) presenting another student's work as your own, (2) presenting an author's work or ideas as your own without adequate citation, and (3) using work completed for another course. Such activities will not be tolerated in this course, and students suspected of academic misconduct will be dealt with according to the procedures outlined in the calendar at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-academic-misconduct-procedure>

For students wishing to know more about what constitutes plagiarism and how to properly cite the work of others, the Department of Geography recommends that they attend Academic Integrity workshops offered through the Student Success Centre: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/learning/academic-integrity>

INSTRUCTOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Course materials created by professor(s) (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the professor(s). These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the professor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing. Information on Instructor Intellectual Property can be found at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/intellectual-property-policy>

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT

Student information will be collected in accordance with typical (or usual) classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

COPYRIGHT LEGISLATION

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy>) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks, etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

SUPPORTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING, SUCCESS, AND SAFETY

Please visit the Registrar's website at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for additional important information on the following:

- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success Centre
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	
T Jan 9	Overview & Environments with Human Histories
R Jan 11	Separation of nature/culture in environmental thought
T Jan 16	The Old and New Ecologies
R Jan 18	The Anthropocene I
T Jan 23	The Anthropocene II
R Jan 25	Quiz 1: The Anthropocene
Case Study 1: Huang He – The Yellow River	
T Jan 30	Paleolithic to Bronze Age: Changing land practices and erosion
R Feb 1	Levees and Political Power since the Xia Dynasty
T Feb 6	Famous floods
R Feb 8	Historical development of States & flooding into the present
T Feb 13	Guest Presentation
R Feb 15	Quiz 2: The Yellow River
Feb 18-24	Reading Break. No classes.
Case Study 2: Amazonian Dark Earths	
T Feb 27	Pedogenesis and “dark earths” in Amazonia
R Feb 29	Earth-mounds, communities, and wide scale practice
T Mar 5	Garden cities and the rainforest as a managed environment
R Mar 7	Colonial visions of Amazonia as pristine wilderness
T Mar 12	New theories on global impact and the cessation of Amazonian land tenure
R Mar 14	Quiz 3: Amazonia
Case Study 3: Anthropogenic Fire and Forests that Think	
T Mar 19	Cool burns as an ecological tool: ethnographic contexts/Assignment Introduced
R Mar 21	Fire and Pleistocene/Holocene transitions in Central Europe & Alberta
T Mar 26	Controlled burns in contemporary forests
R Mar 28	Mesopitication and the internet of mushrooms
T Apr 2	Quiz 4: Anthropogenic Fire

Cybernetic Futures: Runaway vs Creative Systems	
R Apr 4	Deep history and carbon credits in Australia
T Apr 9	Deep history continued and Last Day of classes/Assignments due
Apr 12-23	Fall Final Exam Period

IMPORTANT DATES

M Jan 8	Start of Classes
R Jan 18	Last day to drop a class without a financial penalty
F Jan 19	Last day to add or swap a course
F Jan 26	Fee payment deadline for Fall Term full and half courses.
M Feb 19	Alberta Family Day No Classes.
Feb 18-24	Reading Break. No classes.
F Mar 29	Good Friday no classes
M Apr 1	Easter Monday no classes
T Apr 9	End of classes Last day to withdraw from half courses.
Apr 12-23	Fall Final Exam Period.
May 20-25	Exam period for Registrar deferred final exams

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-schedule.html#fall2017>