

ANTHROPOLOGY 620.05: CULTURAL ECOLOGY

THE ECOLOGY OF PASTORAL SOCIETIES

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Autumn 2009
MW 9:30-11:18
Monday SM1042, Wednesday SEL060

Office hours: R 9-12 or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Pastoral societies are profoundly shaped by the activity of raising herd animals and they are thus an excellent case study of cultural adaptation to the ecology. To come to an anthropological understanding of how raising herd animals in particular physical and political environments shapes pastoral peoples' lives, we will examine pastoral societies from the theoretical frameworks of cultural ecology, political ecology and the new ecology. We will survey a wide range of pastoral societies in a variety of socio-economic, historical and environmental settings in Africa, the Near East, and Central Asia.

We will examine one theoretical question about the cultural ecology of pastoral societies in a collaborative course project. Because of the nature of their economy, pastoralists risk losing their livelihood overnight to drought, diseases, and other disasters. Pastoralists have developed different strategies to cope with these risks, including social strategies. In African pastoral societies, for example, livestock exchanges have been considered a critical strategy to cope with environmental risks. However, there is much variation in livestock exchanges across African pastoral societies and in many non-African societies there are no livestock exchanges but one finds other social institutions like patron-client relations. The question is what explains the variation in social risk management strategies in pastoral societies?

We will examine this question collaboratively through a combination of ethnographic and ethnological research approaches. Together we will design the study, collect, discuss and analyze the data, and write up the results over the course of the quarter.

On Mondays I will lecture in 1042 Smith Laboratory and on Wednesdays we will work collaboratively on the course project in the Learning Collaboration Studio in 060 Science and Engineering Library.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

You will learn how pastoral societies are shaped by their physical and political environments by participation in a collaborative research project that combines ethnographic and ethnological approaches.

READING LIST

The following book is required and available in the OSU Book Store and in online stores like Amazon.com.

Barfield, Thomas J.

1993 *The nomadic alternative*. Englewood Cliffs (NJ): Prentice Hall.

Additional readings are made available through Carmen and the course wiki.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

Attendance and participation: You are expected to be actively engaged in class; that is, coming to class prepared, paying attention, and contributing to discussions and problem solving, both by making comments and by facilitating other people's participation. Because it is difficult to do well in the course if sessions are missed *attendance at every class meeting is required*. Late arrival and early departure are considered poor participation; they are disruptive to others and make it likely to miss essential information. Please contact me if there is an emergency situation. If you are ill and must miss a class, you are responsible for getting the notes and assignment information from your classmates.

Readings: All assigned readings are mandatory. You are expected to have read the assigned readings once or twice before you come to class. As you read, highlight, take notes, summarize, look up new words or concepts, and come with questions for me and/or your classmates. In short, be prepared to discuss the readings in class. I also recommend you to go over the readings once more after class.

Research paper: Students will write a short 8-page research paper about a pastoral society of their choice. Students will use the theoretical framework of cultural ecology to examine the social risk management strategies that pastoralists use to cope with environmental risks and insecurities. The research paper is divided in several smaller research assignments that have to be completed over the course of the quarter, including 1) basic description of the society; 2) annotated bibliography; 3) dependent variable; and 4) independent variables.

The research paper is part of a course project that aims to explain the variation in social risk management strategies across pastoral societies. Data on the independent and dependent variables for the ethnological project comes from students' research papers. The success of the class-wide project depends on the contribution of each individual student. All the assignments have to be completed on the wiki, including the research paper.

Course project: As a class we will use the theoretical framework of cultural ecology to explain and understand the variation across pastoral societies, in particular the variation in social risk management strategies. We will examine this topic collaboratively through a combination of ethnographic and ethnological

research approaches. Together we will design the study, collect, discuss and analyze the data, and write up the results over the course of the quarter.

Most of the work on the course project will be conducted in class on Wednesday in the Learning Collaboration Studio in 060 Science and Engineering Library. There will be a number of small homework assignments that prepare you for the research activities in class. There will two larger assignments in which small groups of students collectively will write a peer-review of the article for the course project.

Evaluation: Course responsibilities will be weighted in the following way:

1. Attendance, participation, and homework	20%
2. Research paper	
Description of society	10%
Annotated bibliography	10%
Dependent variable	10%
Independent variables	10%
Final version	30%
3. Course project	
Peer review	10%
Total	100%

Final grades are based on the OSU Standard Scheme. A general guide to how you are doing is: A 93; A- 90-92; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D+ 67-69; D 60-66; E < 60.

Special notes from the instructor

- I am using a wiki for all the course work. You have to sign up for a wikidot account at www.wikidot.com and become a member of the course wiki 62005.wikidot.com by using the secret password (geep).
- I strive to make this a paper-less course. All assignments have to be completed on the course wiki. I do not want hard copies.
- Email related to the class must be marked in the subject line in the following way: *ANTH 620.05 your last name*.
- I will use Carmen to post assignments and other information for the class (e.g., cancelled office hours, changes in reading assignments). Check it at regularly (at least twice a week).
- If you are a student with a disability and need accommodations, you are welcome to meet with me to discuss arrangements for the accommodations.
- Except in cases of properly documented illness or personal emergency will late assignments be accepted; they will progressively lose value and will be evaluated and returned as time allows.
- Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated and reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

SCHEDULE AND TOPICS¹

PART I: CULTURAL ECOLOGY

WEEK 0: INTRODUCTION

September 23: Introduction
Introduction (Barfield 1993)

WEEK 1: CULTURAL ECOLOGY

September 28: Cultural ecology
Cultural ecology (Steward 1955:36-42), The cattle keepers (Barfield 1993)
September 30: Project – Wiki workshop; talk by Kevin Nolan (10:30)
The Sandford thesis (Moritz et al. 2009)

WEEK 2: FAMILY HERDS

October 5: Herds and household
Household viability (Stenning 1971), Herds (Leslie & Dyson-Hudson 1999)
October 7: Project – Theoretical framework
Pastoral moral economy (Moritz 2009)
• Basic description of society

WEEK 3: THE AFRICAN CATTLE COMPLEX

October 12: The African Cattle Complex
The moral economy (Bollig 1998), A Sebei Capitalist (Goldschmidt 1972)
October 14: Project – eHRAF workshop in Thompson Library 150A, Nancy Courtney
Brideprice economics (Goldschmidt 1974)

PART II: POLITICAL ECOLOGY

WEEK 4: POLITICAL ECOLOGY

October 19: Political ecology
The camel nomads (Barfield 1993), Political Ecology (Bassett 1988)
October 21: Project – Research design
Cross-cultural analysis (Johnson 2002)
• Annotated bibliography

WEEK 5: EQUALITY AND INEQUALITY

October 26: Equality and inequality
Good shepherds (Barfield 1993), producing their fates (Bradburd 1989)
October 28: Project – Independent variable; talk by Kristen Ritchey
Livelihoods (Moritz, Ritchey and Kari 2009)
• Independent variables

¹ Please note that this is a tentative schedule and that the instructor reserves the right to make changes.

WEEK 6: PASTORALISTS AND THE STATE

November 2: Pastoralists and the state

The horse riders (Barfield 1993), tribal/peasant pastoralists (Salzman 2004)

November 4: Project – Dependent variables

- Dependent variables

PART III: THE NEW ECOLOGY

WEEK 7: THE TURKANA

November 9: Turkana pastoralists

Success and failure (McCabe 1990)

Film: Kenya – The Year of the Clouds

November 11: Veterans Day

No Class

WEEK 8: TRAGEDY OF THE COMMONS

November 16: The overgrazing controversy

The tragedy of the commons (Hardin 1968), the case against (McCabe 1990)

November 18: Project – Data analysis

WEEK 9: NEW ECOLOGY

November 23: New ecology

Rethinking range ecology (Behnke & Scoones 1993)

November 25: Project – Data analysis

WEEK 10: PASTORALISTS UNDER PRESSURE

November 30: Development and conservation

A clash of Conservation Models (Igoe 2004:36-68)

December 2: Project – Discussion of results

The enduring nomad (Barfield 1993)

- Peer-review of article

FINALS WEEK

- Final research paper is due Tuesday December 8th before 12 noon

READING LIST

Barfield, Thomas J.

1993 The nomadic alternative. Englewood Cliffs (NJ): Prentice Hall.

Bassett, Thomas J.

1988 The political ecology of peasant-herder conflicts on the northern Ivory Coast. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 78(3):453-472.

Behnke Jr., Roy H., and Ian Scoones

1993 Rethinking range ecology: implications for rangeland management in Africa. *In*

- Range ecology at disequilibrium: new models of natural variability and pastoral adaptation in African Savannas. R.H. Behnke Jr., I. Scoones, and C. Kerven, eds. Pp. 1-30. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Bollig, Michael
1998 Moral economy and self-interest: kinship, friendship, and exchange among the Pokot (N.W. Kenya). *In* Kinship, networks, and exchange. T. Schweizer and D.R. White, eds. Pp. 137-157. Structural Analysis in the Social Sciences. Cambridge (UK): Cambridge University Press.
- Bradburd, Daniel A.
1989 Producing their fates: why poor Basseri settled but poor Komachi and Yomut did not. *American Ethnologist* 16(3):502-518.
- Goldschmidt, Walter
1972 The operations of a Sebei capitalist: a contribution to economic anthropology. *Ethnology* 11(3):187-201.
- Goldschmidt, Walter
1974 The economics of brideprice among the Sebei in East Africa. *Ethnology* 13(4):311-331.
- Hardin, G
1968 The tragedy of the commons. *Science* 162(3859):1243-1248.
- Johnson, Amber Lynn
2002 Cross-Cultural Analysis of Pastoral Adaptations and Organizational States: A Preliminary Study. *Cross-cultural research* 36(2):151-180.
- Leslie, Paul W., and Rada Dyson-Hudson
1999 People and herds. *In* Turkana herders of the dry savanna: ecology and biobehavioral response of nomads to an uncertain environment. M.A. Little and P.W. Leslie, eds. Pp. 233-247. Research monographs on human population biology. Oxford (UK): Oxford University Press.
- McCabe, J. Terrence
1990 Turkana pastoralism: a case against the Tragedy of the Commons. *Human Ecology* 18(1):81-103.
- McCabe, J. Terrence
1990 Success and failure: the breakdown of traditional drought coping institutions among the pastoral Turkana of Kenya. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* XXV(3-4):146-160.
- Moritz, Mark
2009 The pastoral moral economy. Manuscript.
- Moritz, Mark, Kristen Ritchey and Saïdou Kari
2009 Hired herder livelihoods in the Far North Region of Cameroon. Manuscript.
- Moritz, Mark, et al.
2009 Too Many people and Too Few Livestock in West Africa? An Evaluation of Sandford's Thesis. *Journal of Development Studies* 45(7):1-21.
- Salzman, Philip Carl
2004 Pastoralists: Equality, Hierarchy, and the State. Boulder (CO): Westview press.
- Stenning, Derrick J.
1958 Household viability among the pastoral Fulani. *In* The development cycle in domestic group. J. Goody, ed. Pp. 92-119. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Steward, Julian
1955 The concept and methods of cultural ecology. *In* The theory of culture change. Pp. 30-42. Urbana (IL): University of Illinois.