

ESPM 3051 Lands and Humans in World Cultures

CREDITS: 3 Credits, Spring 2022 (No Pre-requisites)

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Fully online asynchronous. No in-person meeting is scheduled.

ZOOM OFFICE HOURS: Thursday 2-3 pm or by appointment. Zoom link is provided at the course Canvas.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

- When we travel the world, we are often surprised by many different ways that people use lands to produce food and fiber, build and maintain housings, and extract resources like water and timber. In this course, we will learn how those culture-specific land-uses have developed. We will look into the scientific, cultural, and historical origins of the diverse land-use practices and associated sustainability issues found across world cultures.
- Scholars of different backgrounds and interests have been engaged in this topic. For example, consider indigenous farming in mountainous Oaxaca, Mexico. Soil scientists can tell us about rocky soils and steep slopes that have challenged their agricultural practice or about how their Milpa system has transformed the soils. On the other hand, anthropologists will help us understand how their relationship with the lands has helped shape their culture and the surrounding life-supporting ecosystems. This course thus adopts interdisciplinary perspectives. Students will read, think about, and discuss materials sourced from disciplines such as environmental science, geography, economics, anthropology, and history.
- Students in this course seek to cultivate non-judgmental perspectives of diverse land-uses and associated sustainability challenges. Instead of starting with stating the sustainability challenges and discussing what ought to be done to fix the problems, we will focus on examining how these issues are deeply interwoven with their environments, ecology, culture, and history.

THIS COURSE MEETS GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE LIBERAL EDUCATION THEME.

““Liberal Education is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change”.” AAC&U (Association of American Colleges and Universities

About 40% of the ice-free land on the earth is currently subject to human land uses. How we use the land is critical to how we feed our growing population without risking the future sustainability of the earth. Instead of approaching this global challenge from a top-down

perspective, this course takes a bottom-up approach. We start from many different corners of the earth where the lands and the people have had a long history of interacting with each other. The lands have shaped the people while the people shaped the lands around them. This is an intimate process that is invisible to us if we insist on a bird-eye view. Likewise, as much as the processes are physical, chemical, and biological, they have been formed by the people who are a part of the history, society, and culture.

This course's ultimate goal is to cultivate culturally sensitive and ethically responsible citizens who are aware of complex historical, cultural, and scientific factors that underlie diverse land-use practices and sustainability issues in the modern world. Rather than starting with sustainability problems and solutions, we will prioritize understanding the logic and history behind the land-uses that have long contributed to the issues. For example, shifting cultivation is often criticized for damaging tropical forests and biodiversity. Few, however, acknowledge that this is the oldest form of agriculture and that many indigenous cultures have successfully woven shifting cultivation into sustainable resource management. With this priority, reading materials and discussion guides have been designed in collaboration with the University librarians. Several interview lectures will be provided by international scholars from the cultures of our topics; they will share their first-hand knowledge of traditional land-uses and sustainability challenges.

This course shows that in many world cultures and countries, innovations in land-use have been and still remain a powerful source of social changes. By paying close attention to what people did and do to the lands and the resulting feedback loops, this course seeks ***to foster a stronger sense of our roles as historical agents that have the power to address global challenges of food and sustainability.*** This course illustrates that seemingly small changes in the ways that people interact with lands can give rise to large-scale social changes. For example, a small technological innovation in plow shifted the economic landscape of Medieval Europe. Farmers' incessant efforts to improve rice cultivation fundamentally transformed Asia's food, society, and ecological environments. In addition to documenting land-use as an incubator of large-scale social changes, the course includes topics like marginalized people on marginalized lands and indigenous mountain farmers, which intend to expose students to the places where our role as an agent of positive changes matters. Several lectures will be delivered by scholars or activists who will share their concerns for the connections between land-uses and sustainability issues in different cultures.

Lastly, many efforts are currently underway to find and implement solutions to unsustainable land uses in different parts of the world. We will look into those efforts ***to illustrate how knowledge and practices inform each other.*** The feedback between knowledge and practice has long shaped the changes in land-uses. For example, our understanding of water movement and farmers' irrigation practices and experiences have informed each other, leading to agricultural evolutions in Mesopotamia, Andalusia in Spain, and Mid-Atlantic US that will be discussed in the course. Sometimes, contradicting views of practice lead to competing knowledge and policies, producing intense debates. Conflicting views, knowledges, and policies on shifting cultivation is one of good examples we will discuss in this course. Exploring the relationship between knowledge and practice is also an important component of discussions in this course.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Can locate and critically evaluate information.

-This course draws its materials from multiple disciplines: environmental science, geography, economics, anthropology, and history. It then becomes important to identify disciplinary boundaries, locate relevant information source materials, and critically evaluate and synthesize the information from different disciplines. Lecture and group discussions will expose these disciplinary boundaries and crossovers.

-For each theme, students will be introduced to a list of literature from different disciplines in diverse formats (peer-reviewed vs. magazine articles, for example). Quizzes and discussions will include questions that require (1) identifying the disciplines of the authors and describing the formats of the reading material, (2) differentiating the targeted audiences and writing styles of these reading materials, and (3) comparing contradictory or complementary arguments from different authors.

Understand diverse philosophies and cultures within and across societies.

-Understanding human-land interactions is a key to better understanding diverse cultures across societies. Students will create a voice-thread presentation as a final. The presentation should focus on a culture or 'country's specific land uses and sustainability issues, explicitly addressing the feedback between the 'society's land use practices and its sustainability, and connect the discussion to global or US land uses and sustainability issues. Students will be provided with plenty of examples through lectures.

COURSE CANVAS USE

Student Question Forum

Use this space to ask general questions about class content, procedures, or scheduling. If you see a question and know the answer, feel free to reply! The student question forum is accessible from "Ask and Connect" in the course Canvas homepage.

Inbox

If you have a question of a more personal nature, (grades, personal situations, class concerns) please send an [In-Box message](#).

Updates

Each module will become accessible on Monday.

Deadlines

- Th. midnight: Viewing lectures, reading, and online discussion (initial post).
- Sun midnight: online discussion (response posts), Quiz, and reflections

Grading

Following grades will become immediately available when you complete them.

-Viewing lectures and Quiz

Following grades will become available when the instructor posts the grades.

-Online discussion initial posts (IP) and response posts (RP), weekly reflections/preflections, and final project

STUDENTS WORKLOAD AND ASSIGNMENTS

This is a three-credit course. Students are expected to work 9 hrs per week in order to achieve reasonable grades (above C). See below how the workload is divided into different course activities.

(1) Assigned readings

There will be ~3 reading assignments per weekly module. Reading materials are available in a digital course package (Library Course Page in the course Canvas). Reading materials are sourced from peer-reviewed academic journal papers, newspaper and magazine articles, nonfiction and fiction books, youtube videos, reports from non-governmental organizations, governments, and international agencies. Students will need ~4 hrs per week to complete the reading assignments.

Each 'module's required reading materials are chosen to cover the following aspects: (1) scientific, cultural, and ethical contexts around a culture- or country-specific land uses and associated sustainability issues and (2) our roles as historical agents who can make positive impacts by connecting knowledge and practices.

(2) Weekly Quizzes

Weekly quizzes are on reading assignments and lecture materials. Each Quiz has 10-20 questions in the format of T/F, multiple choices, and short answers. It will take ~1hr to complete a quiz.

(3) Online Discussion

Based on lecture and reading materials, there will be an online discussion each week. This activity will require 1 hr per week.

(4) Weekly Reflection

Students will respond to guided questions to reflect on the 'week's learning through lectures, readings, and discussions. This activity will require 1 hr per week.

(5) Cumulative Presentation Project (This replaces mid-term and final.)

Students build a 15 min long voice-thread presentation on a topic related to the course over the semester. This project should clearly show the 'students' understanding of a culture or a 'country's specific land-use systems and related sustainability issues, understanding of background knowledge that explains how the specific land uses and sustainability issues are coupled, and ability to relate the specific regional issues to global or US land uses and sustainability issues. The final products will be graded. This activity requires a total of ~10 hrs per semester.

GRADING (A-F)

Assignments	Contribution to Final Grade (%)
Viewing Lectures	20
Quiz	20
Online discussion	20
Weekly Reflection	20
Final Project	20
Total	100

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

Late Assignments: Late assignments receive a 10% deduction per day. No submission receives 0 points.

Additional / Extra Credit Assignments: The instructor will not provide additional extra credit assignments for students seeking to improve their grades in the course. This practice is unfair to other students and creates an additional workload for the instructor. There are ample opportunities for students to earn grade points during regularly assigned coursework.

Policy on Grades: The A-F grading scale allows the following grades and corresponding GPA points:

- a. The F does not earn grade points, and the student does not earn University credit. The credit hours for the course count in the grade point average. The F is assigned when the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit, or (2) was not completed, and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be given an I.
- b. Instructors are not required to use pluses and minuses when grading on the A-F scale.
- c. Grade points are the same regardless of the level or course of enrollment (e.g., graduate or undergraduate level).
- d. Except for the Law School, the University does not award A+ grades, nor are D- grades permitted.

Grade	GPA Points	Definitions for undergraduate credit
A	4.000	Represents achievement that significantly exceeds expectations in the course.
B	3.000	Represents achievement that is above the minimum expectations in the course.
C	2.000	Represents achievement that meets the minimum expectations in the course.
D	1.000 -	Represents achievement that partially meets the minimum expectations in the course. Credit is earned, but it may not fulfill major or program requirements.
F	0.000	Represents failure in the course, and no credit is earned.

STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community. As a student at the University you are expected adhere to Board of Regents Policy: *Student Conduct Code*. To review the Student Conduct Code, please see:

http://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf.

Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach or student learning. The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities."

SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

You are expected to do your own academic work and cite sources as necessary. Failing to do so is scholastic dishonesty. Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or

misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis. (Student Conduct Code:

http://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf) If it is determined that a student has cheated, the student may be given an "F" or an "N" for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the University. For additional information, please see:

<http://policy.umn.edu/education/instructorresp>.

The Office for Community Standards has compiled a useful list of Frequently Asked Questions pertaining to scholastic dishonesty: <https://communitystandards.umn.edu/avoid-violations/avoiding-scholastic-dishonesty>. If you have additional questions, please clarify with your instructor for the course. Your instructor can respond to your specific questions regarding what would constitute scholastic dishonesty in the context of a particular class-e.g., whether collaboration on assignments is permitted, requirements and methods for citing sources, if electronic aids are permitted or prohibited during an exam.

USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES IN THE CLASSROOM

Using personal electronic devices in the classroom setting can hinder instruction and learning, not only for the student using the device but also for other students in the class. To this end, the University establishes the right of each faculty member to determine if and how personal electronic devices are allowed to be used in the classroom. For complete information, please reference: <http://policy.umn.edu/education/studentresp>.

MAKEUP WORK FOR LEGITIMATE ABSENCES

Students will not be penalized for absence during the semester due to unavoidable or legitimate circumstances. Such circumstances include verified illness, participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, bereavement, and religious observances. Such circumstances do not include voting in local, state, or national elections. For complete information, please see:

<http://policy.umn.edu/education/makeupwork>.

APPROPRIATE STUDENT USE OF CLASS NOTES AND COURSE MATERIALS

Taking notes is a means of recording information but more importantly of personally absorbing and integrating the educational experience. However, broadly disseminating class notes beyond the classroom community or accepting compensation for taking and distributing classroom notes undermines instructor interests in their intellectual work product while not substantially furthering instructor and student interests in effective learning. Such actions violate shared norms and standards of the academic community. For additional information, please see:

<http://policy.umn.edu/education/studentresp>.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

"Sexual harassment" means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment in any University activity or program. Such behavior is not acceptable in the University setting. For additional information, please consult Board of Regents Policy:

https://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/Sexual_Harassment_Sexual_Assault_Stalking_Relationship_Violence.pdf

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The University provides equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: http://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/Equity_Diversity_EO_A.pdf.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

The University of Minnesota views disability as an important aspect of diversity, and is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

- If you have, or think you have, a disability in any area such as, mental health, attention, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical, please contact the DRC office on your campus (UM Twin Cities - [612.626.1333](tel:612.626.1333)) to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.
- Students with short-term disabilities, such as a broken arm, can often work with instructors to **minimize** classroom barriers. In situations where additional assistance is needed, students should contact the DRC as noted above.
- If you are registered with the DRC and have a disability accommodation letter dated for this semester or this year, please contact your instructor early in the semester to review how the accommodations will be applied in the course.
- If you are registered with the DRC and have questions or concerns about your accommodations please contact your (access consultant/disability specialist).

Additional information is available on the DRC website: UM Twin Cities - <https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/> or e-mail UM Twin Cities - drc@umn.edu) with questions.

MENTAL HEALTH AND STRESS MANAGEMENT

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website: <http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu>.

ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY: FOR COURSES THAT DO NOT INVOLVE STUDENTS IN RESEARCH

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.*

Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the Department Chair, your adviser, the associate dean of the college, or the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost.

COVID-19, Face-Covering Requirement, Symptoms, Vaccination, and Boosters

The University requires all students and employees to be vaccinated or have a valid exemption; more information is at [safe-campus website](#). On January 5, 2022 President Gabel announced an update on COVID-19 and campus operations which strongly encourages all community members to get a booster as soon as they are eligible. For information about getting a booster and how to schedule an appointment, please refer to [the University's Get the Vax 2.0 initiative](#).

Stay at home if you experience any signs of illness or have a positive COVID-19 test result, and consult with your healthcare provider about an appropriate course of action. Absences related to illness, including COVID-19 symptoms, for yourself or your dependents, are [excused absences](#) and I will work with you to find the best course of action for missed work and course content. I will follow these same protocols and will let you know if the delivery of this course has to be temporarily changed as the result of my own circumstances.

See below for additional details:

People who are not vaccinated are at high risk for getting and spreading SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. New variants such as Omicron spread more easily and quickly which may lead to more cases of COVID-19 among college students this semester. Increases in the number of COVID-19 cases are straining healthcare resources.

The best defenses against contracting COVID-19 and spreading it to others are vaccination, masking, and taking measures to isolate when symptomatic or COVID-19 positive.

When indoors on campus, students, faculty, staff and guests are currently [required to wear a face covering \(mask\)](#). You must wear your mask so that it covers both your nose and mouth. This will help protect all members of the community, and especially those who are immunocompromised and/or who are caretakers of others (e.g., young children) who are not yet vaccinated. Even though vaccinations are highly protective and required for all students and employees, breakthrough infections do occur; therefore, indoor masking continues to be one of our most important tools for ensuring sustained in-person learning. With the high transmissibility of the recent variants it is strongly recommended that you use an enhanced mask— a surgical mask either alone or in combination with a cloth mask, or an N95, KN95, AirPop or similar mask. Surgical masks are widely available throughout campus, and you can get free high-quality masks by following the instructions at <https://www.uhs.umn.edu/university-health-and-safety-mask-support-program>.

Both the Center for Disease Control ([CDC](#)) and Minnesota Department of Health ([MDH](#)) recommend that we stay home and get tested if we are experiencing [COVID-19 symptoms](#), even if we're already fully vaccinated. I commit to doing my part to keep you and your peers safe by doing this, and I expect that you will too. If you experience [COVID-19 symptoms](#) or symptoms of any potentially infectious respiratory or other illness, you should stay home or in your residence hall room and not come to class or to campus. Consult your healthcare provider about an appropriate course of action, and refer to the [M-test program](#) for COVID-19 testing resources. If you test positive for COVID-19 here are the guidelines for [what to do](#).

The above policies and guidelines are subject to change because the University regularly updates [pandemic guidelines](#) in response to guidance from health professionals and in relation to the prevalence of the virus and its variants in our community. Any changes in COVID-19 policy will be indicated in email messages from the Administration and these syllabus details will be modified as needed.

COURSE SCHEDULE

<u>Weeks</u>	<u>Topic</u>
<u>1</u>	Introduction
<u>2</u>	Shifting cultivation in the modern world and an example from Nagaland, India
<u>3</u>	Tropics vs. The Rest: Inherent challenges for food production
<u>4</u>	Manure revolution and divergence in Asia vs. Europe
<u>5</u>	Plow as a driver of social change in the Medieval NW Europe
<u>6</u>	Animals in the equation of land-use
<u>7</u>	Irrigation in the ancient Mesopotamia

	Spring Break
8	Landscapes as riverscapes: from Mesopotamia to the Mid-Atlantic US
9	Globalization and the life expectancy of soils in Andalusia, Spain
10	Earthworms and the People in Boreal Forests and the Arctic
11	Marginal Lands and Marginalized People
12	Rice farming in Asia and an example from Jindo Island, S. Korea
13	Indigenous Mountain Farming in Mexico
14	Anthropocene from the land perspective