SOAN 203: The Anthropology of Good Intentions
Fall 2021
Carleton College
Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Instructor: Dr. Constanza Ocampo-Raeder
Email: constanza@carleton.edu
Mode of Instruction: Online (Tues-Thurs 8:15-10:00 am)
Office Hours: TBA Please sign up via Google Calendar

“People with good intentions but limited understanding are more dangerous than people with total ill will.”
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

COURSE GOALS
We seem to be living in an exciting time. Regardless of if you aim to make a difference locally or in a far-off land there are countless internships, volunteer opportunities, responsible products to choose from, engaging travel options or venues to create projects designed to make a positive impact on the environment or on the lives of those less fortunate than ourselves. However, even though there seems to be good intentions everywhere many environmental and humanitarian problems persist and we must ask: how effective are these initiatives? Do they truly deliver what they promise? How can we measure success or failure? Is this a fair process or are there voices left unheard or represented?

In this course I aim to show how anthropology is well suited to answering some of these questions because a) we count with a useful set of theoretical frameworks and disciplinary insights that allow us to understand cultural complexity, diversity, and change; b) we have a unique methodological traditions that lets us document cultural and social phenomena holistically; and c) we have created fruitful collaborations with related and akin disciplines (e.g. geography, political science, history, ecology, and economics) that permits a more complete analysis of contemporary environmental and humanitarian challenges. For these reasons, the main goal of this course is to demonstrate the important role anthropological inquiry plays in finding solutions to conservation and development dilemmas.

To achieve this, the course strives to expose students to key theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches used in anthropology today and to directly link them to real-world scenarios and pressing problems. In other words, the course is designed to give students practical tools, imbued with anthropological frameworks, which can be used to find viable solutions.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
As part of Carleton's assessment initiative, the SOAN Department of has identified six Student Learning Outcomes for SOAN majors. In this course you will learn four of these outcomes:

- Formulate appropriate sociological and/or anthropological research questions about socio-cultural phenomena.
- Select appropriate sociological and/or anthropological research methods to study socio-cultural phenomena.
- Apply sociological and anthropological theory to analyze socio-cultural phenomena.
- Draw upon your understanding of historical and contemporary socio-cultural phenomena to engage the world.
TEACHING PHILOSOPHY
This course presents some peculiar didactic challenges since we will be critiquing initiatives that you may be active in or have strong opinions about. This means that we will also often find that we are critiquing ourselves and that is an uncomfortable process because no one likes to uncover, talk about, or publicly discuss the ways in which we perpetuate a societal problem. You will also find that in many cases solutions are very elusive and so the course might give the impression that we are only criticizing but not actively contributing to developing viable resolutions. In other words, the course can be very frustrating, but that is my goal! The reason is that solutions need to be complex because we are dealing with complex problems, success and failure happens over extended periods of time or in cyclical patterns making definite conclusions about the state of a project hard to make, and because future events (environmental, economic, social, political, etc.) are difficult to predict and successful projects often fail unexpectedly. However, my objective is to have that frustration turn into a productive energy that accepts the complexity of issues and is not afraid to question or innovate in real situations. This process will hopefully help foster intelligent, deliberate, and equitable thinking when it comes to addressing environmental and humanitarian issues which is, in my opinion, a better approach than one based on pure passion.

So, I ask you to not shy away from your activism but to also trust the process and embrace your frustrations and the struggle that emerges. I have taught this class for several years and I assure you that the lessons learned will be of value. For more on my teaching vision, please review my teaching philosophy posted on Moodle, especially my “manifesto” on learning to embrace the struggle of learning, what I call La Lucha.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS
Your grade during the term will be assessed through a combination of participatory activities, written assignments and exams. More specifically your final grade will be divided into three broad sections: 1) participation & attendance, 2) exams (a midterm and pop quizzes), and 3) project-based assignments (product analysis & happiness assignment). Instructions, rational and objectives for each assignment will be clearly outlined and posted on Moodle or handed out during class.

Assignments, expectations, and exams are weighed as follows:

- Attendance and Participation 20%
- Squirrel Hunting Assignment 15%
- Happiness Assignment 10%
- Product Analysis Assignment 15%
- Midterm Exam 15%
- Pop Quiz and Assessments (3-4) 15%
- Final Project Poster 10%

SYLLABUS: THE LIVING ENTITY
Although I have a very good idea of how I would like to teach this course, I like to have the option of changing course materials to adapt to student interests. For this reason, I reserve the right to change the syllabus as we go forward. To avoid confusion a Moodle webpage has been create for this course. On Moodle you will be able to find that day’s hypothesis (useful for contextualizing class themes), required and suggested readings, assignments and relevant materials for each week, as well as links to
submit your assignments. Please make sure you visit the website every week for important messages and instructions.

**LATE AND MAKE-UP POLICY**
I am very strict about due dates and unless you have a legitimate excuse for turning in an assignment late or missing an exam I will either not accept the assignment or deducts a full grade for every day an assignment is late. A legitimate excuse entails contacting your student Dean, discussing the issue with them and providing the necessary evidence they require. I am certainly sympathetic to emergencies but in general I do ask you to try to let me know what is happening before the assignment or exam comes around in order to avoid misunderstandings.

**RECORDING CLASS**
Please note that recording the class without my permission is **not allowed** and should not be considered as a way to keep up with the class during missing days or as a back-up method for notetaking. I am more than happy to explain my reasons if interested but these are based on maximizing your education, fomenting critical thinking skills and respecting the classroom as a safe space to explore and discuss ideas.

**ATTENDANCE**
Attendance is mandatory unless you have a legitimate medical excuse. In that case only two classes periods are permitted without significantly impacting your grade. If a more serious issues comes up you need to contact your dean to discuss a viable solution to these absences. If you do miss a class please make sure you complete the readings, obtain notes from a peer and then come see me during office hours if you have question/s regarding the material covered. Please note that you will not be able to make up pop quizzes if you have an unapproved absence.

I would also like to give you some advice regarding absences. If you have serious issues going on then you should contact the Dean, your adviser, and medical professionals (if applicable) to deal with any event that merits absences. However, in most other circumstances I want to strongly encourage you to go to class. Your primary objective in college is to learn, and coming to class should be one of your highest priorities. In recent years I have noticed student absences increasing and over a wider variety of reasons. At the end of the day, you are an adult and you can choose not to come to class, but please note that it is to your detriment to miss class, this is a twice-a-week course which means you will miss a lot of information with each absence, and my courses build on previous information as we move forward. You will find that I have a lot of empathy for student’s situations and I do support my students, but I have also seen and have been thanked by students for encouraging them to come to class, because it is a positive energy! Please come see me if you would like to talk about this more.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**
You are expected to adhere to Carleton’s code of academic honesty. Even in the event of participating in team projects, your final report should still reflect your own work and other people’s ideas should always be credited. If you have any questions regarding this policy please visit [http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity/](http://apps.carleton.edu/campus/doc/integrity/) or come speak to me. Failure to follow Carleton’s expectation will result in a failing grade and formal action with the administration.

**OFFICE HOURS AND COMMUNICATIONS**
I hope you will all come see me during office hours to discuss the course, ideas for other projects, or career plans. Interacting with students is one of the aspects that I most enjoy about my job so please
DO NOT BE SHY and take advantage of office hours. If you cannot make office hours let me know and we can always schedule an alternative time, however please note that meeting outside office hours can be limiting as my schedule is quite full with given my advising, research, and service responsibilities. I sincerely appreciate students that understand the full context of my responsibilities and collaborate with me regarding meetings outside office hours.

Regarding email please note that I will try to answer emails within a 24-hr. period and do not answer emails immediately during the weekend (late Sundays are often the exception but do not expect it). Finally, although I encourage you to contact me via email with questions, if the question requires a long answer I may ask you to come see me personally so I can give you a proper response.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
If you need any help dealing with the requirement of the course please let me know so I can direct you to the multitude of resources available to you at Carleton. Although I will be posting relevant resources to individual assignments tell me if you are having trouble taking notes, studying for the exam, writing up assignments, stress, etc. I will be more than delighted to help direct you and work with you with what you need. If you need additional accommodation please reach out to disabilities services (https://apps.carleton.edu/disabilityservices/) so you can design a program that works for you. This proposed program would then be discussed with me and a mutually agreed upon arrangement will be reach. In case you are interested in exploring your options, a comprehensive list of resources can be found here: https://www.carleton.edu/student/support/

LIBRARY: Worth mentioning is our dedicated library staff, in particular Kristin Partlo (the social sciences reference librarian). If you have any questions or need help finding resources for the class, she is a great resource. You will hopefully meet her during the course but if you need to contact her please email her at: kpartlo@carleton.edu.

TEACHING DURING PANDEMICS
It goes without saying that COVID has impacted our lives tremendously. You have received a lot of training, advice, and information about new conditions. I trust you will follow the rules and be mindful of this situation. Although the possibility of serious illness is with us always at this time, we also should move forward with our primary objective in college: learning. This means we need to be flexible, adaptive and proactive with our learning. Nevertheless, we have an exciting term ahead and I look forward to exploring new options with you during the term.
CREATING AN INCLUSIVE & COMPASSIONATE CLASSROOM

My primary goal as an educator and scholar is to foster a joy for learning and prepare students for their future professional paths. Although joyful, the process is not necessarily always fun or easy. To me, learning is a convoluted process that is difficult as it requires us to push our intellectual limits, take risks, and face our -- and other’s -- legacies straight on. Plus, the “reward” that results from this process is not always readily apparent or may take years to manifest.

I also believe that learning should not be painful or hurtful to those involved in the process. I can assure you that I make a conscious effort to consider the possible consequences or impacts of what happens in my courses. The problem is that even though I try to avoid these situations it is very difficult for anyone to be error-free, up-to-date on the latest developments (as happens with the evolving language around inclusion), or in full agreement with new trends (e.g. I have a real problem with the term Latinx and have legitimate reasons for opposing it which is unexpected to some students). Trying to accommodate or predict the reactions of a diverse and ever-changing group of individuals that venture to take my classes is impossible and overwhelming at times.

For these reasons, a belief in the academic process, and a commitment to creating a compassionate learning space I avoid an explicit policy of providing trigger warnings in my courses and do not ask students to provide their preferred pronouns (however, students are welcome to give them if they want to and I will certainly accommodate them as best as I can). In the case of trigger warnings, I will give some background of the readings and will certainly give a heads up when certain kinds of difficult material approaches but I will not give explicit trigger warnings. In a nutshell, the fundamental reason is that what to you might merit an obvious trigger warning it may not be so for others and vice versa. For example, a common occurrence in my courses is that issues of sexual violence depicted in a North American context will elicit multiple requests for trigger warning, yet material that discusses extreme cases of violence and genocide in regions of the world that we refer to as the Global South are consumed by most students with a dry analytical stance and almost no consideration or acknowledgement of the emotional implications this may have to others in the room (including the instructor or a visitor).

This is a very delicate issue and there is no magic solution. What I ask you is to engage in this journey with me and trust me (and this may mean giving me or your peers multiple chances). I will definitely address issues that are brought to my attention in a constructive manner. I do my best to teach and model the manner in which difficult material can be engaged with in the classroom, but more importantly please know that I am willing to learn with you; but this can only happen in a companionate and honest environment. I hope you are willing to learn with me as well!

COURSE READINGS

Readings will be posted in Moodle. You are expected to complete the assigned readings by class time and come prepared to participate in class discussions. Please note that some weeks have heavier readings loads than others, for this reason I suggest you pay attention to reading guidelines discussed in class. I will also provide a list of additional readings each week for those of you interested more in a particular subject matter, they are not required but I encourage you to explore them. The following is a list of readings used in the class, but note that I often change readings depending on student interest so pay attention to what is posted on Moodle every week.


The Anthropology of Good Intentions


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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>LECTURE THEME &amp; ASSIGNMENTS</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu Sept 16</td>
<td>Introduction: Can anthropologists contribute to solving environmental and humanitarian issues?</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
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<td>Tue Sept 21</td>
<td>Ethnographic Research: Why is ethnographic research a powerful tool in environmental and humanitarian initiatives? Are anthropologists effective at communicating the kinds of contributions their research can make to these initiatives?</td>
<td>Charnley and Durham (Anthropology and Environmental Policy)</td>
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<td>***SCENARIOS ACTIVITY WRITE UP DUE IN CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu Sep 23</td>
<td>Challenges to Inclusion: Why are anthropologists marginalized from key positions in conservation and development programs, discussions, and policy?</td>
<td>Blount &amp; Pitchon (Disciplinary Hierarchies)</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
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<td>Tue Sept 28</td>
<td>Understanding Goals: Are conservation and development goals clear and objective targets? What are some of the problems with the categories used to articulate goals?</td>
<td>Fricker (Sustainability) Escobar (Biodiversity’s Existence) Ferguson &amp; Lohman (Development Machine)</td>
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<td>Thu Sept 30</td>
<td>Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Are traditional and indigenous resource management systems based on ecological principles? Is biological diversity linked to cultural diversity? Is it possible for humans to be a positive element of natural ecosystem dynamics?</td>
<td>Nabhan (Cultures of Habitat) Lu (Catch-22)</td>
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<td>*** SQUIRREL HUNTING ACTIVITY HANDED OUT</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
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<td>Tue Oct 5</td>
<td>Traditional Ecological Knowledge and the Intersection with Indigenous Rights and Movement</td>
<td>Berkes (Traditional Ecological Knowledge) Hoover (Fire Were Lit Inside Them)</td>
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<td>Thu Oct 7</td>
<td>Resource Management Systems: What are the social, cultural and environmental dimensions of resource management strategies? Can resource management strategies have a minimal impact on local environments? How do cultural belief systems inform resource management strategies?</td>
<td>Shepard (Habitat Classification) Ocampo-Raeder (Cultivated Landscapes)</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
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<td>Tue Oct 12</td>
<td>Public Heath and the Environment: How do issues of public health connect to community, ecology and politics? Can local knowledge inform bio-medical systems of heath? How is local knowledge different or similar than typical approaches to TEK?</td>
<td>Nadings (Mosquito Trails)</td>
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<td>*** SQUIRREL HUNTING ACTIVITY DUE in CLASS</td>
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<td>Thu Oct 14</td>
<td>Dealing with Change: How do local populations adapt to changing environmental and social conditions? How can conservation projects design projects that deal with environmental change?</td>
<td>Western (Aboseli Park) Kofinas (Athabascan subsistence)</td>
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| Week 6 | Tue Oct 19 | The Activism Machine: How does activism impact targeted populations? Are activists able to represent local realities? | Brosius (Environmentalism & Indigenous Knowledge)  
Kane (Water activists in Argentina)  
Tsing (Friction) |
|--------|------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
|        | Thu Oct 21 | Common Property Regimes: Is it possible to share or is it against human nature? Can we predict the sustainable or unsustainable use of a shared resource? Are there ways to get people to make sustainable choices when sharing a resource with others? Are these scenarios valid for all types of resources and societies? | Sigmund (Fair Play)  
Ostrom (Principles) |
|        |            | ***MIDTERM EXAM DUE IN CLASS***                                                                 |                                                 |
|        |            | ***MIDTERM EVALUATIONS HANDED OUT***                                                               |                                                 |
| Week 7 | Tue Oct 26 | Gender in Environmental and Humanitarian Initiatives: Why is a gender-based analysis important to environmental Anthropology? Is it a fad or should be paying particular attention to women when designing and implementing projects? | Ocampo-Raeder (Spies and Gossip)  
Chant & Gutman (Gender & Development) |
Lyon (Fair Trade Coffee)  
Honey (Ecotourism Standards) |
|        |            | ***PRODUCT ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT HANDED OUT***                                                        |                                                 |
| Week 8 | Tue Nov 2  | Nature for Sale: When is justified to sell a natural resource? How decides what can be commoditized? Are there certain realms of nature that should not be sold? How does consumption play into these considerations? | Anderson (Tribal Whaling)  
Cunningham (Patenting DNA)  
Wilk (Ecology of Global Consumer) |
|        | Thu Nov 4  | The Politics of Development: How do development goals get articulated and enacted at different scales? What are some of the common pitfalls of development projects? Are development initiatives making a difference? | Ferguson & Lohmann (Lesthoto Development)  
Hoffman & Oliver-Smith (Catastrophe and Culture)  
Kruger et al (Cultures and Disaster) |
|        |            | ***HAPPINES ASSIGNMENT HANDED OUT***                                                              |                                                 |
| Week 9 | Tue Nov 9  | Measuring Happiness: How are development measured? What is the difference between well-being, standard of living, and happiness indexes? Are any of these measures accurately representing local realities? How can anthropologists contribute to depicting local realities? | Frank & Chasin (Kerala Case) |
|        | Thu Nov 11 | Debates in Development: What are the shifts in how we perceive rural development? How do markets impact development goals? Are neoliberal agendas as negative as they are depicted? | Haem (Nueva Ruralidad)  
Schein (Market Mentalities) |
|        |            | ***HAPPINES ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS***                                                             |                                                 |
| Week 10| Tue Nov 16 | Environmental Justice: What are the principle issues exposed by the environmental justice literature? Why is the ethnographic gaze particularly helpful in this endeavor? | Checker (It’s True)  
Kosek (Smokey the Bear) |
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<tr>
<td>Thu Nov 18</td>
<td><em><strong>CLASS SYMPOSIUM</strong></em> (Mini Posters due)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td><em><strong>PRODUCT ANALYSIS DUE @ 5PM</strong></em></td>
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<td>Mon Nov 22</td>
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