Ecological anthropology is a mature topical specialization that crosscuts the five subfields of contemporary anthropology and has its own separate unit within the American Anthropological Association (Anthropology and Environment Section), journals (Human Ecology, Journal of Ecological Anthropology, Ecological and Environmental Anthropology), textbooks, listserv, and so on. The main approaches within ecological anthropology are cultural ecology, historical ecology, political ecology, and spiritual ecology. The graduate core course for the Ecological Anthropology Program is 620H Human Ecology.

This semester the seminar pursues a systematic and penetrating critical analysis of theory and method in ecological anthropology in historical perspective from its early 20th century roots to the present. Several PowerPoint lectures by the instructor will provide background. The class as a whole will discuss background material in these two required textbooks:


Then each student will use a PowerPoint presentation to summarize for the seminar a research paper on a pioneer in the history of ecological anthropology. Next each student will use a PowerPoint presentation to summarize for the seminar a paper on a contemporary leader in ecological anthropology. The research for these two papers should be based on reading as much as possible published by and about each of the two scholars investigated. For the contemporary scholar the student should also conduct an email interview. Finally, building on relevant aspects of the two previous exercises, each student will use a PowerPoint presentation to summarize a research proposal or report for the seminar. (Each of the three papers should be about 15 pages double-spaced including references cited). Several telephone interviews will also be conducted with selected ecological anthropologists on the mainland depending on their availability.

Students will comment on and anonymously grade each other’s presentations using a standard evaluation form. The course grade will be based on class participation at 10% and on the three presentations (historical scholar, contemporary scholar, and research proposal or report) at 30% each.

The prerequisite for 620H is 415 Ecological Anthropology. Those who have not taken 415 may request the instructor’s consent. Auditors are not allowed.

The full course syllabus will be posted on the instructor’s homepage by late December:

http://www.soc.hawaii.edu/Sponsel