

San José State University
Department of Anthropology
ANTH 129 Environmental Anthropology – Spring 2022

Instructor:	A.J. Faas, Ph.D.
Office Location:	Clark Hall 404L
Telephones:	408 924 5732
Email:	aj.faas@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Mondays and Wednesdays 3-5 on Zoom, https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/84373881220 (waiting room – first come, first served). No appointments necessary.
Class Days/Time:	Mondays and Wednesdays, 12-1:15pm
Classroom:	Clark Hall 202
Prerequisites:	ANTH 011 or instructor consent

Course Format

Technology

The course will use a Canvas site for access to articles.

Canvas and MYSJSU Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on [Canvas Learning Management System course login website](http://sjsu.instructure.com) at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through [MySJSU](http://my.sjsu.edu) at <http://my.sjsu.edu> to learn of any updates.

Course Description

Anthropologists plan and conduct research to assess and compare the characteristics of different cultures, communities, and organizations, including their economic systems, demographics, health status, languages, religions, and the ecosystems of which they are a part. Some anthropologists specialize in environmental anthropology. For example, environmental anthropologists have studied how Native American cultures use fire to clear brush, maintain hunting grounds and trails, and avert disastrous fires caused by lightning. Some study how aboriginal and other cultures make the most of limited water resources, or use the land without degrading it. Others conduct research on the growing number of climate refugees--those people who are being displaced from their communities as the result of global climate change in the 21st century. Still others analyze the ways in which culturally constructed ideologies (for example, the notion of human dominion over nature) inform the beliefs and practices of human groups.

This course examines the relationship of human societies to their biological environments--from an anthropological perspective. Emphasis is placed on the damage the planet is incurring due to the cultural activities of humankind and what cultures, communities, and other forms of human organization need to accomplish to counteract environmental degradation and the risks of hazards and disasters. This course is methodologically and theoretically informed by cultural anthropology, archaeology, and physical anthropology and will draw upon the discipline's long-standing concern with the relationship between human societies and the environment. Course materials and lectures will review environmental anthropology from a range of theoretical perspectives including Julian Steward's "method of cultural ecology," Lesley White's "science of culturology," cultural materialism, political economy, feminism, post-structuralism, and more. Most of the course readings are ethnographic accounts, based upon participant-observation, ethnographic interviews, and other methods developed by anthropologists over the past century. A range of topics will be covered over the course of the semester including indigenous ecological knowledge and the loss of such knowledge; population growth and resource consumption; ozone depletion and air pollution; climate change in contemporary and ancient periods (including the Ice Age) and its impact on human groups; the ways in which biological diversity is being transformed by economic development, migration, and other human activities; and sustainable initiatives and cultural alternatives.

Much of this course's conceptual framework will be covered during the lectures and class discussions, so it is critical that you attend class meetings. Exams will be based upon readings, class discussions, and lectures. This course is open to all upper-division undergraduate and graduate students.

Departmental Program Learning Outcomes

The Department of Anthropology seeks to enhance student knowledge and skills in the following areas. Departmental objectives that this course explicitly addresses are asterisked.

Knowledge

1. Understanding culture as the distinguishing phenomenon of human life, and the relationship of human biology and evolution.
2. Awareness of human diversity and the ways humans have categorized diversity.
3. Knowledge of the significant findings of archaeology, cultural anthropology, and physical anthropology, and familiarity of the important issues in each sub-discipline.
4. Knowledge of the history of anthropological thought and its place in modern intellectual history.*
5. Comprehension of migration, colonialism, and economic integration as significant phenomenon shaping global society.

Skills

1. Ability to access various forms of anthropological data and literature.*
2. Awareness of importance and value of anthropological knowledge in contemporary society, and the ability to apply it to social issues.*
3. Knowledge of the research methods of the sub-disciplines of anthropology, and the ability to

apply appropriate research methods in at least one sub-discipline.*

4. Ability to present and communicate anthropological knowledge and the results of anthropological research to different audiences.*

Professional Values

1. Knowledge of political and ethical implications of social research*

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Document theoretical approaches to the anthropological study of the environment, including cultural ecology, cultural materialism, political economy, political ecology, feminist, and post-structural approaches
2. Identify environmental problems and issues that are affecting indigenous communities, people living in rural areas, inhabitants of cities, and displaced populations
3. Use ethnographic data to document the relationship of cultural beliefs and practices to social adaptations, maladaptations, environmental change, and environmental concerns
4. Analyze archeological information to get a better understanding of how human societies culturally conceptualize, manipulate, and transform their environments over the *longue durée*, including periods marked by rapid climate change
5. Deploy anthropological research methods to identify human ecosystem problems and propose possible solutions

Required Texts/Readings

All assigned readings are indicated in the course schedule and available on Canvas.

Library Liaison

The Anthropology Library Liaison is Silke Higgins, Silke.Higgins@sjsu.edu.

Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>. Download the guidelines for the course assignments. Read the guidelines carefully to ensure that you complete course assignments according to instructions. All assignments and exams must be completed in order to pass. ***Assignments will lose ten percent of the grade for each day they are late.***

Assignments for this course include the following: (1) complete SJSU plagiarism tutorial (no credit); (2) class participation (10% of course grade); (3) in-class discussion questions (10%); (4) take-home midterm exam (20% of course grade); (4) take-home final exam (20% of course grade); (5) essay assignments (40% of course grade).

- Download the guidelines for the course assignments. Read the guidelines carefully to ensure that you complete course assignments according to instructions.

- All assignments and exams must be completed in order to pass. ***I will not accept late assignments nor will I administer makeup exams unless documents can be presented as evidence of illness, death in family, jury duty, recognized religious observance, etc.***
- No assignments will be accepted via e-mail—I must receive hard copies of all assignments.
- Please write clearly and correctly; seek help if you need it. Please proofread your papers carefully. Reading your work aloud often reveals mistakes in syntax and spelling.

SJSU Plagiarism Tutorial. All students must complete the SJSU plagiarism tutorial online and submit a pdf of a passing grade on the quiz to Canvas by February 2. The tutorial takes about 15 minutes to complete. Please note that I will not accept any assignments from students until I receive the plagiarism tutorial printout. The tutorial can be found here: <http://goo.gl/7s6Tka>.

Class Participation (10% of final grade). Students are required to have completed assigned readings by the date indicated in the course schedule (see schedule below) and be prepared to discuss the material in class, either in group discussion or class-wide question and answer. You are expected to be respectful of other students, the professor, and opinions, be mindful and courteous in your participation, and avoid dominating discussions.

Group Discussion Assignments (10% of final grade): These assignments engage critical thinking about themes covered in class. I will share discussion questions at the conclusion of each class meeting. You should come to the following class meeting prepared to discuss these questions critically with reference to assigned readings and lectures. You will turn in a short paragraph with your conclusions that will be written in class. Bring paper and a pen!

Midterm and Final Exams (20% of final grade each). There will be a take-home midterm examination—essay questions requiring some independent research—based on lectures and readings. You will have a week to work on and submit your exams. The midterm will cover all material up to that point. The final will cover all material after the midterm and likely include a question based on cumulative material. The final is due during the final examination period on the course schedule, during which time we will evaluate the assignment.

Essay Assignments (40% of final grade) Each student will complete four short essays on a disaster of their choice, which may be recent or historical. The essays will require some background research. Each essay will be approximately 400 words (not including references) and reference sources independently identified by the student and one or more assigned readings.

- Each essay has two due dates: one for in-class peer review and another for submission to the professor. On peer review due dates, students will come to class with their essays, which they will exchange with a partner. Partners will then provide verbal and written feedback on the essays. Students will apply the feedback and revise their essays for submission on the following Wednesday.
- Essays should be double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font, one-inch margins. Essays must be submitted as Word documents (.doc or .docx).
- For all references, you should conform to the Chicago Author-Date Style Guide, available on the Canvas page for this course.
- Students are expected to reference reputable sources (i.e., journalism) for disaster facts and use at least one academic source (journal articles or books) in each essay.

- Essay topics are more fully explained on Canvas, but the general topics are: (1) What are the root causes of the disaster? (2) Either the politics of aid for affected people **Or** the story of cooperation and social support during or after the disaster; (3) recovery from the disaster; and (4) what would you change to either prevent the disaster or improve the recovery?

Determination of Grades

A plus 98>, *A* 94-97, *A minus* 90-93

An "A" demonstrates originality, not merely efficient memory, addresses assignment guidelines effectively, shows effective organization and logical argumentation, uses clear, appropriate and accurate examples and a high level of writing competence and knowledge. The student completes the task(s) and consistently does extra work that is self-initiated.

B plus 88-89, *B* 84-87, *B minus* 80-83

A "B" may show a good level of competence and may even reflect exactly what was discussed in class and texts but does not contribute original knowledge. It shows uneven development of tasks. Work may be generally well organized, use appropriate examples, display facility in argumentation, with a few gaps, and demonstrates a good level of writing and knowledge.

C plus 78-79, *C* 74-77, *C minus* 70-73

A "C" may show a fair level of competence but may be uneven. Work will address the task adequately, but only with parts of the task. It is adequately organized and may occasionally use examples. Argumentation may be inconsistent and writing and knowledge competence may be unclear. Language may be inappropriately informal in parts of assignment.

D plus 68-69, *D* 64-67, *D minus* 60-63,

A "D" will demonstrate poor competence with inadequate organization, task and argumentation development and inappropriate examples. It will display difficulty in using adequate academic language and errors in knowledge will be in evidence.

F < 60

A failure will only occur if the work performed does not correspond to assignment guidelines or does not meet basic assignment criteria.

Canvas

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the Canvas learning management system course website. You are responsible for regularly checking Canvas and your email to learn of any updates.

Classroom Protocol

1. It is expected that students will be attentive and respectful of their fellow students, the instructor and cultures and traditions which are not their own.
2. Students arriving habitually late to class will be asked to leave as this is disruptive to the learning process.

3. **Mobile phones, laptops, and tablets must be turned off during class and must be out of sight or else the instructor will ask the student to leave for the remainder of the class meeting.**
4. Students may record lectures for their own private use only, **not to be redistributed or sold.**
5. Students are required to read SJSU's Academic Integrity Policy S07-2 (see below). **This university policy on plagiarism and cheating will be strictly honored.**
6. In the event that the building is evacuated because of an emergency during class time, the class will convene in the parking lot directly adjacent to the building. No assignment will be canceled because of any such emergency.
7. If you send me a seriously cool picture of Zora Neal Hurston by January 29, I will add 2 points extra credit to your midterm exam.
8. If you miss a class, ask your fellow students for copies of their notes. If you need further help, please see me in my office hours.
9. Students are responsible for being aware of exam dates and assignment deadlines.
10. If you have any concerns about your class performance or comprehension, see me in my office hours or schedule an appointment. I am always willing to help students and I care about whether students are grasping the material and enjoying the class.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

ANTH 129 Spring 2022 Course Schedule

Changes to the following schedule will be made if necessary. Students will be notified in class and by e-mail (using the official class roster e-mail addresses), and all students are responsible for any changes in the calendar.

All readings can be found on Canvas.

COURSE MEETING	TOPICS, READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS, DEADLINES
Wednesday, January 26	<p><i>Class Introduction and Overview of Material and Assignments</i> What is this course about and what can you get from it?</p>
Monday, January 31	<p><i>Historical Orientation to the Anthropology of Disasters</i> <i>What are the key concepts associated with the anthropology of disasters?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Faas, A.J., and Roberto Barrios. 2015. "Applied Anthropology of Risk, Hazards, and Disasters." <i>Human Organization</i> 74(4):287-295.</p> <p><i>Watch</i> A.J. Faas <i>Varieties of Vulnerability Thinking: A (Dis)Orientation to the Anthropology of Disasters</i> https://earthquake.usgs.gov/contactus/menlo/seminars/1213</p>
Wednesday, February 2	<p><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua I</i> <i>What were the key narrative themes in the eruptions of Tungurahua in 1999?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Faas - Prologue</p> <p>Plagiarism Tutorial Due In-Class Information Literacy Workshop</p>
Monday, February 7	<p><i>Disasters and Vulnerability</i> <i>What are the principal ways of conceiving of disaster vulnerability? How does vulnerability frame the way anthropologists study disasters?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Marino, Elizabeth, and A. J. Faas. 2020. "Is Vulnerability an Outdated Concept? After Subjects and Spaces." <i>Annals of Anthropological Practice</i> 44(1):33-46.</p>
Wednesday, February 9	<p><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua II</i> <i>How does Faas reframe thinking on the historical production of disasters? What are the key themes in the humanitarian politics of disaster?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Faas - Introduction</p>

Monday, February 14	<p><i>Disasters and the Historical Production of Vulnerability</i> <i>What were the historical roots of disaster in Puerto Rico? How do anthropologists investigate the historical production of vulnerability?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Rivera, Danielle. 2020. “Disaster Colonialism: A Commentary on Disasters beyond Singular Events to Structural Violence.” <i>International Journal of Urban and Regional Research</i>.</p> <p>Bring in an article about the disaster of your choice for in-class review</p>
Wednesday, February 16	<p><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua III</i> <i>How does the author encourage us to think about mobility and the state?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Faas – Intro to Pt I</p>
Monday, February 21	<p><i>Disasters and the Historical Production of Vulnerability</i> <i>What were the historical roots of disaster in the Callejon de Huaylas? How do anthropologists investigate the historical production of disaster?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Oliver-Smith (1999) Peru’s 500 Year Earthquake</p> <p>Essay one peer review</p>
Wednesday, February 23	<p><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua IV</i> <i>What were the historical roots of disaster in Penipe? What assemblages of the state were instrumental in the production of disaster in Penipe?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Faas – Chapter One</p>
Monday, February 28	<p><i>Disaster and Mobility</i> <i>What is the relationship between mobility and settlement and how does this relate to the production of disaster?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Marino, Elizabeth. 2015. “Seal Oil Lamps and Pre-Fab Housing: A History of Colonialism in Shismaref.” Chapter 4 of <i>Fierce Climate, Sacred Ground</i>. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press.</p> <p>Essay one submission</p>
Wednesday, March 2	<p><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua V</i> <i>How did Penipeños cope with displacement following the 1999 eruptions? How were the histories that produced disaster in Penipe reflected in their experiences? What is meant by “bare life” and how was this reflected in people’s experiences?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Faas – Chapter Two</p>

Monday, March 7	<p><i>Humanitarian “Gifts”</i> <i>How do disaster response and recovery operations affect their intended beneficiaries? What are the “metafunctions” of humanitarian aid?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Zhang, Qiaoyun. 2016. “Disaster Response and Recovery: Aid and Social Change.” <i>Annals of Anthropological Practice</i> 40(1):86-97.</p> <p>MIDTERM DISTRIBUTED</p>
Wednesday, March 9	<p><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua VI</i> <i>How was the state assemblage reflected in reconstruction efforts in Penipe? What were the politics of resettlement?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Faas – Chapter Three</p>
Monday, March 14	<p><i>Living and Bare Life in the Wake of Disaster</i> <i>How do we understand disaster reconstruction and resettlement through the lived experience of disaster-affected peoples?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Barrios, Roberto. 2014. ““Here, I’m not at ease”: Anthropological Perspectives on Community Resilience.” <i>Disasters</i> 38(2):329-350.</p> <p>MIDTERM DUE BY 2pm.</p>
Wednesday, March 16	<p><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua VII</i> <i>How do we understand disaster reconstruction and resettlement through the lived experience of disaster-affected peoples?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Faas – Chapter Four</p>
Monday, March 21	<p><i>Cooperation Matters in Disaster I</i> <i>What are some of the models of cooperation and solidarity in disasters?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Hoffman, Susanna. 1999. “The Best of Times, The Worst of Times: Toward a model of cultural response to disaster.” In <i>The Angry Earth: Disaster in Anthropological Perspective</i>, edited by Anthony Oliver-Smith and Susanna Hoffman, 134-155. New York: Routledge.</p> <p>Essay two peer review</p>
Wednesday, March 23	<p><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua VIII</i> <i>What are some of the new ways of thinking about cooperation and solidarity in disasters that Faas encourages? And what is meant by “palimpsest” and how does this concept metaphor guide our thinking about cooperation in disasters?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Faas – Intro to Part II</p>

March 28- April 1	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK and Cesar Chavez Day
Monday, April 4	<p><i>Procedural Vulnerability</i> <i>What is procedural vulnerability? How is it distinguished from “vulnerability” as a framework for thinking about the historical production of disaster?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Hsu, Minna, Richard Howitt, and Fiona Miller. 2015. “Procedural Vulnerability and Institutional Capacity Deficits in Post-Disaster Recovery and Reconstruction: Insights from Wutai Rukai Experiences of Typhoon Morakot.” <i>Human Organization</i> 74(4):308-318.</p> <p>Essay two submission</p>
Wednesday, April 6	<p><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua IX</i> <i>What are some of the explanations Faas investigates for the continuity of cooperation after disaster? Which ones fit, which ones do not, and why?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Faas – Chapter Five</p>
Monday, April 11	<p><i>Cooperation Matters in Disaster II</i> <i>How do communities organize to respond to and recover from disaster?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Heron, Adom Philogene. 2018. “Surviving Maria from Dominica: Memory, Displacement and Bittersweet Beginnings.” <i>Transforming Anthropology</i> 26(2):118-135.</p>
Wednesday, April 13	<p><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua X</i> <i>How has mita/minga been practiced throughout history in Penipe? How does the palimpsest metaphor help us think about this? How does this critical, colonial history inform how we think about cooperation in disasters in the present?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Faas – Chapter Six</p>
Monday, April 18	<p><i>Humanitarian Bureaucraft</i> <i>How does James explain the politics and social life of humanitarian aid in Haiti? What are the parallels she identifies between witchcraft and the bureaucracy of humanitarian aid? What does she mean by “diagnostic social processes”?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> James, Erica Caple. 2012. “Witchcraft, Bureaucraft, and the Social Life of (US)AID in Haiti.” <i>Cultural Anthropology</i> 27(1):50-75.</p> <p>Essay three peer review</p>

Wednesday, April 20	<p><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua XI</i></p> <p><i>What are the boundaries between community and state in post-disaster Penipe? How do people produce and challenge these boundaries? What are the relationships between local cooperation and state intervention?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u></p> <p>Faas – Chapter Seven</p>
Monday, April 25	<p><i>Biopolitics of Disaster and Recovery</i></p> <p><i>What is meant by the “biopolitics of disaster”? How does Marchezini critique common logics of disaster response and recovery?</i></p> <p><u>Readings</u></p> <p>Marchezini, Victor. 2015. “The Biopolitics of Disaster: Power, Discourses, and Practices.” <i>Human Organization</i> 74(4):362-371.</p> <p>Essay three submission</p>
Wednesday, April 27	<p><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua XII</i></p> <p><i>What is Faas’s critique of the common logics of disaster recovery? What is his critique of the “nature/culture” binary and how does this affect how we think about disaster?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u></p> <p>Faas – Intro to Part III</p>
Monday, May 2	<p><i>The COVID-19 Pandemic as Disaster</i></p> <p><i>What are the merits of thinking of the COVID-19 pandemic through the lens of disasters? What are the main themes in the disaster research agenda for the pandemic?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u></p> <p>Faas, A. J., Roberto Barrios, Virginia García-Acosta, Adriana Garriga-López, Seven Mattes, and Jennifer Trivedi. 2020a. “Entangled Roots and Otherwise Possibilities: The Anthropology of Disasters COVID-19 Research Agenda.” Special Issue on COVID-19. <i>Human Organization</i> 79(4): 333–342.</p> <p>Essay four peer review</p>
Wednesday, May 4	<p><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua XIII</i></p> <p><i>What does recovery look like in Penipe ten years after the resettlements?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u></p> <p>Faas – Chapter Eight</p>
Monday, May 9	<p><i>Embodiment and humanity</i></p> <p><i>How does Aijazi encourage us to rethink being human and surviving disaster?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u></p> <p>Aijazi, Omer. 2016. “Who Is Chandni bibi?: Survival as Embodiment in Disaster Disrupted Northern Pakistan.” <i>Women’s Studies Quarterly</i> 44(1 & 2): 95-110.</p> <p>Essay four submission</p>

Wednesday, May 11	<p><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua XIV</i></p> <p><i>What is the meaning of “convivir” and how does this reframe thinking about disaster recovery, risk reduction, and the politics of environment and disaster?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u></p> <p>Faas – Epilogue</p>
Monday, May 16	<p><i>Semester Debrief and Q & A</i></p> <p>FINAL EXAM DISTRIBUTED</p>
Monday, May 23	<p>Final Exam 9:45am to 12pm</p>