

**San José State University**  
**College of Social Sciences/Anthropology Department**  
**ANTH 129, Environmental Anthropology, Section 01, Spring 2023**

**Course and Contact Information**

Instructor(s): A.J. Faas, PhD

Office Location: CL 404L

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 3-5pm, in-person (CL 404L) or virtual:

<https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/89630232654>, no appointment – you will enter a waiting room and be admitted in the order in which you arrive

Class Days/Time: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:30-11:45am

Classroom: Clark Hall 202

Prerequisites: ANTH 011 or instructor consent

**Course Description**

Anthropological examination of humans' relationship to their biological environment. Course topics include population growth, resource consumption, human induced climate change, biodiversity, solid and hazardous waste, economic and cultural patterns affecting the environment, environmental risk, water resources, hazards, disasters, sustainable initiatives.

For the Spring 2023 semester, we will primarily focus on anthropological approaches to the study of disaster, a subtopic around which we will survey the key approaches to environmental anthropology.

**Course Format**

This course meets in-person.

**Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging**

The course will use a Canvas site for access to articles, communication about assignments, and grading.

**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 (Required - Delete the word “Required” in final draft)

### Textbook

Faas, A. J. 2023. *In the Shadow of Tungurahua: Disaster Politics in Highland Ecuador*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. ISBN: 9781978831568.

### Other Readings

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

### Library Liaison

The Anthropology Library Liaison is Silke Higgins, [Silke.Higgins@sjsu.edu](mailto:Silke.Higgins@sjsu.edu).

## Course Requirements and Assignments

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

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?

### **Final Examination or Evaluation**

Faculty members are required to have a culminating activity for their courses, which can include a final examination, a final research paper or project, a final creative work or performance, a final portfolio of work, or other appropriate assignment.

See “Midterm and Final Exams” above.

### **Grading Information**

*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.

## 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 before Monday, January 30, 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](#), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](#) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

## Course Number / Title, Semester, 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 marked with \*\*\* can be found on Canvas.

### Course Schedule

COURSE MEETING	TOPICS, READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS, DEADLINES
Wednesday, January 25	<p><b><i>Class Introduction and Overview of Material and Assignments</i></b> What is this course about and what can you get from it?</p>
Monday, January 30	<p><b><i>Historical Orientation to the Anthropology of Disasters</i></b> <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><b>Watch</b> A.J. Faas <i>Varieties of Vulnerability Thinking: A (Dis)Orientation to the Anthropology of Disasters</i> <a href="https://earthquake.usgs.gov/contactus/menlo/seminars/1213">https://earthquake.usgs.gov/contactus/menlo/seminars/1213</a></p>
Wednesday, February 1	<p><b><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua I</i></b> <i>What were the key narrative themes in the eruptions of Tungurahua in 1999?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u> Faas - Prologue</p> <p><b>Plagiarism Tutorial Due</b> <b>In-Class Information Literacy Workshop</b></p>
Monday, February 6	<p><b><i>Disasters and Vulnerability</i></b> <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 8	<p><b><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua II</i></b> <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 13	<p><b><i>Disasters and the Historical Production of Vulnerability</i></b>  <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><b>Bring in an article about the disaster of your choice for in-class review</b></p>
Wednesday, February 15	<p><b><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua III</i></b>  <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 20	<p><b><i>Disasters and the Historical Production of Vulnerability</i></b>  <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><b>Essay one peer review</b></p>
Wednesday, February 22	<p><b><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua IV</i></b>  <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 27	<p><b><i>Disaster and Mobility</i></b>  <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><b>Essay one submission</b></p>
Wednesday, March 1	<p><b><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua V</i></b>  <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 6	<p><b><i>Humanitarian “Gifts”</i></b>  <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><b>MIDTERM DISTRIBUTED</b></p>
Wednesday, March 8	<p><b><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua VI</i></b>  <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 13	<p><b><i>Living and Bare Life in the Wake of Disaster</i></b>  <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><b>MIDTERM DUE BY 2pm.</b></p>
Wednesday, March 15	<p><b><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua VII</i></b>  <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 20	<p><b><i>Cooperation Matters in Disaster I</i></b>  <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><b>Essay two peer review</b></p>
Wednesday, March 22	<p><b><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua VIII</i></b>  <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 27-31	<p><b>NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK and Cesar Chavez Day</b></p>

<p>Monday, April 3</p>	<p><b><i>Procedural Vulnerability</i></b>  <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><b>Essay two submission</b></p>
<p>Wednesday, April 5</p>	<p><b><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua IX</i></b>  <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>
<p>Monday, April 10</p>	<p><b><i>Cooperation Matters in Disaster II</i></b>  <i>How do communities organize to respond to and recover from disaster?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u>  Reese, Ashanté M., and Symone A. Johnson. 2022. “We All We Got: Urban Black Ecologies of Care and Mutual Aid.” <i>Environment and Society: Advances in Research</i> 13: 27–42.***</p>
<p>Wednesday, April 12</p>	<p><b><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua X</i></b>  <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>
<p>Monday, April 17</p>	<p><b><i>Humanitarian Bureaucraft</i></b>  <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><b>Essay three peer review</b></p>
<p>Wednesday, April 19</p>	<p><b><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua XI</i></b>  <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>  Faas – Chapter Seven</p>



Monday, April 24	<p><b><i>Biopolitics of Disaster and Recovery</i></b>  <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>  Marchezini, Victor. 2015. “The Biopolitics of Disaster: Power, Discourses, and Practices.” <i>Human Organization</i> 74(4):362-371.***</p> <p><b>Essay three submission</b></p>
Wednesday, April 26	<p><b><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua XII</i></b>  <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>  Faas – Intro to Part III</p>
Monday, May 1	<p><b><i>The COVID-19 Pandemic as Disaster</i></b>  <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>  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><b>Essay four peer review</b></p>
Wednesday, May 3	<p><b><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua XIII</i></b>  <i>What does recovery look like in Penipe ten years after the resettlements?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u>  Faas – Chapter Eight</p>
Monday, May 8	<p><b><i>Embodiment and humanity</i></b>  <i>How does Aijazi encourage us to rethink being human and surviving disaster?</i></p> <p><u>Reading</u>  Aijazi, Omer. 2016. “Who Is Chandni bibi?: Survival as Embodiment in Disaster Disrupted Northern Pakistan.” <i>Women’s Studies Quarterly</i> 44(1 &amp; 2): 95-110.***</p> <p><b>Essay four submission</b></p>
Wednesday, May 10	<p><b><i>In the Shadow of Tungurahua XIV</i></b>  <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>  Faas – Epilogue</p>
Monday, May 15	<p><b><i>Semester Debrief and Q &amp; A</i></b>  <b>FINAL EXAM DISTRIBUTED</b></p>
Monday, May 22	<p>Final Exam 9:45am to 12pm</p>