

ANTH5614 Ethnobotany

Instructor: Dr. Nick Kawa
Email: kawa.5@osu.edu
Office: 4030 Smith Lab

Office Phone: 614-292-2391
Office Hours: 2:30-4:00 PM
Web support: Carmen (carmen.osu.edu)

COURSE MEETING TIME(S):

Time: 12:45-2:05 on Tues. & Thurs.

Place: Smith Lab 4025

REQUIRED TEXTS:

All readings will be provided on **Carmen**.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

How have plants shaped human lives over time? How, in turn, have people shaped the lives of plants over the course of humanity's existence on this planet? In this class, we will delve into human-plant relationships, examining how humans have relied on plants to meet our most basic needs, from our sustenance to security. In the process, we will look at how plants have become objects of techno-scientific manipulation and inquiry, resulting in a wide array of consumptive goods as well as thorny ethical questions and quandaries. In the second half of the course, we will consider how plants can be understood as subjects in their own right with distinctive capabilities and communicative forms that have allowed them to adapt to a range of conditions. Toward the end of the course, we will speculate about what might come next for botanical beings and our socio-cultural relationships to them, particularly in this era of human-induced environmental change. Finally, we will share our individual reflections on specific plants or human-plant relationships in an end-of-the-semester ethnobotanical exhibition that will showcase both student essays and art.

COURSE GOALS:

By the conclusion of the course, each student should:

1. Discuss how culture shapes human perceptions of and relationships to plants.
2. Develop anthropological research questions about human-plant relations.
3. Produce creative reflections on one's own personal relationships to plants through an anthropological lens.
4. Employ ethnographic and ethnobotanical methods to collect information about human-plant relations.

BREAKDOWN OF GRADING:

Attendance (25 points): Regular attendance is expected of all students. Participation in class discussions is also strongly encouraged not only because it contributes to the intellectual environment of the classroom, but it facilitates individual learning as well.

In-Class Activities (5x 3 points): During the semester, we will engage in several participatory activities related to human understandings of plants. Five of these in-class activities will be graded for participation points, reinforcing the importance of being present in class.

Ethnobotanical Take-Home Assignments (5x 5 points): Five small quizzes and take-home assignments related to course readings will be administered during semester. Be sure to read the chapters or articles assigned here in the syllabus BEFORE the start of each class.

Exploratory Essays (2x 10 points): Two different short essay assignments will be assigned during the semester. One is a personal reflection on a plant of significance to you. The second is an ethnographic and/or ethnobotanical essay that draws from interviews with someone knowledgeable about plants. Details on each will be provided in the weeks leading up to their due dates.

Ethnobotanical Exhibition (25 points): The whole class will contribute to an end-of-semester ethnobotanical exhibition in which each student will present a revised version of one class essay alongside a complementary artistic rendering. More details on this final exhibition will be provided in the second half of the course.

Final Take-Home Exam (30 points): The final exam will consist of several short answer and short essay questions that frame key concepts and issues described in the course, requiring students to synthesize readings and apply the anthropological insights developed in class.

Final Projects (Graduate Students Only**; 25 points):** Graduate students will be required to develop a final project that incorporates ethnobotanical theory, case studies, or methods that are relevant to your graduate research agenda. You will be given three options of the format: 1) a review paper or essay, 2) an Oxford-style annotated bibliography, 3) a research project proposal. One-on-one meetings will be arranged with the instructor during the semester to determine the final project format and further details regarding evaluation will be provided then.

TOTAL: 140 points (undergraduate students)
165 points (graduate students)

COURSE GRADING SCALE:

100- 92.0%	A
91.9-90.0%	A-
89.9-88.0%	B+
87.9-82.0%	B
81.9-80.0%	B-
79.9-78.0%	C+
77.9-72.0%	C
71.9-70.0%	C-
69.9-68.0%	D+
69.9-60.0%	D
<60.0%	E

OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES STATEMENT

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

MENTAL HEALTH STATEMENT

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 or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766 and 24-hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

TITLE IX STATEMENT

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. We are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT STATEMENT

All students should become familiar with the rules governing academic misconduct, especially as they pertain to plagiarism and cheating. Ignorance of the rules is not an excuse and all alleged cases of academic misconduct will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM). It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

COURSE CALENDAR:

Week 1 (Jan. 7 & 9) Human-Plant Relations

(Tu): What is ethnobotany and why study it?

Readings: None

(Th): Plants and culture

Readings: Wall Kimmerer "Skywoman Falling"; "Asters and Goldenrod"; "Learning the Grammar of Animacy"

Week 2 (Jan. 14 & 16) Plants & Subsistence

(Tu): Foraging and "the gifts of nature"

Readings: Wall Kimmerer "The Council of Pecans"; "The Gift of Strawberries"

(Th): Why we use spices
Readings: Sherman and Billing “Darwinian Gastronomy”

Week 3 (Jan. 21 & 23) Plant Domestication

(Tu): Maize and the Three Sisters
Readings: Wall Kimmerer “The Three Sisters”; Ravindran “The discovery of jumping genes”
(Th): Crop diversity and selection
Readings: Purugganan and Fuller “The nature of selection during plant domestication”; Mann “The Agro-Industrial Complex”

Week 4 (Jan. 28 & 30) Plants for Building & Protection

(Tu): Building and worlding with plants
Readings: Wall Kimmerer “A Black Ash Basket”; “The Teachings of Grass”
(Th): Boundary making
Readings: Sheridan “Boundary Plants”

Week 5 (Feb. 4 & 6) Plants for Healing & Medicine

(Tu): Weedy plants as medicinal plants
Readings: Stepp “The role of weeds as a source of pharmaceuticals”
(Th): Vegetal healing in the African diaspora
Readings: Voeks “Disturbance Pharmacopeias”

Week 6 (Feb. 11 & 13) Plants as Guides & Teachers

(Tu): Ayahuasca and Amazonian shamanism
Readings: Luna “The concept of plants as teachers”
(Th): Plants with mothers
Readings: Jauregui “Plantas con madre”

Week 7 (Feb. 18 & 20) Plants as Signs & Symbols

(Tu): Trail trees of North America
Readings: Kawa et al. “Trail Trees: Living Artifacts (Vivifacts) of Eastern North America”
(Th): The American lawn
Readings: Robbins and Sharp “The Moral Economy of the American Lawn”

Week 8 (Feb. 25 & 27) Plants & Empire

(Tu): Colonial bioprospecting
Readings: Osseo-Asare “Bioprospecting and Resistance”
(Th): The story of rubber
Readings: Mann “Black Gold” (from *1493*)

Week 9 (March 3 & 5) Plants in Industrial Agriculture

(Tu): Soy in Paraguay
Readings: Hetherington “Beans before the law”
(Th): GMOs and agricultural deskilling
Readings: Stone “Bt cotton”

SPRING BREAK: March 9-13

Week 10 (March 17 & 19) Plants as Agentive Beings

(Tu): Eucalypts as fire starters

Readings: Franklin “A choreography of fire”

(Th): Plants that “keep bad vibes away”

Readings: Kawa reading

Week 11 (March 24 & 26) Plant Sensing & Communication

(Tu): Plant sensing

Readings: Myers “Conversations in Plant Sensing”

(Th): Vegetal intelligence

Readings: Trewavas “Aspects of Plant Intelligence”

Week 12 (March 31 & April 2) Plant Controversies

(Tu): The case of coca

Readings: Rivera Cusiqanqi “Here Even the Legislators Chem Them”

(Th): Marijuana in the contemporary US

Readings: TBD

Week 13 (April 7 & 9) Plants & Our Planetary Future

(Tu): Rethinking nature in the city

Readings: Stoetzer “Ruderal Ecologies”

(Th): End-of-time botanical tourism

Readings: Myers “Edenic Apocalypse”

Week 14 (April 14 & 16) Course Conclusion

(Tu): Exhibition Day 1

Readings: None

(Th): Exhibition Day 2

Readings: None

Week 15 (April 20-24)

Final Exam (Take-Home)