

Cross-Cultural Studies/Alaska Native Studies CCS 612
Traditional Ecological Knowledge
Old University Park Building, room 164, Wednesdays 5:15-8:15 pm
Spring 2009

Instructor: Michael Koskey (call me Mike)

Office: Brooks 307

Office Telephone: 474-6604

Office Fax: 474-5666

Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 1 pm – 5 pm, or by appointment

E-mail: mike.koskey@alaska.edu or ffmsk1@uaf.edu or mikoskey@yahoo.com

Audio conference: 1-800-570-3591

PIN: 9402593

Wednesdays 5:15 - 8:15 pm

Pre-requisite: Graduate standing or approval of the instructor.

Course Description

This course examines the acquisition and utilization of knowledge associated with the long-term inhabitation of particular ecological systems and the adaptations that arise from the accumulation of such knowledge. Attention will be given to the contemporary significance of traditional ecological knowledge as a complement to academic disciplinary fields of study.

Intimate knowledge of place—culturally, spiritually, nutritionally, and economically for viability—is traditional ecological knowledge.

“You have noticed that everything a Native does is in a circle, and that is because the power of the world always works in circles and everything tries to be round. Everything the power of the world does is done in a circle. The sky is round and so are the stars. The wind, in its greatest power whirls. Birds make their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth and goes down in a circle. The moon does the same, and both are round. Even the seasons form a circle in their changing, and always come back to where they were. The life of a man is a circle, from childhood to childhood and so it is everything where power moves.”

—Black Elk, Oglala Lakota

Course textbooks

* *The Earth is Faster Now: Indigenous observations of Arctic environmental change*, Krupnik and Jolly, editors

* *EarthDance: Living systems in evolution*, Elisabet Sahtouris

Available on-line at: <http://www.ratical.org/LifeWeb/Erthdnce/>

* Various articles on “Moodle” at <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu:8080/moodle/> [contact sean@ankn.uaf.edu for access]

* *Yuuyaraq: The Way of the Human Being*, Harold Napoleon

Available on-line at: <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/publications/>, or purchase from ANKN

Course objectives

1. to explore another process(es) of knowing and teaching about place
2. to begin an understanding of the interrelationships of animals, plants, humans and habitats
3. to begin to appreciate the numerous variables impinging on individual species in a complex and synergistic ecosystem which is continually changing
4. to see that Alaska Native gathering models are process-oriented rather than goal-oriented
5. to see the need for Alaska Native people to develop specific strategies for self-empowerment, synergistic action, and resource management
6. to seek ways for bridging the traditional ecological knowledge with Eurocentric ways for ongoing cross-cultural communications and cooperation
7. to experience the transition from a “Mother Earth” providing for all needs for everything, and change emanating from late “Western Civilization”

Within the objectives stated above will be a constant consideration of the practical collection and application of traditional knowledge, and how to use such knowledge in a respectful, non-intrusive way. These methods include:

1. Interviewing “key respondents” or people who are especially knowledgeable about a topic. For some topics, there might be just one acknowledged expert, while in other cases, several people might offer various ideas and observations on the subject.
2. Conducting a systematic survey to get a range of information and responses, using either a set of open-ended questions (a “protocol”) for discussion, or a more formal written set of questions with more directed responses (a “questionnaire”). These methods are appropriate when you need to talk to a “sample” or selection of people or households.
3. Holding meetings in which a number of experts are present and discuss a topic in depth. This is a good way to explore the range of knowledge and experience in a community, identify different points of view, and if appropriate, reach consensus.
4. Investigating archives, data bases, and other written materials. If a topic has been studied by someone else, it is a good idea to study their material before-hand. This may give you insights on questions to ask. It also provides time-depth.
5. Observing during field visits to communities, participating in subsistence and other activities, and visiting sites with knowledgeable people.

Students with Disabilities

If you have any condition such as a physical or sensory disability, which will make it difficult for you to carry out the work as I have outlined it, or which will require extra time on examinations, please notify me in the first two weeks of the course so that we may make appropriate arrangements.

If medical situations arise during the semester, whether physical or emotional, you can contact the Center for Health and Counseling at 474-5655.

Reading Schedule

The following is the chapter-by-chapter listing of readings for the class for the listed date. These texts need to be read *before* coming to class, since they will constitute the primary focus of in-class discussion. Most classes require three readings on three different topics, intended to provide for a more diverse array of subjects for each three-hour class.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Readings</u>
1/28	Introductions, Basics of TEK (TK, IK, LK, LEK, ecoliteracy, etc.), Essay Presentation choices and scheduling Krupnik & Jolly: Preface & Introduction
2/4	Krupnik & Jolly: These are Things that are Really Happening Sahtouris: A Twice-told Tale; The Cosmic Beginnings Kawagley, "Alaska Native Holotropic Mind and Science"
2/11	Krupnik & Jolly: Community Contributions to Ecological Monitoring Sahtouris: The Young Earth; Problems for Earthlife Mercurieff, "Western Society's Linear Systems and Aboriginal Cultures"
2/18	Krupnik & Jolly: We Can't Predict the Weather Like We Used to Sahtouris: The Dance of Life; A Great Leap Kizzia, "Identity search"
2/25	Napoleon: <i>Yuuyaraq: The Way of the Human Being</i>
3/4	Krupnik & Jolly: Coastal Sea Ice Watch Sahtouris: Evidence of Evolution; From Protists to Polyps Nelson, "Understanding Eskimo Science"
3/11	No class. Spring break—have fun!
3/18	Krupnik & Jolly: Watching Ice and Weather Our Way Sahtouris: From Possums to People; The Big Bang Experiment Klein, "Wilderness: A Western Concept Alien to Arctic Cultures"
3/25	Krupnik & Jolly: Nowadays it is Not the Same Sahtouris: What the Play is All About; Worldviews from the Pleistocene to Plato Clayton, "A productive, but taxed, Earth"
4/1	Krupnik & Jolly: Travelling with Fred George Sahtouris: World Views from Plato to the Present; Less than Perfect, More than Machine Whitty, "The Fate of the Ocean"
4/8	Krupnik & Jolly: Climate Change and Health in Nunavik and Labrador Sahtouris: The Body of Humanity; A Matter of Maturation Miller, "The Midas Touch"

Date Readings

- 4/15 Krupnik & Jolly: Putting the Human Face on Climate Change through Community Workshops
Sahtouris: Ecological Ethics; The Indigenous Way
Johnson, "Dene Traditional Knowledge"
- 4/22 Krupnik & Jolly: Epilogue: Making Sense of Arctic Environmental Change?
Sahtouris: Sustainable Society; Cosmic Continuation
Teicher, "A school built on Navajo values"
- 4/29 Krupnik & Jolly: Appendix: Snowchange 2002
Kawagley, "Why Should Yupiaq Literacy Slow Student Progress?"

Assignments

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. Reaction Papers | 12 (due each class except first) |
| 2. Essay-Presentations | 4 (presented according to schedule devised in first class) |
| 3. Project Paper | 1 (due at end of semester) |

Grading

First, if the class decides on a mainstream grading policy, then I will do it. Otherwise, in the following alternate grading scenario you'll be expected to do all the work for each grade to obtain that grade. For instance, to receive a grade of "B," you must do all the work for grade "C" as well as that for "B." All work must be of high quality—the very best that you can produce. Below are detailed grade-requirements, from "C" to "A," explaining the tasks required to receive that grade. Remember that to achieve a grade higher than "C" requires the fulfillment of all lower grade-requirements, in addition to those for the target-grade:

GRADE C—all students must complete the assignments below

1. You must submit to me on paper, by fax, e-mail, or mail a one-page reaction paper on some word, idea, an observation of Native people in the course of your work, an observation of nature, or something that you find interesting or want to expand upon during the following week. There should be 12 of these—one for each week of regular class.

•*Reaction papers are due weekly*

2. Each student will be required to pick two (one from each) essays from *The Earth is Faster Now* and from *EarthDance*. Additionally, each student will *find/record* two articles or interviews—to be made available to each class participant—on a topic relevant to their semester project paper. Each student will be required to give a 10-15 minute summary to the class on each of the readings, with the two article presentations being in part a project-paper presentation. As well, each student will provide a 1-2 page outline or narrative summary of the chapter/article/interview for the other class participants.

•We will determine which students will review which chapters and assign presentation dates during the first and second classes.

3. In your readings, attending school, potlatch, and experiencing good and bad happenings in these activities, and lack of respect for most anything shown by people, is there “evil” involved? Why or why not? As a way to answer the question, read Genesis 1 & 2, glean from the readings what constitutes or engenders evil. Similarly, you may read about the concept of evil in any other religious text. When might evil be good for the individual or community? Or is it ever good? Attach these considerations to a practical idea that could be applied to real-life situations.

Alternatively, you may devise your own research paper topic that is relevant to the class and has instructor approval.

•This paper must be 5+ pages long, double-spaced, at 10 to 12-point font.

GRADE B—longer paper

Earth, air, fire, water and, even, spirit seem to be in crisis today. Natural disasters seem to be happening more often taking more and more human lives, as well as the lives of others. Contrast the Native ways of knowing and doing—to make a life and a living successfully for many thousand of years—to that of the modern materialistic and techno-mechanistic worldview which has been in existence for 500 to 1700 years, depending on when we set the beginning of the industrial revolution. Write using, perhaps, the four values of harmonious living, cooperation, teamwork, and adaptation. Attach these considerations to a practical idea that could be applied to real-life situations.

Alternatively, you may devise your own research paper topic that is relevant to the class and has instructor approval.

•This paper must be 10+ pages long, double-spaced, at 10 to 12-point font.

GRADE A—in-depth paper

The readings depict important ways of learning and knowing, and certainly include the idea of "cultures of habitat." Does this change your idea of education, which includes schooling as well as all facets of life? Should the Native language become the language of instruction in school, home and community? Why or why not? Should the Alaska Native student learn the English language? Give reasons for your answer. Does the mono-language and mono-culture goal of the world make sense? Can the Native ways of knowing and making sense of this world be applicable today? Can they make contributions to this modern world to produce soft technology and living in harmony? How? Your readings and class discussions should give you a lot of ideas. In all these assignments, there is no one right answer although the inclination of modern thought would give you the impression that a mono-language and mono-culture is the way to go (i.e., globalization).

OR

Among the elderly, adults, young adults, and the young, many have no idea of who they are, little or no idea of where they are, no ties to geography or landscape, and rituals and ceremonies are missing from their lives. There are many Native people who are well grounded in their worldview and culture. For all Native people, what elements (values, traditions, rituals and so forth) will be needed for them to formulate a new identity and place in the fast-changing world due to global warming and other forces? What are the odds of being successful in this all important effort? You might even look up William Oquilluk's book *People of Kauwerak* in www.alaskool.org to see how the survivors of disasters survived. The morphic fields that Rupert Sheldrake wrote about become very important sources of power for survival.

•*This paper must be 15+ pages long, double-spaced, at 10 to 12-point font.*

Alternatively, you may devise your own research paper topic that is relevant to the class and has instructor approval.

Other sources

Alaska Native Knowledge Network: <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu>

Alaska Native Science Commission: <http://www.nativescience.org>

Alaskool: <http://www.alaskool.org>

Division of Subsistence Technical Papers:

<http://www.subsistence.adfg.state.ak.us/geninfo/publctns/techpap.cfm>

Respect

The rules for respect are simple: anyone may talk about anything that they wish to; the speaker is not to be interrupted, questioned or judged; one may pass on the privilege of speaking if uncomfortable to another; any personal or otherwise sensitive information given and heard never goes beyond the class.