

PORTUGUESE 288i (taught in English)

Fall 2014

Exploring the Mystery of Amazonia: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Environmental Issues (3 cr)

CORE Literature (HL) CORE Diversity (D)

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Course Description: This course focuses on writings, videos and movies that provide a concept and a set of cultural values related to the Amazonian ecosystem encompassing several countries in South America. The course has three main components: **1.** It draws insights on the ecology of South American rain forest, on the relationships and frictions between the natural environment and human inhabitants and/or predators, and on the dominant and subordinate cultures in the region; **2.** It approaches students to viewpoints expressed by US and non-US scientific explorers, historians, travelers, researchers, adventurers and fictionists, laborers, and Amerindians' (Indians) advocates; **3.** It examines folktales, narratives and testimonials by Indigenous people and other inhabitants of the region. - The course is developed through lectures, class discussions, readings, writing of journals and the viewing of documentaries, videos and motion pictures set in or about the Amazonian region.

NOTE: A new item is being incorporated to this course, that is, SUSTAINABILITY OF THE AMAZON. After having attended a workshop on Sustainability, sponsored by The University of Maryland, I felt that this item was of the foremost importance to this course. We will focusing on the problems, issues, pros and cons related to the very much singled out region of the planet for the wealthiness of its soil, flora and fauna.

Goals: **1.** To lead students to get acquainted with finely tuned writings on the natural resources of the Amazon region, on some theories, practices, activities and folk beliefs related to the natural environment, human survival, local popular imagination, and on the general misconceptions on that diversified region; **2.** To guide students, through reading of pertinent discourses and watching videos and movies, in the exploration of areas and subjects related to the Amazon ecosystem, focusing mostly, but not exclusively, in the Brazilian region, by far the largest and most scrutinized among the areas covered by the Amazonian rain forest and rivers. **3.** To help students to develop a sense of analysis and synthesis, including a personal reflection, on subjects examined. **4.** To encourage students to examine values pertinent to a non-Western society, such as of the Amerindians, the *caboclos* and other *mestizos* in the Amazon Basin.

Requirementss: Students are required to take all quizzes and exams, do the assignments and participate in class discussions, according to schedule. Therefore, students' responsibilities include group or individual oral presentation, the writing of weekly journals* on articles read, and of reports on topics presented by guest speakers or viewed in movies and videos. (*Explanation about journals is in a separate handout.) **Final paper:** A topic for the final paper should be selected by student and submitted to instructor soon after the mid-term examination. **Final Examination: In class**

Grading method: Mid-term examination: 25 pts; two quizzes: 10 pts each (20 pts total); oral presentation: 10 pts; journals, reports, summaries: 15 pts; take-home final examination: 30 pts..

Course Grades: A = 100-90 pts; B = 89-79; C= 78-69; D = 68-59; F = 58 -.

Texts: *Tropical Rainforests, Latin American Nature and Society in Transition.* (TR) Ed. By Susan E. Place, revised and updated edition; *The Lost Lady of the Amazon, the Story of Isabela Godin and Her Epic Journey* (LLA), by Anthony Smith (2003).

NOTE 1: Non-scheduled guest-speakers may be included in the program. Syllabus will be adjusted accordingly.

NOTE 2: Missed Quizzes and Exams, and missed due dates of Journals and other possible assignments will be graded zero, except in very exceptional circumstances, that should be documented by student.

NOTE 3: If you have a cell phone, please turn it off before entering the class for this course. The same with I-Pods, and other electronic gadgets. No laptop open is allowed, except special cases (talk with the instructor).

NOTE 4: Please have a folder exclusively for this course, because you will receive many handouts – around 25 along the course. If you miss, displace, or lose your handouts, try to get a copy from a colleague. The instructor will not be able to produce 2nd edition of them (they are costly and printed exactly for the number of students attending this course).

SYLLABUS

Every class starts with discussion of assigned reading, unless occasional change in the program.

Dates	Lectures, class discussions, students presentation, videos, guest speakers:	Readings & other assignments:
Week 1	Introduction to course. Panoramic view of history, geography, economy & cultures.– Layers of the rainforest & types of soil. - Screening (partial) of video on the Amazon rain forest. Early history of the basin’s exploration: Spaniards & Portuguese: Orellana, Aguirre, Pedro Teixeira.. – Legends: El Dorado & Amazon women warriors. (Cont. & end of the video).	Handouts: 1.Basic information on the Amazon region; 2. Concepts, & terms related to the rain forest. Assignment for Tuesday: Map of the Amazon river, its sources & main tributaries.
Week 2	The United Nations Millennium Declaration identified principles and treaties on sustainable development, including economic development, social development and environmental protection. – Requested: Project on the feasibility of safeguarding the Amazon Ecosystem, according to Brazilian interest (or lack thereof) on the subject. (More information to follow.) - Video to be watched on your own: “Amazon Rainforest: A Case for Sustainable Development” (C.S. Mott Foundation, YouTube, 5’53’)	Handouts: BBC Geography - “Human Uses of Rainforest,” in http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/geography/ecosystems/human_uses_rainforest_rev5.shtml Hawken, Paul. “You are brilliant, and the earth is hiring”, in <i>Choices for Sustainable Living</i> , pp. 13-15 (including “Definitions of Sustainability”, p. 15).
Week 3	Discussion of Intro and Chapters 1-3 (LLA), “Dream of Amazonia”. Environment: physical & human. Economy: The rubber tappers. Rubber extraction. Issues: Land-owners; deforestation. Chico Mendes’ struggle. PowerPoint: Rubber.	Readings –For discussion on Tuesday, TR: “Chico Mendes, Fight for the Forest”, pp. 176-8; “A Well-Adapted Life”, G. Reichel-Dolmatoff, pp. 41-46; “Who is destroying the Amazon rainforest?”, J. Lutzenberger, pp. 123-131. LLA: Chapters 3-4. Handout: “Introduction to Chico Mendes”. Journal # 2: Distributed on Thursday – Due on Tuesday of Week 4.
Week 4	On your own, at the Hornbake Library: Videos – Tuesday: <i>In the Ashes of the Forest; The Fires of the Amazon</i> (SD 418.3.A53F57) Chico Mendes – Voice of the Amazon. Thursday: Discussion of assignments. Comments on the videos. Introduction to the Amerindians, <i>caboclos</i> , migrants.	Reading: Handout (Xerox): Article on <i>Fordlandia</i> . LLA: Chapters 5-6. Journal # 3: (No questionnaire) - Report on each of the videos watched – Write a description of the videos following this outline: Title, summary, main episodes, concerns expressed, your opinion – Due on Tuesday of Week 5.

<p>Week 5 Thurs day: Quiz # 1</p>	<p>(Cont.) Caboclos – PowerPoint. Discussion of “Fordlandia” & other projects in the Amazon basin. Review and Quiz # 1: 50 minutes (Thursday).</p>	<p>Readings: Handout (Xerox): “Constructing a Supernatural Landscape through Talk: Creation and Recreation in the Central Amazon of Brazil”, J. Chernela & P. Pinho. “SIVAM”, J. Carr.</p>
<p>Week 6 October (2 &4)</p>	<p>Areas of political surveillance (SIVAM). PowerPoint: SIVAM. Intro to Indigenous way of life. PowerPoint: Aspects of Indigenous way of life & Arts and Crafts. Showing of some Indigenous artifacts.</p>	<p>Readings: TR: “Civilization and Its Discontents”, Katherine Milton, pp. 34-42. LLA: Chapters 7-8. Optional reading: TR: “Indigenous Knowledge and Biodiversity”, Cunningham, pp.188-196. Journal # 4: Mini-paper on any of these topics: Discussion of articles read/ SIVAM / Indigenous life. Due on Tuesday of Week 9.</p>
<p>Week 7 MID-TERM EXAM. THURSDAY. OCT. 11</p>	<p>Folklore of the Amazon - legends on: human entities (>curupira=), aquatic animals (>cobra grande, the ‘boto’ [dolphin]), land animals (turtles). Forest spirits. Amazonian culinary. MID TERM EXAMINATION: THURSDAY of Week 9.</p>	<p>Readings (Xerox): “The Dance of the Dolphin”, Candace Slater. Brazilian tales of the Amazon. LLA: Chapters 9-10. REMINDER: After the Mid-Term, individual or group oral presentation.</p>
<p>Week 8</p>	<p>Selected fictional writings. Readings in class of selected poetry. Class exercise on readings. Discussion: Contrasting views of the Amazon: Hudson, Rivera & Bates- excerpts. Introduction of topics for the final paper.</p>	<p>Reading: - Hudson & Rivera, Bates. Poems by Amazonian poets and on the Amazon. Excerpts of Márcio Souza (Brazil), Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Colombia) & Alegría (Peru). Journal # 5: Literary report on assigned excerpts. Due on Tuesday of Week 9.</p>
<p>Week 9</p>	<p>Examination/ evaluation of literary excerpts. Student PRESENTATION.</p>	<p>Readings: LLA - Chapters 11-12 & A personal Epilogue. Journal # 5 – Book review of <i>The Story of Isabella Godin.</i> Due on Thursday of Week 10.</p>
	<p>Narratives by Amerindians. The Yanomanis, their legends. Suruis, their legends. Video: The Yanomanis.</p>	<p>Readings: (Xerox) Salamone: <i>The Yanomamis ...</i> Wilbert: <i>Folk literature</i> (narratives 7, 17, 25, 32); Betty Mindlin & Suruí narrators: selections.</p>
<p>Week 11 QUIZ # 2</p>	<p>Video - The Canela Indians. – SECOND QUIZ # 2: THURSDAY. Student presentation.</p>	<p>Journal #6: Amerindians’ narratives & Your selection of 2 stories set in the Amazonian region – your comments. Due Thursday, Nov. 15</p>

Week 12	The Amazon in the world's imagination: Stereotypes. Movie: <i>The Emerald Forest</i> .	Journal # 7: Your research on stereotypes about the Amazon. OR: Your research on Indigenous legends. Due on Thursday of Week 14.
Week 13	Recess.	
Week 14	Student presentation. Tourism and Ecotourism. Selected writings.	Readings (Xerox): "Ecotourism in the Amazon," Garcia, Bastos. Journal # 8: Report on the movie – to be turned in on Thursday of Week 14.
Week 15	Student presentation. Final thoughts/comments/ on the Amazonian region.	
Week 16	REVIEW. LAST DAY OF CLASS.	
	FINAL PAPER DUE ON EXAM DAY – up to the end of the exam or leave at – Dr. Igel's mailbox (located in Jiménez Hall – 3 rd floor)	FINAL EXAMINATION DATE: -

Bibliography

Articles: [In brackets, the alphabetical location of articles assigned in the Syllabus - most articles are very short, hence the accumulation of two or three for the same class. All books and articles are on *Reserve at McKeldin Library*, unless otherwise indicated]:

[PLACE] Place, Susan E., ed., *Tropical Rainforests, Latin American Nature and Society in Transition*. Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1993 (Lipske, Mendes, Hudson).

[SALAMONE] Salamone, Frank A., *The Yanomami and Their Interpreters - Fierce People or Fierce Interpreters?* Lanham: University Press of America, Inc., 1997.

[SLATER] Slater, Candace, *Dance of the Dolphin, Transformations and Disenchantment in the Amazonian Imagination*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

[SGUIGLIA] Sguiglia, Eduardo. *Fordlandia*. Translated from the Spanish by P. Duncan. New York: St. Martin Press, 2000.

[STONE] Stone, Roger D., *Dreams of Amazonia*. New York: Penguin Books, 1985.

[WAGLEY] Wagley, Charles. *Amazon Town, A Study of Man in the Tropics*. New York: The MacMillan Co., 1953.

Excerpts of Fiction/Folktales:

[ALEGRIA] Alegria, Ciro. "The Call" in *Amazonian Literary Review*, ed. By Nicomedes Suárez-Araúz & Charles Cutler. Mass.: Smith College, Issue 2, 2000. A narrative of a man in the forest – his isolation is not solitude.

[BBC Geography] - "Human Uses of Rainforest," in

http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/geography/ecosystems/human_uses_rainforest_rev5.shtml

[HAWKEN] Paul. "You are brilliant, and the earth is hiring", in [Choices for Sustainable Living](#), pp. 13-15 (including "Definitions of Sustainability", p. 15).

Poetry from: *Amazonian Literary Review*, Issues 1 & 2. Edited by N.Suárez-Araúz & Charles Cutler, 2000.

[LLOSA] Llosa, Mario Vargas. Selected short story.

[MARQUEZ] Marquez, Gabriel García. Selected short story.

[MINDLIN] Mindlin, Betty & Suruí Narrators, *Unwritten Stories of the Suruí Indians of Rondônia*. University of Texas, Austin: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1995. Legends narrated by the Suruí Indians and recorded by anthropologist Mindlin.

[SOUZA] Souza, Márcio. *The Emperor of the Amazon*. Narrative dipped in irony and humor on struggles between Brazilian patriots and an American diplomat representing his country and other foreign interests in claiming part of the Amazon territory.

[WILBERT] Wilbert, J. & Simoneau, K., eds. *Folkliterature of the Yanomami Indians*. Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1990. Selected folktales recorded by anthropologists among the Yanomami Indians in the frontier region between Venezuela and Brazil.