

## **Geography 4340 Section 1: Human-Environment Interaction**

**Hybrid: 1/3 online and 2/3's face to face**

**MW 11:15 am to 12:10 pm face to face**

**Friday material will be online**

**COB 212**

**Fall 2025**

Instructor: Dr. E. Cory Sills, Associate Professor

Office: CAS 142

Office hours: MW 1:00 to 2:30 pm

In Person, By Appointment, or Via Zoom

E-mail: [esills@uttyler.edu](mailto:esills@uttyler.edu) ph:903-566-7442

**Communications:** I encourage you to contact me during office hours, immediately after class, or via Zoom. These are great opportunities to review your exams, go over assignments, ask questions, or seek clarification. If you're unable to attend my scheduled office hours, please reach out to arrange an alternative meeting time. I aim to respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays and within 48 hours on weekends. When emailing, be sure to include your full name and indicate that you are enrolled in *Geography 4340*.

**Required texts:** The first book can be purchased at the UT Tyler bookstore or online at sites such as Amazon or Chegg.

1. Environmental Anthropology: From Pigs to Policies, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Patricia K. Townsend, 2018.
2. Additional readings will be posted to Canvas (see the schedule for details about the readings)

**Course description:** Study of the dynamic relationships between human cultures and their environments. This course will examine the strategies employed by humans to cope with challenges and take advantage of opportunities within their ecological environment.

### **Course Objectives:**

- To examine and synthesize key theoretical concepts, thinkers, and practitioners on human-environment interactions.
- To develop required skills to critically read, analyze, and interpret scholarly works and case studies.
- Apply the learned theories to modern environmental problems and issues.
- To develop and improve critical thinking and writing skills about human-environment interactions.

**Course format:** This is a hybrid class where 1/3 of the class will be online. Even though we will not meet in class on Friday's you will still be held accountable for material assigned for Friday's class. Class lectures and discussions will be supplemented by the required text, current events, videos, demonstrations, and guest lectures. Lectures and readings will not necessarily cover the same ground. Indeed, they are intended to supplement each other rather than to completely overlap. All students must participate in the class discussions. I strongly recommend that you attend every lecture and carefully study the assigned readings. I encourage relevant questions and comments during the lecture. A question you have other students might also have, and thoughtful remarks will make the course more interesting for everyone, including myself.

**Class Etiquette:** I expect everyone in the classroom to be **respectful** of each other and treat everyone with dignity – we all bring to the class different opinions and experiences. Some of these might be dissimilar to your own. I expect comments to be positive and objective and not judgmental and rude.

**Content Warning:** Some of the readings and discussions in this class are emotional and controversial. I will do my best to provide a warning before we begin these discussions and readings. If you have any concerns about the content, please see me to discuss.

**Grading:** The course grade will be based on two exams (mid-term and final), group discussion participation, Friday online materials and assignments (that will be due on Monday), a research paper that will include a proposal and a presentation, as well as participation in discussions and attendance.

**Exams:** The mid-term and final exams will cover material from class including slides, discussions, presentations, guest lectures, readings, and videos. The midterm will cover material from the first part of the course; the final will cover material from the second part of the course including presentations by the class. Exams can include multiple choice, true/false, short answer questions, and essay questions dealing with major issues raised in the course. Exams are closed book and closed notes. **Any communication via an electronic device during an exam will be considered potential cheating.**

**Discussions:** Each student will be required to participate in four group discussions throughout the semester. See the syllabus for dates. To facilitate discussion, each person will be required to turn in at least 3 questions and/or comments covering all of the readings prior to class. **Specific instructions will be posted on the class Canvas site. If you need help with this component, please ask me for further details. I will not accept late discussion questions and comments.**

**Friday Online Materials:** I will post materials for you to review every Friday. You may work on these materials at your own pace. There will be 4 graded Friday assignments. You will be tested on all Friday materials during your midterm and final exam (Exam 2).

**Case Study Research Paper (proposal, paper, and presentation):** Each student will research, write, and present an 8–10-page research paper. The paper should examine a real-world example of human-environment interaction by analyzing the causes, consequences, and lessons learned from a specific case study of your choice. Detailed instructions will be posted on the class Canvas site. Presentations will occur towards the end of the semester.

**Class Participation and Attendance:** Students are expected to complete the readings for each class period and to participate in class discussions about the readings.

- **Make-up Policy:** Make-up tests will be given with a legitimate reason and in rare circumstances. Students should contact the instructor **prior** to the exam and not after if they will miss the exam. Make-up exams will not be given except when there are exceptional circumstances (be prepared to provide documentation of your circumstance, such as a doctor's note, police report, University-excused absence, *et cetera*).
- Grading scale:
 

A	90-100%	B	80-89.99%	C	70-79.99%
D	60-69.99%	F	0-59.99%		

**Course weights:**

Exam 1:	20%
Exam 2:	20%
Group Discussions (4):	16%
Friday Online Assignments (4):	12%
Research Paper Proposal:	5%
Research Paper:	20%
Research Presentation:	5%
Class Participation (Attendance and Discussion):	2%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Incidence of Scholastic Dishonesty: You will receive an automatic zero on the assignment. All cases of plagiarism or cheating will result in an automatic zero for the assignment!**

**AI Statement for This Course:** The work submitted by students in this course will be generated by themselves. This includes all drafts and final products. You may use another software program for editing of your document and you may use AI tools (such as ChatGPT or Copilot) to help brainstorm, generate ideas for your research paper, and find references. However, the written text of the paper, discussion questions, and any other assignments must be your own and not generated by AI. Any instance of the following constitutes a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code: a student has

another person/entity do any portion of a graded assignment, which includes purchasing work from a company, hiring a person or company to complete an assignment or exam, using a previously submitted assignment and/or using AI tools (such as ChatGPT). You will receive a zero on the assignment for violating this policy.

**Cell Phones/Laptops:** Turn off your ringer and do not use your cell phone during class – this includes text messaging. If you are expecting an important call, please put your phone on vibrate and sit close to the door. This action will help minimize any disturbance to the class. **I will not be recording this class. Any video, photographic or audio recordings of the class must be approved by me.**

## **University Policies and Information**

### **Withdrawing from Class**

Students may [withdraw](#) (drop) from this course using the [Withdrawal Portal](#). Withdrawing (dropping) this course can impact your Financial Aid, Scholarships, Veteran Benefits, Exemptions, Waivers, International Student Status, housing, and degree progress. Please speak with your instructors, consider your options, speak with your advisor, and visit the One-Stop Service Center (STE 230) or email [enroll@uttyler.edu](mailto:enroll@uttyler.edu) to get a complete review of your student account and the possible impacts to withdrawing. We want you to make an informed decision. UT Tyler faculty and staff are here for you and often can provide additional support options or assistance. Make sure to carefully [read the implications for withdrawing from a course and the instructions](#) on using the [Withdrawal portal](#).

Texas law prohibits students from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career\*. The six courses dropped includes those from other 2-year or 4-year Texas public colleges and universities. Consider the impact withdrawing from this class has on your academic progress and other areas, such as financial implications. We encourage you to consult your advisor(s) and Enrollment Services for additional guidance. **CAUTION #1:** Withdrawing before census day does not mean you get a full refund. Please see the [Tuition and Fee Refund Schedule](#). **CAUTION #2:** All international students must check with the [Office of International Programs](#) before withdrawing. All international students are required to enroll full-time for fall and spring terms. **CAUTION #3:** All UT Tyler Athletes must check with the Athletic Academic Coordinator before withdrawing from a course. **CAUTION #4:** All veterans or military-affiliated students should consult with the [Military and Veterans Success Center](#).

\* Students who began college for the first time before 2007 are exempt from this law.

### **Artificial Intelligence Statement**

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy. *Refer to the About This Course section of the UT Tyler Syllabus Module for specific information on appropriate use of AI in your course(s).*

### **Final Exam Policy**

Final examinations are administered as scheduled. If unusual circumstances require that special arrangements be made for an individual student or class, the Dean of the appropriate college, after consultation with the faculty member involved, may authorize an exception to the schedule. Faculty members must maintain student final examination papers for a minimum of three months following the examination date.

### **Incomplete Grade Policy**

If a student, because of extenuating circumstances, is unable to complete all of the requirements for a course by the end of the semester, then the instructor may recommend an Incomplete (I) for the course. The "I" may be assigned in place of a

grade *only when **all** of the following conditions are met:* (a) the student has been making satisfactory progress in the course; (b) the student is unable to complete all coursework or final exam due to unusual circumstances that are beyond personal control and are acceptable to the instructor, and (c) the student presents these reasons before the time that the final grade roster is due. The semester credit hours for an Incomplete will not be used to calculate the grade point average.

The student and the instructor must submit an Incomplete Form detailing the work required and the time by which the work must be completed to their respective department chair or college dean for approval. The time limit established must not exceed one year. Should the student fail to meet all of the work for the course within the time limit, then the instructor may assign zeros to the unfinished work, compute the course average for the student, and assign the appropriate grade. If a grade has yet to be assigned within one year, then the Incomplete will be changed to an F, or NC. If the course was initially taken under the CR/NC grading basis, this may adversely affect the student's academic standing.

### **Grade Appeal Policy**

Disputes regarding grades must be initiated within sixty (60) days from the date of receiving the final course grade by filing a Grade Appeal Form with the instructor who assigned the grade. A grade appeal should be used when the student thinks the final course grade awarded does not reflect the grades earned on assessments or follow the grading scale as documented in the syllabus. The student should provide the rationale for the grade appeal and attach supporting document about the grades earned. The form should be sent via email to the faculty member who assigned the grade. The faculty member reviews the rationale and supporting documentation and completes the instruction section of the form. The instructor should return the form to the student, even if a grade change is made at this level. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, the student may appeal in writing to the Chairperson of the department from which the grade was issued. In situations where there is an allegation of capricious grading, discrimination, or unlawful actions, appeals may go beyond the Chairperson to the Dean or the Dean's designee of the college from which the grade was issued, with that decision being final. The Grade Appeal form is found in the [Registrar's Form Library](#).

NOTE: The Grade Appeal Form is different from the Application for Appeal form submitted to the Student Appeals Committee, which does not rule on grade disputes as described in this policy.

### **Disability/Accessibility Services**

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA), the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical, and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler/> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with the Assistant Director Student Accessibility and Resources/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <https://www.uttyler.edu/disability-services>, the SAR office located in the Robert Muntz Library, LIB 460, email [saroffice@uttyler.edu](mailto:saroffice@uttyler.edu), or call 903.566.7079."

### **Military Affiliated Students**

UT Tyler honors the service and sacrifices of our military-affiliated students. If you are a student who is a veteran, on active duty, in the reserves or National Guard, or a military spouse or dependent, please stay in contact with your faculty member if any aspect of your present or prior service or family situation makes it difficult for you to fulfill the requirements of a course or creates disruption in your academic progress. It is important to make your faculty member aware of any complications as far in advance as possible. Your faculty member is willing to work with you and, if needed, put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you. The [Military and Veterans Success Center \(MVSC\)](#) has campus resources for military-affiliated students. The MVSC can be reached at [MVSC@uttyler.edu](mailto:MVSC@uttyler.edu) or via phone at 903.565.5972.

### **Students on an F-1 Visa**

To remain in compliance with Federal Regulations requirements you must do the following:

- Traditional face-to-face classes: Attend classes on the regular meeting days/times.

- Hybrid Classes: Attend all face-to-face classes convened by the instructor according to the schedule set for your specific course.
- Online course: Only one online course can count toward your full-time enrollment. Students are expected to be fully engaged and meet all requirements for the online course.

### **Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct**

The UT Tyler community comes together to pledge that "Honor and integrity will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do." Therefore, we enforce the [Student Conduct and Discipline policy](#) in the Student Manual Of Operating Procedures (Section 8).

### **FERPA**

UT Tyler follows the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as noted in [University Policy 5.2.3](#). The course instructor will follow all requirements to protect your confidential information.

### **Absence for Official University Events or Activities**

This course follows the practices related to [Excused Absences for University Events or Activities](#) as noted in the Catalog.

### **Absence for Religious Holidays**

This course follows the practices related to [Excused Absences for Religious Holy Days as noted in the Catalog](#).

### **Absence for Pregnant Students**

This course follows the requirements of Texas Laws SB 412, SB 459, SB 597/HB 1361 to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting students. Part of the supports afforded pregnant students includes excused absences. Faculty who are informed by a student of needing this support should make a referral to the Parenting Student Liaison. NOTE: Students must work with the Parenting Student Liaison in order to receive these supports. Students should reach out to the Parenting Student Liaison at [parents@uttyler.edu](mailto:parents@uttyler.edu) and also complete the [Pregnant and Parenting Self-Reporting Form](#).

### **Campus Carry**

We respect the right and privacy of students who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>.

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What we cover in the lecture on a day-to-day basis may differ from the attached schedule. I will inform the class via email if topics change.

Week	Day	Date	Lecture and Activities	Readings (Links to some materials are on Canvas)
1	Mon.	8/25	Introducing the Course!	Syllabus
1	Wed.	8/27	Lecture: Culture and Nature	Human Environment Interaction Chap. 1 (Canvas)
1	Fri	8/29	Watch “Alaska’s Vanishing Native Villages”, PBS Frontline. Link posted in Canvas.	
2	Mon.	9/1	<b>No Class: Labor Day</b>	
2	Wed.	9/3	Discuss Documentary Lecture: Origins of Environmental Thinking	People and Nature Chap. 2 (Canvas)
2	Fri	9/5	Complete Friday Online Graded Activity <b>Calculating Your Carbon Footprint</b> and answer the questions posted to Canvas. Due on Monday 9/8	
3	Mon.	9/8	<b>Census Day</b> <b>Due:</b> Carbon Footprint Friday Activity Lecture: Emergence of Cultural Ecology	Environmental Anth. Chap. 2
3	Wed.	9/10	Lecture: Hunter-Fisher-Gatherer Introduction to N!ai	Environmental Anth. Chap. 5
3	Fri	9/12	Friday Online Graded Activity: Watch “N!ai, The Story of a !Kung Woman” and answer the questions posted to Canvas. Due Monday Sept. 22 <sup>nd</sup>	
4	Mon.	9/15	<b>Discussion 1: Hunter-Fisher-Gatherer (Discuss articles)</b>	Readings posted to Canvas
4	Wed.	9/17	Lecture: Domestication	People and Nature Chap. 2 (Canvas)
4	Fri	9/19	Complete. Friday Online Graded Activity: Watch “N!ai, The Story of a !Kung Woman” and answer the questions posted to Canvas. Be prepared to discuss on Monday 9/22	
5	Mon.	9/22	<b>Due:</b> N!ai, The Story of a !Kung Woman Lecture: Pastoralists	Cult. Eco. Chap. 4 (posted to Canvas)
5	Wed.	9/24	Lecture: Agriculturalists	Environ. Anth. Chap. 6
5	Fri	9/26	Watch “How LA's thirst for water is draining a California valley”, link	

			to video posted in Canvas.	
6	Mon.	9/29	<b>Discussion 2: The Commons</b>	Readings posted to Canvas
6	Wed.	10/1	Commons Game	
6	Fri	10/3	Friday Online Graded Activity: What Drives Environmental Impact? Exploring IPAT. <b>Due</b> Monday 10/6.	
7	Mon.	10/6	Lecture: World Population IPAT Activity	Environ. Anth. Chap. 10
7	Wed.	10/8	<b>Due:</b> Research Paper Proposal Research Paper Workshop	
7	Fri	10/10	<b>Mid-term Review</b>	
8	Mon.	10/13	<b>Mid-term (in class)</b>	
8	Wed.	10/15	Lecture: Ethnoecology	Environ. Anth. Chap. 3
8	Fri	10/17	Read the NRCS Document on Traditional Ecological Knowledge and watch the video on Caddo basket making posted to Canvas.	
9	Mon.	10/20	Lecture: Energetics	Environ. Anth. Chap. 4
9	Wed.	10/22	Lecture: Reconstructing Ancient Landscapes	
9	Fri	10/24	Read and prepare for Discussion 3.	
10	Mon.	10/27	<b>Discussion 3: Ancient Landscapes</b>	Readings posted to Canvas
10	Wed.	10/29	Lecture: Spiritual Ecology	Environ. Anth. Chap. 13
10	Fri	10/31	Friday Online Graded Activity: Energetics and Human-Environment Interaction <b>Due</b> Monday 11/3.	

11	Mon.	11/3	<b>Last Day to Withdraw</b> <b>Due:</b> Energetics Assignment Lecture: Political and Applied Ecology	Environ. Anth. Chap.'s 7, 8, 12
11	Wed.	11/5	<b>Discussion 4: Political Ecology</b>	Readings posted to Canvas
11	Fri	11/7	Prepare for Environmental Policy Activity. Download instructions posted to Canvas.	
12	Mon.	11/10	Environmental Policy Activity	
12	Wed.	11/12	Lecture: Consumerism and Capitalism	Environ. Anth. Chap.'s 11 & 14
12	Fri	11/14	Work on Research Paper	
13	Mon.	11/17	Research Paper Due Research Paper Presentations	
13	Wed.	11/19	No class: Watch Story of Stuff. Link posted in Canvas.	
13	Fri	11/21	Watch Video "Murder on the Rainbow Mountain" link posted in Canvas	
<b>Thanksgiving Week November 24-28</b>				
14	Mon.	12/1	Research Paper Presentations	
14	Wed.	12/3	Research Paper Presentations	
14	Fri	12/5	Review for Final	
15	Mon.	12/8	Finals Week	
15	Wed.	12/10	<b>Final Exam TBA</b>	
15	Fri	12/12	Finals Week	