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Wildlife Conservation in the Anthropocene: An International Perspective

Proposed Concentration: Global Indigenous Studies

As we usher into the Anthropocene, where ‘Amazon’ is more easily recognized as a global marketing forum than the mighty river, the fate of biodiversity reflects a similar trajectory. Human population growth has resulted in unprecedented changes in our planet’s ecosystems. Species have been lost, modified, and/or forced to live in concrete jungles. Human history, culture and socio-political nuances in different parts of the world result in distinctive challenges as well as enigmatically opportunities for human-wildlife coexistence. In this seminar course we will investigate perspectives from South Asia where animals and humans coexist at very high density and share proximity, consider the North American system where views about biodiversity can often be very polarizing, and explore conservation in parts of Africa where pockets of vast wildernesses persist. We will engage with the primary literature, hear from scientists, and discuss the idea if there could be a unifying model that safeguards biodiversity while supporting human development. Three hours of lecture/discussion each week.

COURSE LOGISTICS

Instructor: Prof. Stotra Chakrabarti; schakrab@macalester.edu

How to address me: I go by Stotra (*STOW-T-RA*), Prof. Chakrabarti (*CHAAK-RA-BARTI*), or Dr. Chakrabarti. My pronouns are he/him/his.

Want to know about my lab and research? [Check Out the CAB Lab here](#)

Follow me on Twitter for Sci-com: [@StotraChakraba2](https://twitter.com/StotraChakraba2)

Lecture: MWF 12-1 pm; OLRI 284

Sports: I try to regularly play ping-pong at the LC and/or soccer. If you are interested in either, join the team 😊

Want to Meet? Use the hyperlink for [*20-Meeting sign-up slots*](#)

I also have an open-door and/or zoom-friendly policy! So, please find me around if you need help. I am always around to listen to you. *I would be really keen to meet all of you one-on-one in the first 2 weeks to know more about you and your expectations from the course. Please reach out to schedule a meeting with me in the first couple of weeks.*

Email Policy: I generally respond to emails promptly on weekdays; emails received after 5PM can take longer to respond. I often cannot answer emails over the weekend, so please plan accordingly.

TA: Eliot Berk, eberk@macalester.edu

How to address: I go by Eliot and my pronouns are he/him!

Office Hours: Available in class, and by appointment, and will have regular office hours (TBD after consultation with the class)

Course Presence: The course primarily relies on experience and exposure (seminar style lectures, paper discussions, hands-on field and analytical labs, interactions with peers and guest speakers), and it will greatly benefit you to ‘participate and learn’. **You will earn most of the points if you just show up for class!** I will expect students to attend lectures regularly on time, unless there is an emergency (*which is absolutely fine*). You can take *3 leave of absences without questions* for the whole course, but an intimation would be appreciated, otherwise I will be worried about your well-being. Also, if you cannot attend class, please let me know and I will try and record the lecture/discussion. Please inform me beforehand if you need more time off. **I am committed to be extra-sensitive towards the flexibility that is required in the special times that we live in currently, so please let me know what I can do to make this course more accessible to you. Please see the Sickness Consideration Section at the end of the document for more details.** If you are feeling perpetually low, remember we are going through a severe collective trauma for >3 years. It will have a significant, long-term effect on mental health. If you are getting out of bed and managing to do some things, then you are doing great!

Out of class work expectations: Readings and paper responses should take ~2-3 hours. Longer assignments and group work, will require some more time to be scheduled. If you are having trouble working in a group setting due to personal/professional/scheduling conflicts, please let me know. **I want you to learn in this course but not rush to achieve any goal. Take your time. Also, please do not be afraid to make mistakes, we only learn when we make mistakes. Remember “why do we fall? So that we can learn to pick ourselves up!” We are going to make mistakes and learn together in this course.**

Deadlines: All deadlines are flexible and come with an automatic grace period of 48 hours. **However, based on feedback from earlier courses where there were no deadlines, I am bringing in something new this time. There are deadlines this time, to add a little bit of structure and not overwhelm you to remain motivated to submitted.** But if you need extra-time, you can choose from a total of **5 flexibility tokens** throughout the course. Each token will grant you an additional 48h of time. The tokens are exclusive of the automatic grace period. ***If you wish to avail a token, please reach out to me/Eliot in advance of an assignment deadline*.**

If you gauge that you won’t be able to turn in an assignment even after the grace period and/or token time, don’t worry, please contact me ASAP so that I can work with you to schedule a deadline that works for you. Otherwise, the assignment portal will automatically expire

Texts: No general textbooks for this course, but book chapters and readings will be made available through Moodle.

Developing your voice in science: Science requires a balance of courage, humility and kindness – this is as true for undergraduates as it is for researchers at leading institutions. You need courage and confidence to pursue and develop new ideas and approaches, confidence to critique others’ ideas, and to follow your curiosity. But science also requires humility and empathy – identifying limitations, asking for advice, permissions, help and guidance, accepting appropriate criticism from others, and reflecting on improvements. **ASK QUESTIONS, CRITIQUE PEERS, BUT PLEASE DO SO WITH KINDNESS.** As you develop your thoughts and opinions in this class, be mindful that we are also collectively creating a community of learning.

LEARNING GOALS

This course will make you aware of issues pertaining to wildlife conservation in the era that we live in and identify effective solutions for these challenges. **The course is designed to facilitate the understanding of concepts relevant to wildlife conservation through interactions with researchers from around the world who are experts in their fields.** The course will provide you with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate issues related to wildlife conservation and

management at local, national, and international scales. Through this course, I will help you to be aware of what it takes to be a conservation researcher, and the avenues you can pursue. By the end of the course, you should also be able to:

- Recognize major threats to biological diversity across the globe and their underlying ecological and socio-political nuances.
- Understand fundamental concepts pertaining to pragmatic wildlife conservation in an increasingly ‘human’ world.
- Understand and critique scientific publications, and use key findings to address wildlife conservation issues.
- Understand wildlife conservation trends across the globe and the regulatory framework governing its practice.
- Demonstrate the ability to synthesize and communicate wildlife conservation problems and solutions in scientific as well as popular formats.
- Choose projects from across the world where you could take up internship opportunities and embark upon a journey to make a change!

ASSESSMENTS (for deadlines and flexibility tokens please refer to page 2; timing of assignment submissions are in the weekly schedule as well as the one-page syllabus, and on moodle)

Paper Responses: Paper responses will be due on the day indicated in the course schedule. The reading material, directions, as well the grading rubric will be made available ahead of time on Moodle so that you have ENOUGH time to prepare. Please check Course schedule/Moodle for updates and timings.

Paper Discussion: Paper discussions will be led by a group of 3 or 2 students (we will discuss how you want the groups to be). Each group will be assigned to lead a paper discussion once throughout the course. I expect discussion leaders to engage with your peers through active participation. Please check Course schedule/Moodle for updates and timings.

Midterm: Midterm will comprise of an aptitude based applied question based on the syllabus covered so far. Open book, take-home assignment; students are expected to consult with other peers to work on this assignment. The Question will be uploaded on Oct 4th and submission is due on/by Oct 16th.

Inspire Talks: Students (in groups) will make a short 15-minute presentation on a topic of choice. This will be followed by reflections where we will have an active discussion on each presentation. So, make sure to write down questions and comments for your peers when they are presenting and don’t be shy to bring them up during the discussion. More details on Moodle.

Seminar Reflection: We have a line-up of 7 amazing guest speakers, **actual living scientists**, who will be speaking to you about their fascinating wildlife conservation research and practice, and also give you a peek into their professional journey. You are expected to write separate reflections (major take-home messages, what you enjoyed the most, the most stimulating concepts/questions in ~200 words) for **4 seminars**. This assignment is due at the end of the course; however, I strongly recommend you to choose the seminars you want to write about and submit your reflections soon after the seminar(s).

GRADING (no overlapping due dates for any assignments)

Assessment	Due	Points
Paper responses	Asynchronous as given in the schedule	20
Paper discussion lead	Asynchronous as given in the schedule	20
Midterms	October 15	50
Inspire Talk	Dec 4-9	50
Seminar Reflections	Last Day of Class	20

Grade	%
A	94-100
A-	90-93.9
B+	87-89.9
B	83-86.9
B-	80-82.9
C+	77-79.9
C	73-76.9
C-	70-72.9
D+	67-69.9
D	63-66.9

Extra Points/Credits

You will receive 2 extra points for every paper response that you turn in before or by the due date. There are in total of 6 paper responses, which cumulatively adds up to 12 extra points if you submit all assessments on or before time!

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND INCLUSIVITY

My goal is to promote an inclusive learning environment where diverse perspectives are recognized, respected, and seen as a source of strength. Part of that effort includes a recognition that all humans have implicit biases, and it is our responsibility to do our best to identify them in ourselves and take actions to mediate them. If something in or about this class makes you feel unwelcome, please see me, your advisor, a professor you trust, or a college administrator.

Names and pronouns: You should be addressed in the manner that you prefer. If you want to make sure I address you with a particular name and/or pronoun, please let me know.

Title IX: Macalester College is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students that is free of discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Further details are explained in the college's Title IX regulations (<https://www.macalester.edu/titleix>). If you, or someone you know, experiences a Title IX violation, know that Macalester has staff trained to support you. Macalester faculty members are "responsible employees," which means that if you tell me about a Title IX violation, I must share that information with the Title IX Coordinator. Still, you will control how your case is handled, including whether you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need (Title IX Office, 651- 696-6258) including, if you wish, confidential sources on campus who are not subject to the mandatory reporting requirement (see list of "Confidential On-Campus Support" at <https://www.macalester.edu/health-and-wellness/sexual-violence-prevention-education/>).

Accessibility: I want all students to have fair and equitable access to the learning opportunities in this course. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or to accurate assessment of achievement, please notify me as soon as possible. Students are also welcome to contact the disability service office to discuss a range of options to removing barriers in the course, including accommodations (contact Disability Services, 651-696-6275 or disabilityservices@macalester.edu).

Once you have a letter of accommodations, please see me so that we can implement an action plan. Furthermore, I know that at times personal issues, stress, health problems or life circumstances may impact your ability to perform academically. Please contact the Office of Student Affairs at 651-696-6220 (studentaffairs@macalester.edu) for support and ask them to get in touch with your instructors.

Other helpful information to support your experience in the class:

- To address concerns on content or experience in the class, either find me before/after class; email me to set up a time to meet in person, and/or attend TA office hours
- If you need additional writing support, please check out *MAX Center* for writing tutors or *Works in Progress* peer review program (Kagin Commons, first floor)
 - You are not able to attend class due to an unexpected event (sickness, family or personal issues) - Contact me as soon as possible to set up a time to talk about options.
 - You are not able to attend class due to religious observance - Please let me know you will be observing ahead of time, so that you can obtain course materials ahead of the absence.
 - If you need an extension on the submission deadlines - Please let me know ahead of the deadline either through email or before/after class.
- **Do you need time for yourself? Studentship can be overwhelming, and I want you to take care of yourself. Your wellbeing is of paramount importance and I do not want you to compromise on that, EVER! If you are finding it difficult to follow the scheduling or pace of this course, please let me know. Also please check these [resources out](#).**

All readings, assignment descriptions, and other information about the course will be on Moodle. Moodle will be updated frequently, so please check regularly.

THIS IS A COURSE TO 'EDUCATE' YOU ABOUT WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND NOT LOSE OUR WAY IN COMPLEX THEORIES OR JARGONS, SO PLEASE HAVE FUN WHILE YOU WORK THROUGH THE COURSE! ALSO, A SYLLABUS IS NOT A CONTRACT --- WE WILL REMAIN FLEXIBLE MUTUALLY

WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE [Tentative, please check moodle for updates & changes]

WEEK	DAYS	TOPIC		
		Monday	Wednesday	Friday
1	Sep 3-6	LABOR DAY	Personal Intro, Syllabus Review	Stotra's Lab & Positionality
2	Sep 9-13	Why Conserve Wildlife? Where the wild things are!	Directions in Conservation Biology Metapopulation Theory & SLOSS Debate	SLOSS & Connectivity Tigers & Lions
3	Sep 16-20	Demographic and Environmental Stochasticity: lions and pumas Paper I updated on Moodle	Religion, monetary compensation and conservation in Asia	Guest Lecture Chinmay Sonawane
4	Sept 23-27	Traditional Ecological knowledge and Indigenous Perspectives in Asia Paper II updated on Moodle	Guest Lecture Dr. Jennifer Gumm	Paper I Discussion (Discussion Lead Group A) *Paper I due* Paper II updated on Moodle
5	Sep 30-Oct 4	Guest Lecture: Kayla Fratt	Roads & Wildlife	Brain Break *Mid-Term Question Uploaded*
6	Oct 7-11	Human-Wildlife Cooperation	Review & Midterm Discussion	Guest lecture: Dr. Roger Faust *Paper II due*
7	Oct 14-18	Paper II Discussion (Discussion Lead Group B)	NO CLASS – ADDITIONAL WORK TIME FOR MDTERMS *Midterm Submission Due*	FALL BREAK
8	Oct 21-25	Poaching Paper III updated on Moodle	Elephants in Africa	Guest Lecture: Sam Helle
9	Oct 28-Nov 1	Trophy Hunting *Paper III due*	Paper III Discussion (Discussion Lead Group C) Paper IV updated on Moodle	Guest Lecture: Madison Stevens
10	Nov 4-8	Guest Lecture: Aalayna Green	Fortress Conservation Model *Paper IV due*	Paper IV discussion (Discussion Lead Group D) Paper V updated on moodle
11	Nov 11-15	Human-Wildlife Coexistence in the Global North	Hunting Case Study: wolf politics	Guest Lecture: Harshini Jhala *Paper V due*
12	Nov 18-22	Paper V discussion (Discussion Lead Group E)	Review/Recap	Brain Break
13	Nov 25-29	Inspire Project Discussion: Unsupervised	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
14	Dec 2-6	Inclusive Conservation Science & Practice	Inspire Talk	Inspire Talk
15	Dec 9	Inspire Talks/End of class celebrations	No Class	No Class

Non-compulsory component of the course (but I hope all/most of you can join):

Course Dinner: Sept 26th (5-6:30 pm)

Recommended Study Materials:

While there is no textbook for this course and all reading materials (book chapters/articles) will be made available on Moodle, I recommend the following books for further reading, which I would also be referring to throughout the course:

1. *Conservation Biology for All*, eds. NS Sodhi & PR Ehrlich, Oxford University Press 2010
2. *Conservation Science & Action*, ed. WJ Sutherland, Blackwell Science Limited, 1998
3. *Behavioral Ecology & Conservation Biology*, ed T Caro, Oxford University Press 1998

Land Acknowledgement

Our college resides on the ancestral homeland of the Dakota people (particularly the Sisseton and Wahpeton bands) who were forcibly exiled from the land in response to aggressive and persistent settler colonialist oppression. We make this acknowledgement to honor the Dakota people, ancestors and descendants; as well as the land itself.

Sickness, Absence, & Masking Policy

Masks: To make class space more accessible I will keep masks available in the classroom space, if you need. If you have any special requirement/accommodation regarding the current masking policy at Mac, kindly reach out to me.

For your well-being and for the community: We are living in unprecedented times, and it is our collective responsibility to ease the stress that we are all facing. There are multiple avenues through which you can get help. Please check this [Campus Resource](#) for information regarding immediate issues. **Please stay back if you are not feeling well, nothing is more important than your health and wellbeing, and the wellbeing of the community.**

Help re. absence: I will work with you so that you can get all the resources and help you need to make-up for lost lectures/lab. **However, if you cannot attend, it would be really helpful if you could drop me a line before class so that I can get the equipment ready to record the session.** *Help will always be given in my class to those who ask for it and otherwise.*

If you are not feeling well, **please stay back**. No class is more important than your well-being --- it is far more meaningful and prudent to rest, heal and get back when you are physically and mentally ready. As mentioned earlier, Eliot and I will work with you so that you can get all the resources you need to make up.

If you are feeling perpetually low, remember we are going through a severe collective trauma for >3 years. It will have a significant, long-term effect on mental health. If you are getting out of bed and managing to do some things, then you are doing great! Your wellbeing is of paramount importance and I do not want you to compromise on that, **EVER!** Also, please check these [resources](#) out.

Buddy-up: While we will always be around to help and work with you, I would strongly suggest that you have a class buddy (/buddies) who you can rely on to share notes and discuss class lectures and labs. This would be of real help IF owing to unforeseen circumstances you have to miss classes/labs – y'all can fill each other in. IT REALLY HELPS! **Learning is all about community and collaborations – it never happens in containment** 😊

Please be kind and sensitive about asking others regarding their comfort levels in shaking hands/hugs