



Wildlife Conservation in the Anthropocene: An International Perspective

As we usher into the Anthropocene, where ‘Amazon’ is recognized as a global marketing forum more 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 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 optimistic scenarios with respect to wildlife conservation. In this seminar we will investigate perspectives from South Asia where animals and humans coexist at very high density and proximity, consider the North American system where views about biodiversity can often be very polarizing, and explore conservation in Africa where pockets of pristine wilderness persist. We will engage with the primary literature of wildlife conservation, hear from scientists on the frontlines, and discuss the idea that there could be a unifying model that safeguards biodiversity without detrimentally impeding human development. Three hours of lecture/discussion each week. **We will also try and make field visits, depending upon the availability of students and their schedules.**

COURSE LOGISTICS

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

How to address me: I go by Stotra, Prof. Chakrabarti, or Dr. Chakrabarti. My pronouns are he/him/his.

Lecture: MWF 10:50 am-11:50 am; OLRI 284

Office Hours: Monday 2-3 PM, Friday 12-1 PM in OLRI 211, or by appointment. **I also have an open-door policy, even if the door is closed! So, please find me around if you need help. I am always around to listen to you.**

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

Prerequisites: BIOL/ENVI 170 and either BIOL 180 or ENVI 240.

Email Policy: I will respond to emails promptly between 9AM-5PM on weekdays; emails received after 5PM can take longer to respond. I often cannot answer emails over the weekend, so please plan accordingly.

Course Presence: The course primarily relies on experience and exposure (discussions, dialogues, observations, interactions with guest speakers etc.), and it will greatly benefit students 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 and labs 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. 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. If you are feeling perpetually low, remember we are going through a severe collective trauma for 18 months. 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 ~1-2 hours. Longer assignments and group work, including presentations, will require some more time to be scheduled. If you are having trouble working in a group setting due to work or class scheduling conflicts, please let me know. **I want you to learn in this course but not rush to achieve that. Take your time. Also, please do not be afraid to make mistakes, we only learn when we make them. Remember “why do we fall? So that we can learn to pick ourselves up!” We are going to make mistakes together and learn together in this course.**

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 improvement. **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.
- Analyze 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

Paper Responses: Paper responses and critique will be due ~10 AM of the day indicated in the course schedule. The reading material as well as prompts will be made available ahead of time on Moodle so that you have ENOUGH time to prepare. Paper responses will be held 8 times over the course. Please check Course schedule/Moodle for updates and timings. **Deadlines can be made flexible --- I want you to learn and not rush!**

Paper Discussion: Paper discussions will be led by a group of two 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.

Midterms: It will be an open book exam with a few applied questions on Wednesday, October 20th. Students get time until Friday October 22nd 6 pm to submit.

Inspire talks: Students (in groups) will make a 20-30 minute presentation on a topic of choice. This will be followed by reflections where we will have an active discussion on each presentation. So, please 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.

Finals: Finals will comprise of a short review paper/article on the topic pertaining to your INSPIRE TALK. The paper is aimed to help you consolidate suggestions and criticisms from your peers during your talk. While there is no fixed format for the paper, I would expect an abstract, intro, methods (Lit Rev), discussion, references (tables & figures are optional but helps ace any write-up)! Please check for updates on Moodle.

GRADING (no overlapping due dates for any assignments)

Assessment	Due	Points
Paper responses	Asynchronous as given in the schedule	160 (20x8)
Paper discussion lead	Assigned in class	40
Midterms	October 20	50
Inspire Talk	November 22-24	50
Final paper	Between December 14-17	100
Total		400

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 for attending/participating in conferences/outside events related to the course (Wildlife Conservation) = 10 pts each! While only participation will give you points, you should also write an informal letter to me (not graded) elucidating the key take-home messages from the event/conference.

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/violenceprevention/support/>).

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; attend office hours; or email to set up a time to meet in person.
- 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 or office hours.
- **Do you need time for yourself? Studentship can be overwhelming sometimes, 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.**

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 TO LOSE YOUR WAY IN COMPLEX THEORIES, 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	Sept 1-3	N/A	Personal Intro, Ice breaking, who's who	Why Conserve Wildlife? Where the wild things are!
2	Sept 6-10	LABOR DAY Paper I updated on Moodle	Directions in Conservation Biology Metapopulation Theory & SLOSS Debate	Environmental & Demographic Stochasticity: Lions & Pumas
3	Sept 13-17	Guest Lecture The role of science in species conservation in India Prof. YV Jhala	Paper I Discussion (Discussion Lead Group A) Paper I responses due by 10 am	Guest Lecture Conservation Perspectives from Nepal: Samantha Helle Paper II updated on Moodle
4	Sept 20-24	Conservation & Religion in Asia: perspectives of Human Wildlife Conflict	Small Population & Reintroduction Politics: lions & cheetahs Paper III updated on Moodle	Paper II Discussion (Discussion Lead Group B) Paper II responses due by 10 am
5	Sept 27-Oct 1	Roads and Wildlife Paper IV updated on Moodle	Paper III Discussion (Discussion Lead Group C) Paper III responses due by 10 am Paper IV updated on Moodle	Guest Lecture Has conservation gone to the dogs: Monisha Mohandas
6	Oct 4-8	Paper IV Discussion (Discussion Lead Group D) Paper IV responses due by 10 am	Guest Lecture Conservation in Borneo: Dr. Dawn Tanner	Enchanted Africa
7	Oct 11-15	Guest Lecture Fences, Trophy Hunting & Lions: Prof. Craig Packer Paper V updated on Moodle	Human Wildlife Interface: Disease	Guest Lecture Carnivores, community and inclusivity: Moreangels Mbizah
8	Oct 18-20	Paper V Discussion (Discussion Lead Group E) Paper V responses due by 10 am	MID TERM [Open Book]	FALL BREAK
9	Oct 25-29	Recap (led by students) Paper VI updated on Moodle	Guest Lecture Wildlife Trade: Dr. Jennie Miller	Risk to Primates from Logging
10	Nov 1-5	Paper VI Discussion (Discussion Lead Group F) Paper VI responses due by 10 am Paper VII updated on Moodle	Guest Lecture Conservation Paradigms in North America: Prof. Joseph Bump	Role of Private Landowners in safeguarding species range: Ocelots in Texas & lions in Asia
11	Nov 8-12	Paper VII Discussion (Discussion Lead Group G) Paper VII responses due by 10 am Paper VIII updated on Moodle	Guest Lecture Role of media & outreach in saving wolves of North America: Nancy Gibson	Reintroduction Science: Trophic Cascades
12	Nov 15-19	Paper VIII Discussion (Discussion Lead Group H) Paper VIII responses due by 10 am	Guest Lecture Hunting and Citizen Science: Ellen Candler	Inclusivity in Wildlife Conservation
13	Nov 22-24	Guest Lecture Captive Exotics: Dr. Ellie Armstrong	Inspire talk groups and topic discussion	THANKSGIVING BREAK
14	Nov 29-Dec 3	Inspire Talk	Inspire Talk	Inspire Talks (reflections)
15	Dec 6-10	Protected Areas Conservation Laws	Future for Conservation biology	Recap

Non-compulsory component of the course:**2 Saturday Movie Nights: Screening of Films****1 Saturday (whole day): Trip to International Wolf Center**

The dates will be fixed after discussion with students.

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.