

Fall 2020

070.495 and 070.695

Householding on a Warming Earth

Instructor: Naveeda Khan

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Write instructor ahead of time to set up time to meet during/outside office hours

Course Description:

The household appears as commonsensical to us. It is where people, most often those of a family, reside together, sharing resources, labor and collective fate. However, anthropologists have been arguing against this commonsense since it emerged in the 1950s, asking questions such as, is the household the same as the family? where does a household end and the rest of society begin? Yet the household is back again in climate change policy discussions as being most vulnerable to the problems associated with climate change, such as, temperature extremes, food insecurity, exacerbated disease, and increasing conflict and violence. How might anthropological debates relating to households within the context of everyday life, conflict and famine provide important insights into how we can approach the issue of climate change from the perspective of this smallest of social units?

This course is made up of two broad sections on households. In the first section, we examine climate change impacts from the perspective of household economics in the global north and global south, going deeper into the history of the concept of the household and related concepts, different modes of budgeting within households, ending with how natural environments and households put pressure on one another. We then ask how households look beyond economic and environmental frameworks, through the organization of space within homes, kinship and gender relations, mythology and food symbolism. In an effort to break out of the presumptions of heteronormativity of households within much of the scholarship, we turn to the perspective of children within households. We consider how much of household economics leaves out of consideration theft and betrayal within households and with what ramifications for inter-generational transmission. We return to a final discussion on how each of the two sections complicates easy presumptions of relationships between climate change and households, with the density of thinking around households making more nuanced how we understand climate change as a structural problem, and how climate change stands to impact households from the inside out, as lived experience.

Evaluation:

This course is graded S/U for everyone unless individual students request a letter grade and make their preference known to the instructor within three weeks of the start of the course. The emphasis of this course will be on close readings of assigned material, on occasion listening to recorded lectures ahead of class, class discussion and short weekly assignments, that range from one paragraph to one to two single spaced pages, from creative to critical writing. My aim is to help students absorb and apply the course material throughout the semester.

The week's assignments have to be in individual blackboard folders by noon Monday so I can read and comment by class time Tuesday. Students have to attend class and

complete all the assignments on a timely fashion to get S. I will make all necessary accommodations for disabilities by means of the Student Disability Office. I will make accommodations for time differences and internet availability within reason. I am also available during my office hours and by appointment for any additional help or conversations. Instructor retains the right to make changes necessary to assigned material and assignments, and will provide advanced warning accordingly.

Course Schedule:

Section One: Household Economics

Week One/ Sept 1: Introduction: Why Climate Change and Households?

Assignment: Please introduce yourself over the weekly discussion board, telling us who you are, your major(s), interest in the class and time zone.

Week Two/Sept 8: Climate Change from the Perspective of the Global North

Viewing/Reading: PBS Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KdiA12KeSL0>

Spreaker Climate Change: Household Balance Sheets
<https://www.spreaker.com/user/ecowaves/2-climatechange-householdbalancesheets>

Daniel Aldana Cohen and Kevin Ummel June 2019 "Follow the Carbon: The Case for Neighborhood-Level Carbon Footprints" Kleinman Center for Energy Policy, University of Pennsylvania (report available for download here:
<https://kleinmanenergy.upenn.edu/policy-digests/follow-carbon>

Assignment: Submit a newspaper article on an innovation related to climate change that caught your interest. Write one paragraph on what makes this innovative or interesting or puzzling or even wrong headed to you.

Week Three/Sept 15: Climate Change from the Perspective of the Global South

Readings: Daryl Collins, Jonathan Murdoch, Stuart Rutherford, Orlando Ruthven 2009 Portfolios of the Poor: How the World's Poor Live on \$2 a Day. Princeton University Press: Chapter Two: The Daily Grind (28-64)

Robin Leichenko and Julie A. Silva 2014 "Climate Change and Poverty: Vulnerability, Impacts, and Alleviation Strategies" in WIREs Clim Change, 5" 5390556, doi: 10.1002/wcc.287

Assignment: Take one of the tables or figures in the chapter "The Daily Grind" and write a paragraph about what you understand it as saying about the lives of the poor discussed in the chapter. Attempt your own reading. Do not make references to the authors' analysis.

Week Four/Sept 22: In the Eye of the Storm

Movie: Are You Listening! (Shuntye Ki Pao, 2012) By Kamar Ahmad Simon
Come to class having watched the film. We will discuss it in class.

Assignment: Take a minute of the film. Write a page describing that minute. You can attend to the scene, the people, the action, as you wish.

Week Five/Sept 28: Intersections of Economics and Ecology

Readings: Jeremy Walker and Melinda Cooper 2011 “Genealogies of Resilience: From Systems Ecology to the Political Economy of Crisis Adaptation” in *Security Dialogue* 42(2): 143-160

Lisa Adkins 2019 “Social Reproduction in the Neoliberal Era: Payments, Leverage, and the Minskian Household”

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331638213_SOCIAL_REPRODUCTION_IN_THE_NEOLIBERAL_ERA_PAYMENTS_LEVERAGE_AND_THE_MINSKIAN_HOUSEHOLD

Assignment: Write one to two pages on what you take to be the main argument(s) in one of the two readings. Pull out something that confused you in your selected reading.

Week Six/Oct 6: The Household between Economics and Anthropology

Readings: Gary S. Becker 1993 A Treatise on the Family Harvard University Press: Chapter Two: Division of Labor in Households and Families (30-53)

Claude Meillassoux 1983 “The Economic Bases of Demographic Reproduction: From the Domestic Mode of Production to Wage-Earning” in *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 11(1): 50-61, DOI: [10.1080/03066158308438220](https://doi.org/10.1080/03066158308438220)

Assignment: Write one to two pages page comparing how women are represented in each of these readings, focusing on women’s relationships to the household.

Week Seven/Oct 13: Provisioning within Households

Readings: Richard R. Wilk ed. 2019 The Household Economy: Reconsidering the Domestic Mode of Production Westview Press: Chapter Three: Decision Making and Resource Flows Within the Household: Beyond the Black Box” by Richard R. Wilk (23-53)

Jane I. Guyer 2004 Marginal Gains University of Chicago Press: Chapter 8: Balances-Household Budgets in a Ghanaian Study (131-152)

Daniel Miller 2012 Consumption and its Consequences. Polity Press: Chapter 3: Why We Shop (64-89)

Assignment: Drawing on one of Wilk's figures, do a resource flow diagram of the household you are a part of or somebody else's household.

Week Eight/Oct 20: Bringing in the Environment

Readings: Michael R. Dove and Carol Carpenter eds. 2011 Environmental Anthropology: A Historical Reader Blackwell Publishing: Chapter Nine: Critical Pressures on Food Supply and their Economic Effects by Raymond Firth (202-222)

Tim Ingold 2000 The Perception of the Environment: Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill Routledge: Chapter Ten: Building, Dwelling, Living: How Animals and People Make Themselves at Home in the World" (172-189)

Assignment: Make a one-minute long video on a theme of interest to you from the readings. You can use external images, videos, texts to illustrate your theme.

Section Two: The Household Beyond Economics

Week Nine/Oct 27: About the House

Readings: Jean-Pierre Vernant 1969 "Hestia-Hermes: The Religious Expression of Space and Movement among the Greeks" Information (International Social Science) 8(4): 131-168.

Janet Carsten and Stephen Hugh-Jones 1995 About the House: Levi-Strauss and Beyond Cambridge University Press: Chapter 4: "The Hearth Group, the Conjugal Couple and the Symbolism of the Rice Meal Among the Kelabit of Sarawak" by Monica Janowski

Assignment: Write one page or two describing how chores are broken down in your household or someone else's household and what ideas might underlie this division.

Week 10/Nov 3: From the Perspective of the Child

Readings: Margaret Trawick 1992 Notes on Love in a Tamil Family University of California Press: Chapter Seven: The Lives of Children (215-240)

Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Mamphela Ramphele, Pamela Reynolds eds. 1997 Violence and Subjectivity University of California Press: Ground of All Making: State Violence, the Family, and Political Activists by Pamela Reynolds (141- 170)

Assignment: Write one or two pages comparing the understanding of family between the two readings. How is a family different from a household? Alternatively, interview a child in your family to gain their perspective on being part of a household and write it up.

Week 11/Nov 10: Theft Within the Family

Readings: Michael Lambek 2011 "Kinship as Gift and Theft: Acts of Succession in Mayotte and ~~Ancient~~ Israel" in *American Ethnologist* 38(1): 2-16

David Sneath 2006 "Transacting and Enacting: Corruption, Obligation and the Use of Monies in Mongolia" in *Ethnos* 71(1): 89-112

J. Timmons Roberts and Bradley C. Parks 2009 "Ecologically Unequal Exchange, Ecological Debt, and Climate Justice" in *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 50(3-4): 385-409

Assignment: How are these articles different from each other? How can they be brought together? Write a one page speculative paper on possible connections.

Week 12/Nov 17: Households under Duress

Movie: *Ashani Shonket* (*Distant Thunder*, 1973) by Satyajit Ray
Watch before class

Reading: Utsa Patnaik 2018 "Profit Inflation, Keynes and the Holocaust in Bengal, 1943-44" in *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 20, LIII (42): 33-43

Assignment: Provide one discussion question for the class. The question may be limited to the movie or the reading or bring the two together to bring back the theme of the course, which is, how do households and climate change interrelate.

Nov 24 Thanksgiving Break

Week 13/Dec 1: Final Discussion

Reading: Daniel Miller 2012 *Consumption and its Consequences*. Polity Press: Chapter 6: How Not to Save a Planet (139-181)

Assignment: Make a two-three-minute video of your writings for this course to present to class