

Native Traditions and the Environment EVR 4934/5935-U03
Riach Fall 2016
MWF 4:00 - 4:50 PM in PC 447

The aim of this class is to provide students a better understanding of the principles of Traditional Ecological Knowledges (TEK's) of Indigenous peoples and how they can contribute to enhancing environmental resiliency and sustainability.

Course Description

This course focuses on knowledge and traditions TEK's that have been transmitted across multiple generations of indigenous peoples through oral stories, and traditional beliefs and practices, especially those regarding the relationship with the natural environment. It examines the concept of TEK's from the perspective of Western science and Native science. Students explore case studies from various parts of the world where TEK's and Western environmental science methods are bridged and/or combined to address environmental issues. Students analyze TEK's potential contributions to climate change adaptation planning, natural resource management, and sustainable development at local, regional and national levels.

The course is offered in a seminar format. It combines class lectures, student discussions, reviews of online material, multimedia presentations, and guest presenters to achieve the goals of the class.

Course Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Define TEK's and explain their cultural and environmental significance.
- Describe the intellectual roots of TEK's as an academic field of study.
- Identify the main principles that distinguish TEK's from conventional western ecological knowledge.
- Appraise past and existing efforts to combine or bridge TEK's with western science to address environmental resiliency and sustainability.
- Identify and address challenges and responsibilities facing the maintenance and future of TEK's.
- Articulate a critical review of the approaches to using TEK's in addressing environmental resiliency and sustainability.

Textbooks

Raymond Pierotti (2011). *Indigenous Knowledge, Ecology, and Evolutionary Biology*. New York: Taylor & Francis. ISBN: 9780415879248

For EVR 5935 only, the following required book is also required. A copy will be available in reserve at the FIU library.

Berkes, Fikret (2012). *Sacred Ecology* (third edition). New York: Taylor & Francis. ISBN: 9780415517324

Blackboard and Additional Course Content

This course will use Blackboard to make additional readings, webinars, videos and presentations available to students.

Major Topics Covered

Foundations of TEK

- What is TEK, how it develops and is maintained, and why it is significant
- Historical overview of the rise of TEK as an academic field of study

Principles of TEK

- All things are connected
- All things are related
- Humans as predators
- The use of metaphors

Comparing and Contrasting TEK and Western Science

- Finding examples of TEK principles within western science
- Stereotypes of TEK and Indigenous Peoples
- Critical reviews of western science and of indigenous responses to western science

Combining TEK and Western Science

- Insider and outsider views of TEK in practice
- Adaptive management of ecosystems and natural resources
- Adaptations to climate change

The Future of TEK

- Empowerment of Indigenous Peoples through TEK
- Respecting intellectual property rights when working with TEK
- Indigenous Peoples and TEK in academia
- Challenges facing the maintenance of TEK

Undergraduate Grading EVR 4935

Reflection papers	25%
In-Class discussions	25%
Final paper	25%
Final presentation	25%

Graduate Grading EVR 5935

Reflection papers	20%
Discussions	20%
Independent research	10%
Final paper	25%
Final presentation	25%

Note: The syllabus is susceptible to change due to unforeseen circumstances that may develop throughout the semester.