

# Primates in Peril

## ANTH 4040/BIOL 4000

### Fall 2023

**Time:** MW 2:30-3:45 pm

**Location:** Colvard 3140

Instructor: Dr. Lydia E. O. Light

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Office: Barnard 215

Office hours by appointment, in person or over Zoom



### COURSE DESCRIPTION

More than 40% of the Earth's species are facing extinction, mostly due to human activities. Nonhuman primates include some of the most highly endangered mammals on the planet while also holding a privileged position in people's conceptions of nature. The biodiversity conservation movement has attempted to address the complex issue of primate conservation but efforts are often disastrously unsuccessful. Is there any hope for saving these species? Would we have to sacrifice our fellow humans to do so?

This course will explore the fundamental challenges hindering global success of the biodiversity conservation movement with particular attention on nonhuman primates. You will be introduced to a variety of theoretical approaches from anthropology, ecology, risk management, social and environmental justice, and political ecology.



\*\*\*\*Statement on Social Justice: As anthropologists, we are committed to making the world safe for human differences, and to serving students of all identities and from all backgrounds. As a part of that, this class is explicitly anti-racist. I will not tolerate racist and discriminatory language and beliefs.

\*\*\*\*Statement on Gender Equality: This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If your name is different than what is indicated on the class roster, please let me know. Please correct me on your gender pronoun if I make a mistake. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

This course directly engages students as citizens of the global community. It will challenge you to think critically about your role in the world while also fostering ethical considerations for humans and animals. Students from all disciplines will be introduced to the importance of anthropological thinking in creating realistic workable solutions when dealing with issues on a global scale.

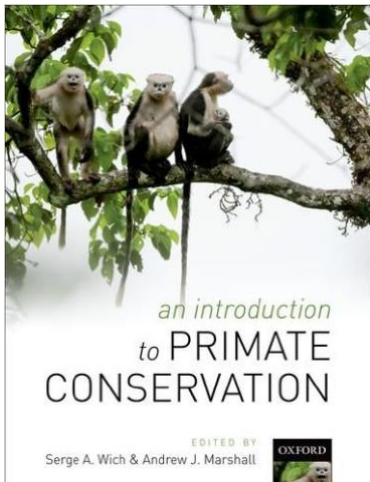
## REQUIRED MATERIALS



**ETHNOGRAPHY:** A different perspective is presented in an ethnography focused on orangutan rehabilitation. This book **is required** and may be purchased at the UNCC bookstore, off-campus bookstores, online at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) (use smile.amazon.com to contribute a portion of your purchase to a charity of your choice).

### Decolonizing Extinction: The Work of Care in Orangutan Rehabilitation

By Juno Salazar Parreñas  
Duke University Press  
ISBN-13: 978-0822370628



**RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK:** The majority of the readings are found in the primary text. **THIS TEXT IS AVAILABLE AS AN ETEXTBOOK AT THE UNC CHARLOTTE LIBRARY AND INDIVIDUAL CHAPTERS ARE UPLOADED TO CANVAS.**

### An Introduction to Primate Conservation

By Serge A. Wich & Andrew J. Marshall  
Oxford University Press

Additional readings will be assigned and posted on Canvas.

## TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

My approach to teaching focuses on the power of experiential knowledge. Therefore, I include as many opportunities for my students to emotionally engage with the material presented. While certain aspects of the course are most effectively taught through traditional lectures, I use a variety of active learning techniques, primarily focused on class time. I also feel that students in my courses should be gaining skills that apply to other courses and professionalism in general.

## **COURSE UNITS**

*UNIT ONE – Background Conceptual Issues:* This unit will present a general overview of nonhuman primates and common methods relevant to primate conservation.

*UNIT TWO – Threats:* Primates face a variety of threats to their continued existence. In this unit, we will examine habitat destruction and degradation, primate trade, hunting, infectious diseases, and climate change.

*UNIT THREE – Solutions:* Primate conservationists have used a number of different strategies to protect primate populations, including protected areas, landscape mosaics reintroduction, ecosystem services, and evidence-based conservation. This unit will examine the suitability of each of these approaches and possible future directions for improving the chances of success.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

You are expected to **take responsibility for your learning** in this course. This includes attending class, engaging in lectures, completing assigned readings, participating in small group and class discussions, completing all exercises, turning in all take-home assignment on time and keeping up to date on all information presented via Canvas.

*READINGS AND LECTURES:* Frequent readings will be required for this course. All the readings will be posted on Canvas and included as a file in that week's online module. To maximize the effectiveness of lecture-based learning, you should complete the readings prior to the lecture on that topic.

*DISCUSSIONS:* Several classes will be dedicated to discussions of documentaries or selections of readings about current topics in primate conservation. You will be asked to read the articles or watch the video **prior** to the discussion listed on the syllabus. During small group discussions, each group will collectively write one short response to the readings or video to be turned in as a group following the conclusion of the discussion.

*SHORT ACTIVITIES:* Throughout the course, I will assign you short activities designed to help you assess your progress and engage with course material.

*PROJECTS:* Two projects will be assigned during the semester. The first assignment will be a class debate in which small groups will be asked to discuss the main threats to primate survival. The second assignment will require you to examine your own consumption of palm oil and to reflect on how your actions impact orangutan populations in Indonesia.

*EXAMS:* Two exams will be given throughout the semester consisting of multiple-choice, true/false, and matching questions. The exams will NOT be cumulative; however, key principles from earlier sections may be relevant to later material and may be included on later exams.

*FINAL PORTFOLIO:* At the end of the course, you will complete digital portfolios with a number of individual assignments addressing various aspects of the class. More specific details of the individual assignments will be provided on Canvas.

*GRAND FINALE:* We are mandated by the university to meet during the final exam period. Instead of a traditional exam, we will engage in an activity designed to integrate your knowledge of primate conservation.

*SELF-ASSESSMENT AND PARTICIPATION:* Self-assessments and participation will be evaluated twice during the term. You will be asked to schedule a video conference with me to discuss your performance in the course. Participation will be evaluated based on quality, not quantity; students may be penalized for either under- or over-participating (monopolizing the conversation, being disruptive, or disrespecting classmates or the instructor) in class discussions.

## **GRADING**

This course will be embracing the “ungrading” policy that has been developed recently (see the [recent edited volume by Drs. Alfie Kohn and Susan Blum here](#)). This **DOES NOT MEAN** that you do not have work to complete this course. What it does mean is that when you complete an assignment, you will receive full credit and *extensive* feedback from me and you are expected to read that feedback and *implement it for future assignments*. At midterm and at the end of the semester, you will be asked to tell me what grade (A, B, C, D, or F) you think you deserve and to justify that assessment in relation to your performance throughout the course. While I will ultimately be responsible for assigning your final grade, I will rely mostly on your self-assessments.

## **LATE WORK AND GRADE DISPUTE POLICIES**

Late work will always be accepted in this course but assignments have been scaffolded to allow for time for revisions. Therefore, ***falling behind on your coursework may have serious academic consequences***. You should consider your ability to turn assignments in on time when completing your self-assessments. If you feel I have made a grade recording error, you **MUST** contact me to discuss the issue within **2 weeks** of when the grade is posted on Canvas or by the last day of class if during the final two weeks of the semester. Any disputes brought to my attention after that point will not be addressed as you are responsible for monitoring your grades.

## **CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR**

My classroom is a place where open-minded, independent thinking is encouraged. To facilitate this environment, you are expected to act with respect and maturity towards your fellow students, the instructor, and any visiting speakers. I hold the following expectations for my students:

- 1) During class discussions, you will refrain from inappropriate behavior and will remain engaged with the discussion.

- 2) Some of the material covered in class may be perceived as controversial. Please remain respectful of your classmates (and instructor) during discussions of such nature. Each of us may have strongly differing opinions on the various topics of class discussions. The orderly questioning of the ideas of others, including mine, is similarly welcome. However, I will exercise my responsibility to manage the discussions so that ideas and discussion can proceed in an orderly fashion. You should expect that if your conduct during class discussions seriously disrupts the atmosphere of mutual respect I expect in this class, you will not be permitted to participate further and may subsequently lose opportunities for course credit.

This syllabus contains the policies and expectations I have established for Primates in Peril. Please read the entire syllabus carefully before continuing in this course. These policies and expectations are intended to create a productive learning atmosphere for all students. Unless you are prepared to abide by these policies and expectations, you risk losing the opportunity to participate further in the course.

### **POLICY ON VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM**

Academia is not structured in a way that is conducive to the multi-faceted lives of our student body here at UNC Charlotte and elsewhere throughout the country. Due to these structural limitations, I explicitly welcome guests in the classroom in the event that other arrangements cannot be made. This includes breastfeeding infants, school-aged children with school holidays, young children for whom regular childcare is temporarily not available, older individuals under your care, and any other reasonable situation. If you plan to bring a guest to class, please consider the nature of the material to be covered in class that day as many of our course discussions will include mature topics.

### **COMMUNICATION POLICY**

I try to be available to students as much as possible. In addition to being available during office hours, feel free to email me at [l1ight1@charlotte.edu](mailto:l1ight1@charlotte.edu) with questions. I will respond to emails within 24 hours, but usually much sooner. However, if there is no question in the email that needs to be answered or the question is explicitly stated here in the syllabus, I will not respond to the email.

### **ON CAMPUS RESOURCES**

*Jamil Niner Student Pantry (JNSP)*: Food insecurity is defined by the USDA as “a lack of access to enough food for an active, healthy life.” Food insecure categories include: reduced caloric intake, reduced food quality, lack of variety in diet, disrupted eating patterns, and hunger. Research shows that college students experience food insecurity at higher rates than the American household rate, and that food insecurity can negatively impact academic performance and persistence. In recognition of this problem, UNC Charlotte offers assistance to students facing food insecurity through an on-campus food pantry. The JNSP is located on the east edge of campus at 1224 John Kirk Road. It has regular hours which may change from semester to semester; please see the website at



<https://ninerpantry.charlotte.edu/> for schedule and details on its services, as well as resources about hunger and food insecurity among college students.

*Office of Identity, Equity, and Engagement:* A diverse student body is one of UNC Charlotte's most powerful tools for preparing future graduates for careers in an increasingly globalized society. If you hold marginalized identities or you are looking for ways to support your colleagues through allyship, the Division of Student Affairs offers [a variety of diversity programs and services](#) related to ability/disability, gender identity, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and other forms of diversity.

*Title IX Reporting Policy:* UNC Charlotte is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these incidents, know that you are not alone. UNC Charlotte has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. Please be aware that many UNC Charlotte employees, including all faculty members, are considered [Responsible Employees](#) who are required to relay any information or reports of sexual misconduct they receive to the Title IX Coordinator. This means that if you tell me about a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, I must report the information to the Title IX Coordinator. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can contact any of the following on-campus resources, who are not required to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator: (1) [University Counseling Center](#) (7-0311); or (2) [Student Health Center](#) (7-7400); or (3) Department of Athletics psychologist ([tbrandt5@charlotte.edu](mailto:tbrandt5@charlotte.edu)). Additional information about your options is also available at [titleix.uncc.edu](http://titleix.uncc.edu) under the "Students" tab.

*Academic Assistance & Accommodations:* I encourage all of my students to seek out additional assistance if they are concerned about their academic performance (and even if they are not). I am always available to meet with students either during my office hours or by appointment. In addition, the university provides a number of services designed to help students excel academically. Students in this course seeking accommodations to disabilities must first consult with the [Office of Disability Services](#) and follow the instructions of that office for obtaining accommodations.

*Scholastic Dishonesty:* While I recognize that adjusting to college academics can be a challenging time, I do not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty in my class. I will not tolerate any attempts to manipulate grading opportunities or misappropriate credit for work done and will penalize any student violating the university policies on scholastic dishonesty. I reserve the right to ask students to demonstrate that graded assignments

completed outside of class are their own work. All students are required to read and abide by the [Code of Student Academic Integrity](#). Violations of the Code of Student Academic Integrity, including plagiarism, will result in disciplinary action as provided in the Code. Definitions and examples of plagiarism are set forth in the Code.

*Ethical Learning Expectations.* All students and instructors are expected to engage with each other respectfully. Unwelcome conduct directed toward another person based upon that person's actual or perceived race, actual or perceived gender, religion, age, national origin, ethnicity, disability, or veteran status, or for any other reason, may constitute a violation of University Policy 406, [The Code of Student Responsibility](#). Any student suspected of engaging in such conduct will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. All students are required to abide by the [UNC Charlotte Sexual Harassment Policy](#) and the policy on [Responsible Use of University Computing and Electronic Communication Resources](#). Sexual harassment, as defined in the UNC Charlotte Sexual Harassment Policy, is prohibited, even when carried out through computers or other electronic communications systems, including course-based chat rooms or message boards.

### **REVISIONS POLICY**

The standards and requirements set forth in this syllabus may be modified at any time by the course instructor. Notice of such changes will be by announcement in class or by changes to this syllabus posted on the course in Canvas.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE – SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

	<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Prep Work</b>	<b>Class Topic</b>
<b>UNIT ONE: Background</b>	1	Aug 21		Introduction
		Aug 23	Canvas	Lecture: Primate Diversity
	2	Aug 28	Video	Discussion: <i>Virunga</i>
		Aug 30	Canvas and JSP Intro	Lecture: Charismatic Leaders
	3	Sept 4	<b>NO CLASS – LABOR DAY</b>	
		Sept 6	Ch. 2 and Canvas	Lecture: Why Conserve Primates?
	4	Sept 11	Ch. 3	Lecture: IUCN Red List
		Sept 13	Ch. 6	Lecture: Measuring Primate Abundance
5	Sept 18	Canvas	Discussion: Is it a species?	
	Sept 20	Canvas and JSP Part 1	Lecture: Ethically Engaged Primatology	
6	Sept 25	<b>EXAM 1</b>		
<b>UNIT TWO: Threats</b>	6	Sept 27	Ch. 7	Lecture: Habitat Change
		Oct 2	Video	Discussion: <i>Years of Living Dangerously</i>
	7	Oct 4	Canvas	Lecture: Primate Trade & Hunting
		Oct 9	Video	Discussion: <i>Jungle Gremlins of Java</i>
	8	Oct 11	Ch. 10	Lecture: Infectious Disease
		Oct 16	Ch. 11	Lecture: Climate Change
	9	Oct 18	JSP Part 2	Debate Work Day
		Oct 23	<b>NO CLASS – FALL BREAK</b>	
10	Oct 25	<b>Debate – Which Threat is the Biggest?</b>		
	Oct 30	<b>EXAM 2</b>		
<b>UNIT THREE: Solutions</b>	11	Nov 1	Ch. 12 and Ch. 13	Lecture: PAs & Multipurpose Landscapes
		Nov 6	Video	Discussion: <i>Madagascar, Lemurs &amp; Spies</i>
	12	Nov 8	Canvas	Lecture: Ethnoprimateology
		Nov 13	Video	Discussion: <i>Jungle Animal Hospital</i>
	13	Nov 15	Ch. 15	Lecture: Translocations & Reintroduction
		Nov 20	Ch. 16	Lecture: Ecosystem Services
	14	Nov 22	<b>NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>	
		Nov 27	JSP Part 3	Discussion: Ethnography & Palm Oil Projects
15	Nov 29	Canvas	Lecture: Evidence-based Conservation	
	Dec 4	Discussion: Violence against conservationists		
16	Dec 6	Discussion: Future Directions		
<b>GRAND FINALE: Dec 11<sup>th</sup> – 2:00-4:30 pm</b>				