

Advanced Topics: Appalachian Environment and Its Cultures
University Studies 410 Section 82913

Course Coordinators: Dr. Tom Hood and Shirley Hollis Rice

Office Hours:

Dr. Hood, MWF 2:00-3:00 p.m. Shirley Rice, TTH 10:00-12:00
a.m.

911 McClung Tower, Phone 974-7023 410 Aconda Court, Phone 974-
9030

email: tomhood@utk.edu

email: shrice@utkux.utk.edu

Introduction: The Appalachian Environment and Cultures course is designed to present a multi-disciplinary overview of Appalachia, supplemented by presentations by scholars, artists, and activists. It represents the cooperative effort of faculty members and others who are interested in Appalachian issues and scholarship. The course material includes a 2-volume textbook of readings, guest lectures, films, assigned readings and a field trip. It will provide a unique opportunity for students to cross disciplinary lines and to explore the various dimensions of Appalachia. Because of the nature of the course and instructional materials, you can expect a good deal of overlap with courses offered in other departments. Our intent is to present an array of perspectives and concepts, which may serve either as an end unto themselves insofar as your collegiate career is concerned, or, possibly, as an introduction from which your interests in Appalachia may gain focus.

Course Objectives:

1. To understand the Appalachian Region, its culture, social, economic, and political origins, characteristics, and institutions.
2. To aid the student in developing an attitude of informed respect and understanding of a unique "indigenous" culture, its folkways, and its people.
3. To understand the fundamental relationship between the physical environment and natural resources of the geographic region and development of the culture and social institutions.
4. To appreciate the important issues and problems indigenous to the region, their sources, and their evolution.
5. To understand the effects of different government interventions in the area and their status.
6. To explore future development (social, cultural, and economic) potentials and pitfalls.
7. To experience the dynamics of group discussion with the stress on conflicting opinions.

8. To provide an atmosphere and opportunity for the student to develop an independently derived body of knowledge and to effectively communicate that knowledge to others who share compatible interests and motives.

9. To increase confidence levels in thinking and communication skills.

The final grade will be based on the following criteria:

1. Class participation. We expect you to read all the assigned material and hope you will be interested in discussing them during class sessions. Your regular attendance is expected and strongly encouraged as is punctuality. We will begin classes on time and ask that you recognize that late arrival is likely to interrupt the attention of and to guest lecturers, films, etc. Several of the classes will be held in Hodges Library, Audiovisual area. Please plan ahead and make every effort to arrive on time- 10%

2. Each class member will be assigned one novel to read which will be selected from the attached reading list. Three to five people will be assigned the same book and will be asked to provide a brief in-class discussion of the work, its theme, symbolism, realism, etc. Please let us know your choice as quickly as possible. Your written report will be made up of four parts:

a. An abstract for distribution to the class members, 1 page overview with appropriate standard bibliographic data. Please refer to abstracts published in scholarly works if you are in doubt about content. Note that this is not to be a review; however your comments, clearly stated as your opinion, are welcome.

b. A historical analysis of some major theme or aspect of the work using the following guidelines:

-Read the book

-Read reviews that have been published

-Discuss the author's portrayal of some major aspect of Appalachian Culture (usually the theme on one of our class sessions) considering the following:

- Is the work accurately presented? Be specific as to the ways in which it is and the ways in which it is not.

- Insofar as inaccurate presentation or aspects of the work, how does it vary from your view of reality and what is your view based on? What support can you offer for your view and your assessment of the work?

-In those ways that the work accurately presents Appalachia, how does the author convince you of its authenticity? What evidence do you have as to its accuracy?

The historical analysis is to be typed, double-spaced, 1" margins, and documented using a standard style guide (such as Harbrace). It should be grammatically correct with no

spelling or typing errors. While length is no guarantee of quality, we feel that a minimum of 5-6 pages will be necessary to develop and support a thesis.

Please be prepared to participate in the class discussion on your selected work on the day assigned. This discussion should be based on your written report and is an excellent opportunity for you to gain feedback that can be used in refining your report prior to submission. Your abstract and discussion will be due on the day specified in the syllabus. The book analysis will be due within two weeks. 25%

4. Appalachian culture is centered around the concept of the extended family. Please prepare a brief history of your own family, not a genealogy, but a narrative of your family's story, much as you would expect to read in a novel or short story. Please attempt to trace your family to its eighteenth and nineteenth century source and share something of the family's experience emerging society. You might follow the outline below or develop your own style:

- Describe your immediate family
- Occupations
- Education and attitude toward education
- Lifestyle (religious, consumptive life style - how did they spend their money; what did they value; what were their hobbies, avocations, leisure activities; what were the intra family social patterns, etc.)
- Discuss your family's mobility. Describe and document ways in which the region(s) of the country in which they lived influenced your family's lives.
- Describe relationships with extended family. How connected was your family to its past its ancestors? What were the occasions when this connection was observed? Describe these occasions. What did it mean to you?