

# ETHNOMYCOLOGY

EBOT F336, ANTH F336



"Always Boil First," by Igor Pasternak, Fungi, Fall 2013

**Spring 2021, 3 Credits, Tuesday 6-9pm, via zoom**

Instructors: SVETA YAMIN-PASTERNAK (syamin@alaska.edu)

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Instructor Information:

Professors Igor Pasternak and Sveta Yamin-Pasternak teach at the University of Alaska Fairbanks Department of Anthropology, Department of Art, and Ethnobotany Program; we are also members of the research faculty at the Institute of Northern Engineering. Ethnomycology has been one of our main fields of study over the last twenty years.

Course Prerequisites:

ANTH 100X or EBOT 100 or Instructor permission

**Course Description**

Ethnomycology is concerned with the roles of fungi in the human social experience. Ethnomycological research asks how the members of the kingdom Mycetozoa, the “third kingdom” (so named for being neither animals nor plants), play into the human dietary, medicinal, spiritual, recreational, economic, and cognitive domains. A broad view of the field considers human engagements with all types of fungi: those that produce fleshy mushrooms as well as slime molds, yeasts, rusts, smuts, and the organisms that humans and other beings experience as fungal infections. A more bounded definition focuses on the beliefs and practices surrounding the fungi that produce fleshy mushrooms. Given the relevance of fungi in all ecosystems and many concepts and practices found in cultures and societies around the world, ethnomycology reaches broadly across domains of social-ecological research.

**Course Goals**

As an introductory overview of ethnomycology, the course aims to provide students with greater awareness and appreciation of the ways in which the study of the human relationships with fungi can shed light on broader cultural processes and social-ecological interactions. An inherently multidisciplinary field, Ethnomycology is a social science that integrates perspectives of many different types of researchers, including anthropologists, cultural geographers, sociologists, art historians, linguists, psychologists, and political scientists. It also reaches into areas of life sciences and physical sciences, humanities, and fine arts, as a number of practitioners in these fields have explored connections between people and fungi. This course examines works of key contributors to ethnomycology – the contributors whose ideas have played an important role in establishing and developing the field. The lecture and reading materials discuss the roles of fungi in food, medicine, art, commerce, recreation, spiritual life, and various utilitarian applications. The course features examples of human-fungi interactions from societies around the world, including Alaska and other high latitude regions.

**Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to apply:

- foundational ideas, discoveries, social-cultural processes, and contemporary influences that shape the field of ethnomycology,
- crosscultural variation and historical change in how humans utilize and interact with mushrooms and other fungi,
- current research directions and questions in ethnomycology and related fields, - key methodologies and analytical tools needed to design and carry out ethnomycological research,

- resources such as library and museum collections, web-based sources, and professional and amateur organizations, helpful in the further explorations in ethnomycology,
- major transformative perspectives from ethnomycology and related fields, which help us think critically about the differences in cultural assumptions and worldviews that shape our social relationships.

Student performance in the exams and writing assignments serve as a measure of the student success.

### **Texts**

#### Required:

Bone, Eugenia 2011 *Mycophilia: Revelations from the Weird World Of Mushrooms*. Rodale Publishers.

Letcher, Andy 2007 *Shroom: A Cultural History of the Magic Mushroom*. HarperCollins Publishers.

#### Recommended:

Tsing, Anna, 2021 *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*. Princeton Press.

This book is recommended for students interested in applying advanced contemporary theory and methods in trans-disciplinary scholarship to raise and address innovative and provocative questions in the field.

Other required reading materials listed in the Course Calendar are distributed in electronic format via Blackboard.

### **Course Structure and Policies**

#### Delivery Method and Required Technology Access:

The class meetings are facilitated through a synchronous delivery via Zoom. All reading materials with the exception of the aforementioned books will be made available via Blackboard.

#### The course grade is determined based on the following criteria:

- **Class participation**, including sharing knowledge and experience and contributing to discussions with fellow students and instructors in ways that reflect familiarity with the reading and lecture material covered to date, is worth **25%** of the course grade
- **Ethnomycological Autobiography** assignment is worth **20%** of the course grade
- **Midterm exam** is worth **25%** of the final grade
- **Final exam** is worth **30%** of the final grade

Completing the **Ethnomycological Autobiography** assignment involves writing a 3-page double-spaced paper that provides an overview of the student experiences with fungi, connected to these five domains: food, medicine, spirituality, household uses, and broader relationships with the social and physical environments in which they have lived. The assignment aims not to evaluate the student erudition in the field, but to explore the individual experiences stemming from the social and cultural background of each student.

**The two exams**, a midterm and a final, consist of essay questions that aim to assess the student understanding of the lecture and reading material. Exam questions and guidelines will be distributed via Blackboard two weeks ahead of the deadline.

Letter grades for the course are assigned as follows:

A+ = 97-100%; A = 92-96.5%; A- = 90-91.5%;

B+ = 87-89.5%; B = 82-86.5%; B- = 80-81.5%;

C+ = 77-79.5%; C = 72-76.5%; C- = 70-71.5%;

D+ = 67-69.5%; D = 62-66.5%; D- = 60-61.5%

### **Student Support**

Students are encouraged to become familiar with the UAF student support services available at regional campuses and online. The UAF main website provides links to the Academic Advising Center, Writing Center, campus libraries, Office of Information Technology, Student Activities Office, Center for Health and Counseling, and e-Learning and Distance Education. Students should feel comfortable to consult the appropriate service for assistance with schoolwork, research, personal wellness, and adequate access to resources. The instructors are happy to assist with questions relevant to the course. Students may contact the instructors via email and also set up appointments for telephonic or office meetings. The instructors work with the Office of Disabilities Services (UAF Main Campus 208 Whitaker Building, 474-5655) to help facilitate best possible accommodation for students with disabilities.

### **Course Calendar**

This is our main route for the semester. Students should expect some modifications to accommodate the emerging class dynamics and the interests and needs expressed as we advance in the course. All changes in the schedule and reading calendar will be announced in class and posted in Announcements on the course Blackboard page within sufficient timeframe to complete the reading.

Core Deadlines and Deliverables:

Ethnomycological Autobiography assignment: January 26

Midterm: March 23

Final: April 30

Weekly: joining every class meeting having read the assigned materials is a must.

**Week 1 January 12****COURSE INTRODUCTION**

**Students receive instructions for the assignment “Ethnomycological Autobiography.”**

**Week 2 January 19****DEFINING THE THIRD KINGDOM:**

**- how fungi are understood in different knowledge systems, including mycological science**

Assigned book chapters:

*Mycophilia*: “Introduction”

*Shroom*: “The Mushroom People”

Assigned electronic articles:

Aptroot, Andre et al

2014 Rapid Assessment of the Diversity of “Vehiculicolous” Lichens on a Thirty Year Old Ford Bronco Truck in Central Puerto Rico, *Fungi* 7(2-3): 23-27

Benjamin, Denis

2014 A Lexicon for Mushroom Tasting, *Fungi* 6(5): 16-17

Dugan, Frank

2014 *Yeasts: What's in a name? A brief reconnaissance and sampling of literature*, *Fungi* 6(4): 46

Hallock, Robert and Maura LaBrecque

2014 Distinct Odors of Mushrooms and an Odor Wheel to Categorize Them *Fungi* 6(5): 18-22

Kay, Richard

2013 What's in a Name? A Philological Foray. Explorations of the Scientific Names of Select Genera of Fungi, *Fungi* 6(2): 4-5

2012 What's in a Name? A Philological Foray. Explorations of the Scientific Names of Select Genera of Fungi, *Fungi* 5(5): 4-5

**Week 3 January 26 Assignment “Ethnomycological Autobiography” is DUE before the start of the class meeting, to be submitted via email.**

### **ETHNOMYCOLOGY AS A FIELD OF STUDY**

**- key contributors, historical and contemporary perspectives**

Assigned book chapters:

*Mycophilia*: “Forays and Festivals”

*Shroom*: “Science and Magic”

Assigned electronic articles:

Tsing, Anna

2013 Dancing the Mushroom Forest, *Philosophy, Activism, Nature* 10: 6-14

Yamin-Pasternak, Sveta

2011 Ethnomycology: Mushrooms in Cultural Entanglements,  
*Ethnobiology, a Textbook*, Adnerson, E.N., Pearsall, D., Hunn, E., and  
Turner, N., eds. Wiley Blackwell Publishers

### **Week 4 February 2**

#### **LEARNING ABOUT MUSHROOMS:**

**- critical overview of literature, online sources, professional and amateur organizations, community events**

Assigned book chapters:

*Mycophilia*: “Conferences and Collectors”

*Shroom*: “The Archaeology of Ecstasy”

Assigned electronic articles:

Arora, David

1999 The Way of the Wild Mushroom *California Wild* 52: 8-19

Bunyard, Britt

2011 Psilocybe 101: A Primer on Magic Mushrooms and Related Little  
Brown Mushrooms *Fungi* 4(3): 43-48

Money, Nicholas

2014 Circus Fungorum: The Aesthetics of Fungal Movement *Fungi* 6(5): 36-39

Stamets, Paul

2013 Maitake: The Magnificent Dancing Mushroom, *Fungi* 6(3): 12-14.

Velinga, Else

2012 Fruitbodies – A Selection of the Mycological Literature, *Fungi* 5(5):  
15-16

### **Week5 February 9**

#### **MYCOPHAGY: FUNGI IN WORLD CUISINES**

**- culinary uses of wild mushrooms, common cultivated varieties, lactic bacteria and yeasts in baking, fermentation, and distilling**

Assigned book chapters:

*Mycophilia*: “Mutualists, Decomposers, and Parasites”

*Shroom*: “Much Disordered”

Assigned electronic articles:

Bunyard, Britt

2013 Tokays and Sauternes, *Fungi* 6(3): 31-32 Buyck, Bart

2008 The edible mushrooms of Madagascar: an evolving enigma,  
*Economic Botany* 62(3): 509-520

Cook, Langdon

2013 Fire on the Mountain: The Secrets of Burn Morel Hunters, *Fungi* 6(4): 34-37

Rubel, William and David Arora

2008 A Study of Cultural Bias in Field Guide Determinations of Mushroom  
Edibility Using the Iconic Mushroom, *Amanita muscaria* as an Example, *Economic  
Botany* 62(3): 223-243.

### **Week 6 February 16**

#### **Continued MYCOPHAGY: FUNGI IN WORLD CUISINES**

**- culinary uses of wild mushrooms, common cultivated varieties, lactic bacteria and yeasts in baking, fermentation, and distilling**

Assigned book chapters:

*Mycophilia*: “Hunters, Gatherers, and Thieves”

*Shroom*: “Feasts and Revelations”

Assigned electronic articles:

Benjamin, Denis

2013 A Proposed Classification for the Bolete Harvest and Its Uses, *Fungi*  
6(4): 27-30

Hufford, Mary

2006 Molly Mooching on Bradley Mountain: The Aesthetic Ecology of Appalachian Morels, *Gastronomica* 6(2): 49-60

Jonsson, Maria

2011 Swedish Mushrooms: Part of a National Heritage, *Fungi* (3): 51-55

Sitta, Nicola and Marco Floriani

2008 Nationalization and globalization trends in the wild mushroom commerce of Italy with emphasis on porcini (*Boletus edulis* and allied species), *Economic Botany* 62(3): 307-322.

### **Week 7 February 23**

#### **Continued MYCOPHAGY: FUNGI IN WORLD CUISINES**

**- culinary uses of wild mushrooms, common cultivated varieties, lactic bacteria and yeasts in baking, fermentation, and distilling**

Assigned book chapters:

*Mycophilia*: "The Exotics" and "Truffles"

*Shroom*: "Wasson"

Assigned electronic articles:

Nicholson, Michael and Brooke Pearson

2014 Variables Influencing Viability of Brewer's Yeast, *Fungi* 7(1): 23-27

Rogers, Robert

2013 Agarikon, Ghosts of the Pacific Northwest, *Fungi* 6(4): 20-23 Shavit, Elinoar

2008 Truffles roasting in the evening fires: pages from the history of desert truffles, *Fungi* (1): 18-23.

Winkler, Daniel

2013 Truffles of The Pacific Northwest, *Fungi* 6(4): 16-19

### **Week 8 March 2**

#### **MUSHROOMS FOR HEALTH AND HEALING:**

**- ethnomedicine and mycopharmacology**

Assigned book chapters:

*Mycophilia*: "Fungi that Make You Well and Fungi that Make You Sick" and "The New Superfood"

*Shroom*: "The Fly Agaric"

Assigned electronic articles:



Beug, Michael:

2012 A Reflection on Medicinal Mushrooms, *Fungi* 5(1): 38-39

McFarland, Joseph:

2012 Is there a Responsible Way to Harvest Chaga? *Fungi* 5(3): 8-9

Pilz, David

2012 Chaga Harvesting in the Land of the Siberian Tiger, *Fungi* 5(3) Rose, David

2012 The Stinkhorn Monologue 5(1): 23-31

Shepard, Glenn H Jr., Arora, David and Aaron Lampman

2008 The Grace of the flood: classification and use of wild mushrooms among the highland Maya of Chiapas. *Economic Botany* 62(3): 437-470

Spinosa, Ron

2012 The Chaga Story 5(3): 22-26

Spinosa, Ron and Britt Bunyard

2012 No, That's Not Chaga 5(3): 45-47

## **HAPPY SPRING BREAK!**

### **Week 9 March 16**

#### **CRAFTY APPLICATIONS:**

- **fungi in fabric dyes, woodworking, gardening, and household applications**

Assigned book chapters:

*Mycophilia*: "All About Buttons" and "Mycotechnologies"

*Shroom*: "Soma" and "Chemistry and Conspiracy"

Assigned electronic articles:

Allen, Alissa

2014 Getting Started with Lichen Dyes, *Fungi* 7(2-3):66-69

Lucking, Robert and Thorsten Lumbsch, 2014 Lichens: Fungal Farmers, *Fungi* 7(2-3): 6-14

McFarland, Joseph

2014 More Details about Fire and Fungi, *Fungi* 7(1):41-44

Rhodes, Chris

2014 Mycoremediation (Bioremediation with Fungi) – Growing Mushrooms to Clean the Earth. A mini-review, *resilience.org*

Rice, Miriam

1980 Mushrooms for Color, Mad River Printing

**Week 10 March 23**

**Midterm Exam is Due before the start of the class meeting, to be submitted by email.**

**FUNGI AND EXPRESSIVE CULTURE:**

- **visual, literary, and performance art inspired by the third kingdom**

Assigned book chapters:

*Shroom*: "Academic Exercise" and "High Priests"

Assigned electronic articles:

Rose, David

2009 Ethnopetics: Somapoetics, *Fungi* 2(2):8-10, 41-44.

2008 A Plurality of One: John Cage and the People-to-People Committee on Fungi, *Fungi* 1(4): 25-35

2008 Auricularia auricular, Anti-Semitism, and Political Mushrooms, *Fungi* 1(1): 12-17

Schaechter, Elio

2009 Mushroom sellers in Renaissance and Baroque paintings. *Fungi* 2(1): 12-13

Stoddard-Hayes, Marlana

2014 Spore Prints as Art, *Fungi* 7(1):22

2011 Spore Prints as Art, *Fungi* 4(3):42

**Week 11 March 30**

**Book Review Assignment is due at the start of class**

**SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS**

- **economic, recreational, and spiritual values connected with fungi**

Assigned book chapters:

*Mycophilia*: "Shrooms"

*Shroom*: "Ripples and Waves"

Assigned electronic articles:

Dugan, Frank

2012 Yippie Yi Yo, Mycota Ki Yay, *Fungi* 5(1): 6-19

Saito, Haruo and Mitsumata Gaku

2008 Bidding Customs and Habitat Improvement for Matsutake

(*Tricholoma matsutake*) in Japan, *Economic Botany* 62(3): 258-268.

Winkler, Daniel

2008 Yarsa Gunbu (*Cordyceps sinensis*) and the Fungal Commodification of the Rural Economy in Nepal, *Economic Botany* 62 (3): 291–305

## **Week 12 April 6**

### **Continued SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS**

- **economic, recreational, and spiritual values connected with fungi**

Assigned book chapters:

*Mycophilia*: “The Superorganism”

*Shroom*: “Ripples and Waves” and “Underground Overground,”

Assigned electronic articles:

Lincoff, Gary 2011 Psilocybin – Its Use and Meaning, *Fungi* 4(3): 20-23, 50

Beug, Michael W.

2011 The Genus *Psilocybe* in North America, *Fungi* 4(3): 6-17

2011 Psilocybin – History, Personal Stories and Potential Future, *Fungi* 4(3): 31-40

Rose, David

2011 *Psilocybe* and Psychedelics; Or, Timothy Leary in Baltimore, *Fungi* 4(3): 24-30

## **Week 13 April 13**

### **Continued SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIPS**

**Students receive questions for the take-home final exam**

- **economic, recreational, and spiritual values connected with fungi**

Assigned book chapters:

*Shroom*: “Ripples and Waves,” “Underground Overground” and “The Elf-Clowns of Hyperspace”

Assigned electronic articles:

Guzman, Gaston

2008 Hallucinogenic mushrooms in Mexico: an overview. *Economic Botany* 62(3): 404-412.

Saar, Maret

1991 Ethnomycological Data from Siberia and Northeast Asia on the

Effect of *Amanita muscaria*, *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* 31: 157-173.

**Week 14 April 20**

**CLOSE TO HOME**

**- mushrooming in our region(s), changing perspectives, emerging uses**

Assigned book chapters:

*Shroom*: "Muck and Brass," and "Epilogue: Love on a Puffball"

Assigned electronic articles:

Benjamin, Dennis

2011 Should the Harvesting and Selling of Wild Mushrooms Be Regulated? *Fungi* 4(2):41-43.

Blanchette, Robert A., Renner, Caroline C., Held, Benjamin W., Enoch, Carrie and Sarah Angstman

2002 The current use of *Phellinus igniarius* by the Eskimos of Western Alaska, *Mycologist* 16: 142-145.

Pleninger, Diane B

2009 Iqmiq; Troubled Child of *Phellinus* and *Nicotiana*, *Fungi* 2(2):2-6, 4748

Yamin-Pasternak, Sveta

2013 The Unconditionally Loved Conditional Edibles or How to Ruin a Morel, *Fungi* (6)1:12-16

2008 A Day that Feeds the Year: Ethnography of Mushrooming in the Russian Arctic, *Fungi* 2(2) 49-57

2007 An Ethnomycological Approach to Land Use Values in Chukotka, *Etudes Intuit Studies* 31(1-2): 121-141

**Final Exam Meeting 7:00-9:30 p.m., Friday, April 30**

**WRAPPING UP THE COURSE -reflections and anticipation for the foraging season**

**Congratulations on completing the semester.**

**Have a wonderful summer and happy foraging!**