

Research Methods for Ethnobotanists

EBOT F220 / ANTH F220

2 credits

Course Information

Provides skills and knowledge for conducting research about human–plant relationships; focuses on interviewing Elders about plant use and introduces to qualitative and quantitative research methods in ethnobotanical research and documentation of knowledge and practices, e.g. plant collection, participant observation and data analysis; addresses decolonizing methodology and Indigenous knowledge revitalization.

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| Instructor | Lisa Strecker lstrecker@alaska.edu Mailing Address: UAF Kuskokwim Campus, PO Box 368, Bethel, AK, 99559 Work phone: 907-543-4551 |
| Office hours | Mondays, 9 – 11 am, via Zoom Please sign up for an appointment slot on your instructor’s google calendar (https://tinyurl.com/yy6begkj) and join the Zoom meeting (below) Send email for alternative times or modality (e.g. over the phone instead of Zoom). |
| Location | EBOT 220 is a synchronous class and will be taught via distance delivery , using Zoom, Canvas, and google apps . Students taking this class are required to have an email address, basic computer skills, and reliable computer internet access for all class sessions. |
| Course platform | Canvas (https://alaska.instructure.com/). You will need your UA credentials to log on. |
| Zoom | https://alaska.zoom.us/j/98144808854?pwd=b1VtMWQ1ajhJbndyTmZJY1hobk9kdz09 Password: EBOT |
| Course Schedule | Mondays and Wednesdays, 6:40 – 7:40 pm, 8/29 – 12/6/2023. See schedule below. |
| Instructional methods | Readings, lecture, discussion, blogging, hands-on learning, student-led projects, student presentations; |

Course Goals

This course will equip students with required skills for conducting field investigations into the human use of plants by providing students experience with interviewing Elders and other community members about their use of native plants. Students will learn how to: conduct structured and non-structured interviews, make appropriate plant collections, formulate participant observations, and analyze this type of data. Students will conduct their own research assignments in order to gain practical mastery of the course topics. Methods and concepts learned in this course will be valuable to the student who hopes to learn about the uses of native flora from the keepers of the knowledge (community Elders). In addition, Ethnobotanical Techniques aims to engage students in the possibilities of a young discipline, challenging pioneers of the study to make their mark and become the future of ethnobotany.

Student Learning Outcomes

Successful students in this course will -

- Explain the importance of botanical voucher specimens for ethnobotany
- Conduct a literature-based research on ethnobotanically relevant plants

- Explain the difference between quantitative and qualitative research approaches
- Conduct an individual project on participant observation
- Process data collected during participant observation assignment
- Name and explain different interviewing approaches
- Collect data for quantitative data analysis
- Identify different forms of documentation of ethnobotanical knowledge
- Explain ethnographic film as a tool for documenting ethnobotanical knowledge
- Identify potential ethical conflicts in ethnobotanical research and how to avoid or address them

Resources & Materials Required

Texts: no textbook; See syllabus for readings. All texts and other course materials will be posted on Canvas.

Readings from texts and supplementary materials provided by the instructors are to be read as assigned, and completed by the next class period. If reading material raises questions that you have or introduces material that you are especially interested in, we will discuss your questions or interests in more detail during the scheduled class period. **You must do the readings as they provide background for lectures, and because you will need to use the material when you prepare your discussion posts and other submissions.**

Course Content

See Lecture Schedule (at end)

Evaluation & Grading

| Element | Number | % of Grade |
|--|--------|------------|
| Presence, | | 10 |
| Participation | | 20 |
| Assignments (post and presentation, see course schedule for details) | 6 | |
| - I Literature research | | 8 |
| - II Voucher specimen | | 8 |
| - III Ethnography | | 12 |
| - IV Interview | | 10 |
| - V Participant observation | | 12 |
| - VI Presentation of research paper | | 5 |
| Discussion posts | 3 | 10 |
| - Replies to discussion posts | 4 | 5 |
| TOTAL | | 100 |

Grading: Detailed assignment description, expectations and grading rubrics are published with each assignment on Canvas.

Grading Scale (based upon the percentage of total possible points):

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| A | A+: 98-100% A: 93-97% A-: 90-92% | "A" (including A+ and A-) indicates a thorough mastery of course content and outstanding performance in completion of course requirements. |
| B | B+: 87-89% | "B" (including B+ and B-) indicates a high level of acquired knowledge and performance in completion of |

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| | B: 83-86% B-: 80-82% | course requirements. |
| C | C+: 77-79% C: 73-76% C-: 70-72% | “C” (including C+ and C-) indicates a satisfactory level of acquired knowledge and performance in completion of course requirements. |
| D | D+: 67-69% D: 63-66% D-: 60-62% | “D” (including D+ and D-) indicates a minimal level of acquired knowledge and minimal performance in completion of course requirements. This grade does not satisfy requirements for courses in the major, minor, core or graduate programs. |
| F | F: below 60% | “F” indicates failure to meet a minimal level of understanding of course content and/or performance in completion of course requirements. All F grades, including those earned in pass/fail courses, are included in the GPA calculations. |
| W | Withdrawn — Indicates withdrawal from a course after the first two weeks of a semester. | |
| I | Incomplete — An incomplete is a temporary grade used to indicate that the student has satisfactorily completed (C (2.0) or better) the majority of work in a course but for personal reasons beyond the student’s control, such as sickness, has not been able to complete the course during the regular semester. Normally, an incomplete is assigned in a case when the student is current in the class until at least the last three weeks of the semester or summer session. Negligence or indifference are not acceptable reasons for an I grade. Instructors include a statement of work required of the student to complete the course at the time the I grade is assigned, and a copy of the notice of the incomplete grade will be sent to the dean of the school or college in which the course is given. An incomplete must be made up within one year or it will automatically be changed to an F grade. One year is the longest amount of time allowable for completion of the I. The I grade is not computed in the student’s GPA until it has been changed to a regular letter grade by the instructor or until one year has elapsed, at which time it will be computed as an F. A senior cannot graduate with an I grade in either a university or major course requirement. To determine a senior’s GPA for honors at graduation, the I grade will be computed as a failing grade. | |
| NB | No Basis — Instructors may award a No Basis grade if there is insufficient student progress and/or attendance for evaluation to occur. No credit is given, nor is NB calculated in the GPA. This is a permanent grade and may not be used to substitute for the Incomplete. It cannot be removed by later completing outstanding work. | |

Policies & Procedures

Student protections and services statement: Every qualified student is welcome in my classroom. As needed, I am happy to work with you, disability services, veterans' services, rural student services, etc. to find reasonable accommodations. Students at this university are protected against sexual harassment and discrimination (Title IX), and minors have additional protections. As required, if I notice or am informed of certain types of misconduct, then I am required to report it to the appropriate authorities. For more information on your rights as a student and the resources available to you to resolve problems, please go the following site: www.uaf.edu/handbook/

Time Commitment: This course is an applied course. Students are asked to work on projects independently. The time to prepare, conduct and document a project is at least as important for the success of this course as the time spent in class. Please consider that college level science courses customarily require at least 2 to 3 hours of time outside of class for each hour spent in class.

Attendance: Student attendance and participation are necessary to pass this course. Each student is expected to attend each class session, to be on time, and to remain for the entire session. Late arrivals and early departures are disruptive and unfair to other students and guest lecturers. With the understanding that life happens, class may be missed up to 1 time. For classes missed, the student is asked to listen to the recordings and submit additional makeup assignments that will be assigned. It is your responsibility to check in with the instructor for the additional makeup assignment.

Assignments missed because of an excused absence, must be made up within one week after a student’s return to school. Because of logistical difficulties, some sessions and assignments may be difficult to make up, so be sure and please always talk with the instructor when you know that you will have to miss class(es).

Should school or class be officially cancelled (because of inclement weather, etc.), **exams, quizzes, presentations or assignments due during that cancellation will be given or due the next scheduled class session.**

Assignments submitted late without an authorized excuse will be subject to a 10% grade reduction for every week that the submission is delayed. **Any make up work not completed by the last day of lecture will receive a grade of zero (0) and this will be factored into your final grade.** Unless state otherwise, assignments will be due by midnight on the due date.

Reading: Students are expected to have read the material listed in the attached Lecture Schedule **prior to class**, and to be prepared to participate in class discussions and activities with comments, questions, and observations. Your participation is both required and highly valued, and will count as part of the final grade.

Readings from texts and supplementary materials provided by the instructors are to be read as assigned, and completed by the next class period. If reading material raises questions that you have or introduces material that you are especially interested in, we will discuss your questions or interests in more detail during the scheduled class period. **You must do the readings as they provide background for the topics discussed in class.** From time to time throughout the semester the instructors may assign additional reading material, with these not necessarily listed in the course outline below.

Study Skills: This class requires good reading and study skills. If a student feels that he or she is falling behind, he or she should contact the instructor **immediately and we will work with you directly.** Issues of this type seldom resolve unless specific measures are taken in a timely fashion.

Drop/Withdrawal/Incomplete: Ceasing attendance does not activate the drop, withdrawal, or incomplete grade process. The student must submit the appropriate forms for each of these processes by the published deadlines to end enrolment in this class. Failure to complete and submit the appropriate forms may result in a failing grade for this course on the student's permanent transcript. Deadlines for drop and withdrawal are listed below. **All paperwork must be completed and submitted by these dates.** Be aware that the college has specific policies and procedures for the assignment of incomplete grades.

Syllabus Addendum (Revised 8/22/2022)

COVID-19 statement: Students should keep up-to-date on the university's policies, practices, and mandates related to COVID-19 by regularly checking this website: <https://sites.google.com/alaska.edu/coronavirus/uaf?authuser=0> Further, students are expected to adhere to the university's policies, practices, and mandates and are subject to disciplinary actions if they do not comply.

Student protections statement: UAF embraces and grows a culture of respect, diversity, inclusion, and caring. Students at this university are protected against sexual harassment and discrimination (Title IX). Faculty members are designated as responsible employees which means they are required to report sexual misconduct. Graduate teaching assistants do not share the same reporting obligations. For more information on your rights as a student and the resources available to you to resolve problems, please go to the following site: <https://catalog.uaf.edu/academics-regulations/students-rights-responsibilities/>.

Disability services statement: I will work with the Office of Disability Services to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities.

ASUAF advocacy statement: The Associated Students of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the student government of UAF, offers advocacy services to students who feel they are facing issues with staff, faculty, and/or other students specifically if these issues are hindering the ability of the student to succeed in their academics or go about their lives at the university. Students who wish to utilize these services can contact the Student Advocacy Director by visiting the ASUAF office or emailing asuaf.office@alaska.edu.

Student Academic Support:

- Speaking Center (907-474-5470, uaf-speakingcenter@alaska.edu, Gruening 507)
- Writing Center (907-474-5314, uaf-writing-center@alaska.edu, Gruening 8th floor)
- UAF Math Services, uaf-traccloud@alaska.edu, Chapman Building (for math fee paying students only)
- Developmental Math Lab, Gruening 406
- The Debbie Moses Learning Center at CTC (907-455-2860, 604 Barnette St, Room 120, <https://www.ctc.uaf.edu/student-services/student-success-center/>)
- For more information and resources, please see the Academic Advising Resource List (https://www.uaf.edu/advising/lr/SKM_364e19011717281.pdf)

Student Resources:

- Disability Services (907-474-5655, uaf-disability-services@alaska.edu, Whitaker 208)
- Student Health & Counseling [**6 free counseling sessions**] (907-474-7043, <https://www.uaf.edu/chc/appointments.php>, Gruening 215)
- Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities (907-474-7317, uaf-studentrights@alaska.edu, Eielson 110)
- Associated Students of the University of Alaska Fairbanks (ASUAF) or ASUAF Student Government (907-474-7355, asuaf.office@alaska.edu, Wood Center 119)

Nondiscrimination statement: The University of Alaska is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and educational institution. The University of Alaska does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, citizenship, age, sex, physical or mental disability, status as a protected veteran, marital status, changes in marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, parenthood, sexual orientation, gender identity, political affiliation or belief, genetic information, or other legally protected status. The University's commitment to nondiscrimination, including against sex discrimination, applies to students, employees, and applicants for admission and employment. Contact information, applicable laws, and complaint procedures are included on UA's statement of nondiscrimination available at www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination. For more information, contact:

UAF Department of Equity and Compliance
1692 Tok Lane, 3rd floor, Constitution Hall, Fairbanks, AK 99775
907-474-7300
uaf-deo@alaska.edu

We want you to know that:

1. UA is an AA/EO employer and educational institution and prohibits illegal discrimination against any individual: www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination.
2. Incidents can be reported to your university's Equity and Compliance office (listed below) or online reporting portal. University of Alaska takes immediate, effective, and appropriate action to respond to reported acts of discrimination and harassment.
3. There are supportive measures available to individuals that may have experienced discrimination.
4. University of Alaska's Board of Regents' Policy & University Regulations (UA BoR P&R) 01.02.020 Nondiscrimination and 01.04 Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination Under Title IX, go to: <http://alaska.edu/bor/policy-regulations/>.
5. UA BoR P&R apply at all university owned or operated sites, university sanctioned events, clinical sites and during all academic or research related travel that are university sponsored.

For further information on your rights and resources [click here](#).

Important Dates

Last day for 100% refund: Friday, Sept. 8, 2023

Last day for student- and faculty-initiated withdrawals: Friday, Nov 3, 2023 (W appears on academic transcript)

Last day for course submissions to be considered for grading: Saturday, December 16, 2023

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note that the schedule will have some flexibility to accommodate possible guest speakers and the particular interests of students. Assignments are always due before the beginning of the next course meeting.

| | Date | Topic |
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| 1a | 8/28/ 2023 | Introduction and introductions, purpose, and objectives of this course. Overview of syllabus and class requirements. Alaska Native Studies Council writing style guide (http://alaskanativestudies.org/writing_style/ , also on Canvas) and find three examples that catch your attention and share them with the class. Assignment (always assigned for future classes): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up your profile on Canvas (due 8/30/2023). • 'There is a lot we can do together, we just need to come from the right mindset' (Wendy Geniusz Makoons). Watch SEB Spring Panel on Decolonizing Ethnobotany (April 17, 2021), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDvGbUdCT-o |
| 1b | 8/30 | Overview of the development of ethnobotany and ethnobiology as academic disciplines Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion post #1: Reflection on ethnobiology and decolonization. (due 9/6/2023; reply by 9/11). |
| (2a) | 9/4 | LABOR DAY – NO CLASSES |
| 2b | 9/6 | Recap: academic literature and other sources of ethnobotanical information; How to read academic literature Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASSIGNMENT I: LITERATURE RESEARCH. Apply your new skills and knowledge and conduct a literature research for one of your EBOT 250 projects OR related to any other plant or ethnobotany-related topic. Submit your 5-10 best finds via Canvas and - Read: Vogl, C. R., Vogl-Lukasser, B., & Puri, R. K. (2004). Tools and methods for data collection in ethnobotanical studies of homegardens. <i>Field methods</i> , 16(3), 285-306. |
| 3a | 9/11 | GUEST SPEAKER – UAF off-campus librarian. |
| 3b | 9/13 | Ethnobotanical research and data Quantitative and qualitative data, primary and secondary sources; Overview of ethnobotanical research methods Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Martin, pp. 26-58 [65]) • Read: Nesbitt (2014) Use of Herbarium Specimens in Ethnobotany • ASSIGNMENT II: (ETHNOBOTANICAL) VOUCHER SPECIMEN. Search online herbaria for voucher specimens of plants that might have some ethnobotanical information on their label; e.g. plants that have a history of global consumption (coffee, tea, bananas) or psychoactive plants. In order to search, find the scientific name of the plant first (Wikipedia!). Post your three most interesting finds in your discussion posts and write a paragraph about your personal search process. Possible herbaria to search will be posted on Canvas. (due 9/18/2023). |
| 4a | 9/18 | Documenting the plants used I: the ethnobotanical voucher specimen; describing ecological aspects of a field site, biomes; |

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| | | <p>Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Edit your assignment post of your ethnobotanical voucher specimen and add information about the plant's distribution (will be discussed in class) (due 9/20/2023) |
| 4b | 9/20 | <p>Documenting the plants used II</p> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read Hoey paper (2014) A Simple Introduction to the Practice of Ethnography, Watch: Ethnography: Ellen Isaacs at TedXBroadway. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVojY5VgymI Prepare for a discussion in class based on Margaret Mead's quote in E. Isaac's talk (5:37). How could Margaret Mead's quote apply to ethnographic fieldwork conducted to study plant knowledge and use? Think of an example and be ready to share in class. |
| 5a | 9/25 | <p>Introduction to ethnographies, ethnographies as sources of ethnobotanical information</p> <p>Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASSIGNMENT III - YOUR EXAMPLE OF AN ETHNOGRAPHY. Go to a library, in person or virtually, find an ethnography and look for information about plant use. If the ethnography that you found does not contain any ethnobotanical information, spend at least one hour reading in it and write a discussion post about the book or the excerpt that you focused on (due 10/2/2023). |
| 5b | 9/27 | <p>Ethnographic fieldwork and ethnographies continued</p> <p>Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think of a person that you could interview for your upcoming interview assignment and enter the name into the corresponding table in the course folder on google drive. |
| 6a | 10/2 | <p>Student presentations: Your example of an ethnography</p> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read: Russell - Interviewing: Unstructured and Semistructured, pp. 210-217. Read: Ulysses et al. 2014 pp. 16-23. |
| 6b | 10/4 | <p>Student presentations: Your example of an ethnography Presentation of fieldwork by instructor</p> |
| 7a | 10/9 | <p>Qualitative methods: Interviewing – unstructured and semistructured</p> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASSIGNMENT IV – YOUR INTERVIEW (due 10/15/2023) Read: Russell – Structured Interviewing: Questionnaire, pp. TBA, Martin; |
| 7b | 10/11 | <p>Qualitative methods: Interviewing – structured interviews, questionnaires</p> <p>Assignment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think of a community and / location for your participant observation and enter the information into the corresponding table in google drive (due 10/16/2023). |
| 8a | 10/16 | <p>Student presentations of interview assignment</p> <p>Assignments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read: Russel - Participant observation ASSIGNMENT V - PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION: Conduct a participant observation and write a post about your experience (due 10/23/2023) |
| 8b | 10/18 | <p>Qualitative research methods: participant observation</p> |
| 9a | 10/23 | <p>Qualitative research methods: participant observation Student presentations on participant observation assignments</p> |

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| 9b | 10/25 | Qualitative methods: participant observation Qualitative Research Methods – analysis of qualitative data Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Russell – Cultural Domain Analysis (6 pages) • Think of three cultural domains that could be analyzed as a class project • Add five sets of data to the spreadsheet for our cultural domain analysis (due 10/30/2023) |
| 10a | 10/30 | Introduction to quantitative research methods – Cultural Domain Analysis Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBA |
| 10b | 11/1 | Cultural Domain Analysis: Freelists, pile sorts and triads in ethnobotanical research Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASSIGNMENT VI - QUANTITATIVE METHODS PAPER - Read and summarize an ethnobotanical paper about a research case using quantitative research methods and be ready to present the research in class. A selection of papers to choose from will be provided. Post your article (or a link to it) with your summary and prepare to present your paper in class (due 11/8/2023). |
| 11a | 11/6 | Discussion of class project on cultural domain analysis |
| 11b | 11/8 | Student presentations of research cases using quantitative data analysis |
| 12a | 11/13 | Examples of ethnobotanical research |
| 12b | 11/15 | Examples of ethnobotanical research Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Excerpt (TBA) from Tuhiwai Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies • Read: Excerpt (TBA) from Geniusz (2009) Our Knowledge is Not Primitive: Decolonizing Botanical Anishinaabe Teachings • Submit Discussion post #2 Cultural sensitivity and research methods (due 11/27/2023, reply by 11/29) |
| 13a | 11/20 | >Asynchronous class session< Watch ethnobotanical documentaries II (Titles list on Canvas) Assignments: Submit Discussion post #3 Ethnobotany and Film (due 11/20/2023, no replies required) |
| 13b | 11/22 | THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS |
| 14a | 11/27 | Decolonizing Methodologies Lecture and student discussion Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Excerpt (TBA) from Carroll, C. (2015). <i>Roots of our renewal: Ethnobotany and Cherokee environmental governance</i>. Prepare for discussion / role play (details TBA) |
| 14b | 11/29 | Decolonizing Methodologies and ethnobotanical fieldwork Lecture and student discussion Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary reading: Fuller (2007) – Guidelines for Using Video to Document Plant Practices Watch ethnobotanical documentaries I (Titles TBA) |
| 15a | 12/4 | Guest speaker: Ethnographic film and ethnobotany Assignment: Read: Grasser et al. (2006) Children as Ethnobotanists |

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| 15b | 12/6 | Ethnographic film and ethnobotany |
| | 12/11 | Finals, NO CLASSES |
| | 12/13 | Finals, NO CLASSES |

Last day for course submissions to be considered for grading: Saturday, December 16, 2023