This course discusses, on Amazonian ethnographic grounds, a major current debate, namely the appropriation of local knowledge. Following a general introduction to Amazonian Ethnology, it particularly deals with the nature of shamanism and knowledge, the process of generating and acquiring knowledge among some Amazonian societies, and then proceeds to discuss issues around intellectual rights in its relation to biological and knowledge prospection.

The course will rely on lectures and seminars. Seminars will follow the so-called 'Melbourne method', which will be fully explained in class. It involves a rotational framing, answering and criticism of issues by three groups (into which the class will be divided at the second session). Questions and answers should be in printed form and signed. Answers may be around two to three pages long. There will be no final paper required and evaluation will rely on informed participation in class as well as on the written material along the course.

Week 1 Introduction
Division into three groups.
Seminar - Film projection. Three questions will be brought by group A, dealing with Descola 1994. Cobb 203

Week 2 Reading: Descola 1994 chapter 3 and Conclusion.
Lecture- Nature and Culture.
Seminar- Group B answers questions; critique of questions and answers by group C.
Group C also poses three questions on the reading for the next week.

Week 3 Reading: Crocker 1985 parts 2 and 3 (chapters 4 to 12)
Lecture. Elements of Je ethnography
Seminar: Group A answers questions, critique by group B; group B poses three questions on the readings for the next seminar

Week 4 Reading: Viveiros de Castro 1992 chapters 8,9, 10
Lecture: Tupi or not tupi.

Seminar: Group C answers, critique by A. A poses three questions on the reading for the next seminar.
Week 5 Reading: Chr. Hugh-Jones
Lecture. Cosmology and everyday life in the Vaupes
Seminar: Group B answers, critique by C. C poses 3 questions

Week 6 Reading: Peter Gow 1991
Lecture- The Piro's new clothes
Seminar- Group A answers, critique by B. B poses question to be responded to on week 7

Week 7 Readings: Taussig chapters 17 to 29. Taylor
Lecture: Shamans as translators.
Seminar- Group C answers, critique by A. A poses questions for 11/13

Week 8 Readings: Correa 1998 and the Convention for Biological Diversity e.g. in Shiva 1994
Lecture: What is going on with local knowledge? The Convention for Biological Diversity and TRIPS.
B answers, critique by C. C poses questions

Week 9 Readings: Kloppenburg and Salick; M. Brown
Lecture- Intellectual Rights and Indigenous People
Seminar: A answers, critique by B. B poses questions.

Week 10 Readings: Gurdial S. Nijar
Lecture: Intellectual Property Rights and Indigenous People
Seminar: C answers, critique by A.


Correa, Carlos 19981, Implementing the TRIPs Agreement. General Context and implications for Developing Countries. Penang, Malaysia, Third World Network.


Gow, Peter 1996 River People Shamanism and History in Western Amazonia in N. Thomas & C. Humphrey eds. Shamanism, History and the State. Michigan University Press.


Hugh-Jones, Christine From the Milk River: spatial and temporal processes in Northwest Amazonia. Cambridge University Press.


Redford, Kent and A. Stearman 1993 'Forest dwelling Native Amazonians and the Conservation of Biodiversity: interests in common or in collision?" Conservation Biology 7 (2): 248-255.


Turner, Terence 1992 'Defiant images. The Kayapo appropriation of video" Anthropology Today vol.8 n.6
