

Biology 297A - Explorations in Aotearoa I: the biogeography and culture of the New Zealand North Island

January 2012 Interim Session Course
January 03-26, 2012
Augustana College, Sioux Falls, SD
Wellington, New Zealand



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Course description: This course is designed to immerse the student in an interactive study of the unique biogeography and indigenous cultural of the North Island of New Zealand, known as Aotearoa by the Maori. One of the continental remnants of the southern supercontinent Gondwana, New Zealand exhibits levels of biological endemism unrivaled across the globe. The biota of this land mass is the result of a startling evolutionary experiment in which mammals, prominent on all other continents, are virtually absent and replaced by giant insects and flightless birds. New Zealand's cultural history, associated first with the indigenous Maori people and their traditions and then later with European settlers, is equally fascinating and deserving of study. Students in this course will conduct both qualitative and quantitative investigations designed to increase their understanding of the evolutionary and historical events that shaped the natural and human history of the North Island of New Zealand. Students will compare and contrast these events and their consequences to the experiences that shaped comparable North American histories. The course is structured to include one week of class activities and trip orientation at Augustana College prior to departure for a three week educational exploration of the North Island of New Zealand. Students will travel via rental van and will stay at local New Zealand YHA facilities, and will contribute to daily group meal preparation. During the course students will attend a traditional Maori kapahaka (dancing) performance and experience traditional Maori kai (food) at a Maori hangi (feast). Students will also observe and document the influence of Great Britain on the development of contemporary society, and seek to understand how these societal values can conflict with Maori tradition. Students will explore the biogeography, ecology and evolution of the North Island flora and fauna through hands-on field exercises at multiple locations across the North Island landscape. Students will spend the last week of the course on a Department of Conservation Island Reserve (Matiu/Somes Island) conducting biological research under the guidance of Dr. Howard, with investigations focused on increasing our understanding of the evolution of acoustic and vibrational communication in New Zealand insects.

Learning Objectives: upon completion of the course, students will be expected to:

1. Understand and describe the geologic history that shaped the New Zealand microcontinent
2. Understand and explain how this geologic history frames the current floral and faunal assemblages on the North Island
3. Understand and describe how the arrival and colonization of the island by humans altered the biodiversity of the island
4. Understand and explain the history of both Maori and European settlement on the North Island
5. Understand and describe how these histories and resulting traditions often conflict, and relate these cultural dynamics to those that have and are occurring in North American

Required textbooks:

Ghosts of Gondwana: The History of Life in New Zealand by George W. Gibbs, Jan. 2006. Craig Potton Publishing

The Island Broken in Two Halves: Land and Renewal Movements Among the Maori of New Zealand by Jean E. Rosenfeld, Nov. 1999. Pennsylvania State University Press

Dogside Story by Patricia Grace, Mar. 2002. University of Hawaii Press

Course Prerequisites: This J-term class is designed as an interdisciplinary course intended for Augustana students from across the disciplines that have an interest in the geography, biology, culture and history of New Zealand. Students must have completed their first year at Augustana (sophomore or higher class standing), and have maintained a 3.0 GPA. Student must also possess, or be eligible to acquire, a U.S. passport. Student interested in enrolling in the course must first liaison with the course professor.

Course structure and grading: The course will consist of daily discussions of readings from the course texts, assignments (group and individual) associated with the study sites, and daily journal entries. Each participating student will be expected to fully participate in all course-related activities. At the conclusion of the course each student will submit a final paper that integrates both research and personal experience to address one of the topics articulated in the course learning objectives. All assignments and the final paper will be uploaded to the course Moodle site. Final course grades will be assigned based upon point total ratios as follows:

1. **Site reports** – 30%. In consultation with the professor, each student will prepare reports (2) on two study sites that will be visited during the course. The reports will be 3-5 pages in length and the student will make copies of each to distribute to the class prior to departure. The two reports will need to provide background on the site and describe the focal features (geologic, biological, and/or cultural) of the selected sites. Additionally, the student will prepare an oral presentation for each report and will lead the group in a discussion once we arrive at the location.
2. **Daily Reflective Journal** – 40%. To organize and forward our discussions, each student will keep a journal that describes and critically evaluates what you have been seeing and experiencing in New Zealand. You will bring it to every discussion, activity, and to all of the study sites. Your critical writings, observations, descriptions, ideas and questions about what you have seen and experienced will provide the foundation for our daily discussions during the trip and your final reflective essay. The journal will also be used as a field data collection notebook during the week we are conducting biological research on Matiu/Somes Island. The journal should include sketches where appropriate.
3. **Final Evaluative Paper** – 15%. This should be ~ 5-7 pages, typed and double spaced. This essay will be a reflection on and exploration of what the students have learned and gained from this trip. They will need to select one of the learning objective themes, and relate their personal learning experiences in New Zealand to one of these core themes. The paper must include at minimum 3-5 journal references outside of the texts.
4. **Course participation** – 15%. This includes the student's participation in discussions and all group activities, completion of readings, and being ON TIME to all course-related activities.

Grades are not curved but will be based upon the accumulated percentage of total points and will generally range as follows: 90-100% of total points = A, 80-89% = B, 70-79% = C, 60-69% = D, <60% = F. All students are required to join the course Moodle site by the first day of class.

Tentative travel and course schedule

Day 1-4: Tue. 04-06 Jan. 2012. Augustana College; course orientation, travel planning, and site reports.

Day 5-7: Sat. 07-Mon. 09 Jan. 2012. Sioux Falls airport; travel to Auckland, NZ. Arrive ~9:00 am 09 Jan. Monday, and settle in at the Auckland YHA, where we will stay for the next two nights. To get a sense of the city, we will walk across the Harbour Bridge before dinner, and then visit the Auckland Sky Tower after sunset.

Day 8: Tue. 10 Jan. 2012. After breakfast at the Auckland YHA, we will visit the ancient Maori Pa sites and the Auckland Museum, and stop for lunch at a local downtown café. At lunch today we will discuss readings from *Broken* and *Dogside*. After lunch we will return to the museum to complete our tour, and then take an interpretive walk around the city center. Dinner will be a cooperative affair at the YHA.

Day 9: Wed. 11 Jan. 2012. Depart Auckland at 7:15 am for Rotorua, New Zealand's geothermal wonderland and the spiritual home of the Maori people. We will stop in Waitomo to float through the caves and observe the spectacular glowworm grottos. We will continue onto Rotorua, where we will spend the next two nights. The arrival evening we will visit a Maori village, attend a traditional dance, and enjoy the indigenous food at a Hangi (feast). We overnight at the Rotorua YHA.

Day 10: Thu. 12 Jan. 2012. This morning in Rotorua will visit Te Puia (NZ Maori Arts & Crafts Institute and Te Whakarewarewa Thermal Reserve), Rainbow Springs Nature Park and the Agrodome. We will break for a lunch discussion from *Ghosts* and *Dogside*. After lunch we will take a hike to observe some of the geothermal landscape, return for dinner, then go for a soak in the local hot springs. We overnight at the Rotorua YHA.

Day 11: Fri. 13 Jan. 2012. We will have a breakfast discussion from *Broken* and *Ghosts*, followed by free time to explore Rotorua until lunch. We depart for Taupo at 1:15 pm. Taupo sits on the shore of Lake Taupo, New Zealand's largest lake and site of a huge volcanic eruption in AD 186. We will visit the Craters of the Moon geothermal walk this afternoon, and then return for dinner at the hostel. For those interested (optional; alternatively you can relax at the hostel), we will have another discussion from *Ghosts* as we soak at the Taupo Hot Springs Spa. We overnight at the Taupo YHA.

Day 12: Sat. 14 Jan. 2012. We will have a breakfast discussion from *Ghosts* and *Broken* at the YHA, and then take an interpretive walk around Taupo city, stopping for lunch at a local café. We depart Taupo for Napier at 1:00 pm, where we will stay at the Napier YHA for two nights. Napier sits on beautiful Hawkes Bay, is New Zealand's Art-Deco city, and hosts a flourishing wine industry. This afternoon we will take a hike to see the gannet colony at Cape Kidnappers, and then have a late dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 13: Sun. 15 Jan. 2012. We will have breakfast at the Napier YHA, with a discussion of readings from *Broken* and *Dogside*. Following breakfast, we will depart for a cycling tour of the Hawkes Bay wine region. Viticulture is quickly becoming a defining element of the New Zealand economy, and Hawkes Bay is one of two world-renown wine regions in New Zealand. We will have lunch while cycling, and will return to the hostel at 5:30 to cooperatively make dinner.

Day 14: Mon. 16 Jan. 2012. We will have a breakfast discussion of *Ghosts* at the YHA, and then you will have free time until lunch, which will be at a local café near the hostel. We depart Napier for Wellington City at 1:30 pm, arriving ~ 7:00 pm. We will get settled in to the YHA and have dinner at a local eatery on Courtney Place, Wellington's lively entertainment district near the hostel.

Day 15: Tue. 17 Jan. 2012. We will have an early breakfast at the hostel, and then take a tour of the city. We will return for lunch on the harbor front, and then spend the remainder of the afternoon at Te Papa, the national museum of New Zealand. We will discuss readings from *Ghosts* and *Broken* over dinner at Kai in the City, a Maori-owned restaurant serving traditional foods.

Day 16: Wed. 18 Jan. 2012. We will pack a lunch in the morning, and stop for a British/Kiwi-style breakfast at the Parade Café, where we will discuss readings from *Ghosts*. After breakfast we will head to Karori Sanctuary, and spend the day hiking the preserve and observing plants and animals endemic to the North Island of New Zealand. We will return to have dinner at Leuven Belgium Beer Café, and conclude the day by shopping at New World market (across from the hostel) for our supplies to take to Matiu/Somes Island.

Days 17-22: Thu. 19-24 Jan. 2010. We will have breakfast at the YHA, and then load up our belongings to head to the ferry dock for our departure to Mitiu/Somes Island Scientific and Historic Reserve. We will be staying in one of the historic buildings on the island, and will have to plan our meals and showers around the selected time intervals each day when there is electricity available. We will be conducting several activities during this week focused on understanding the plight of the endangered species found only on the island (mostly birds and insects), and in collecting data for a research project focused on identifying the mechanisms of communication in the three species of weta (a grasshopper-like insect) found on the island. We will complete the readings from *Ghosts*, *Broken*, and *Dogside*, and the authors of these texts may join us on the island to discuss your thoughts on the readings (and sign your editions). You will complete your journal entries, and your final evaluative paper while on the island, and depart for Wellington City on the afternoon of 24 January to spend your final night in Aotearoa at the YHA.

Day 23: Fri. 25 Jan. 2012. Depart the YHA for the Wellington airport, for travel back to Sioux Falls. As you will be crossing back over the International Date Line, you will actually arrive on the same day you depart, despite the 30+ of air travel.

Note

The information contained within this syllabus and course schedule is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Any changes will be communicated to participating students during class meetings and via updates to the course Moodle site.

Academic Integrity

As a community of scholars, the students and faculty at Augustana College commit to the highest standards of excellence by mutually embracing an Honor Code. The Honor Code requires that examinations and papers contain the following pledge statement to which students are expected to sign:

“On my honor, I pledge that I have upheld the Honor Code, and that the work I have done on this assignment has been honest, and that the work of others in this class has, to the best of my knowledge, been honest as well.”

Simply put, the essence of your work here is completely undone by academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: plagiarism, cribbing all or part of written work without citation, cheating on an exam, and fabricating data. (see your student handbook for a more complete list of examples). As a member of the Augustana community, the highest ethical standards are expected of you. Bottom line: Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class, and will result in a grade of zero for the assignment or test. You will also be reported to the Dean of Students, and may be suspended or dismissed from the college. Augustana's policy on academic integrity can be found at:

<http://www.augie.edu/admin/acadaff/honorsystem.html>

Disability

Augustana College seeks to maintain a supportive academic environment for students with disabilities. Any student who feels s/he may need a disability accommodation, as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act, should contact an instructor privately to discuss specific needs. Students with questions regarding disability services are welcome to contact Susan Bies at the Student Academic Support Service Office (located in the Career Center Suite, room 100 in the Edith Mortenson Center; phone 274-5503; email **susan.bies@augie.edu**.)