Description and Objectives

As one of the core courses of the Micronesian Studies Program, this seminar offers a topical, multidisciplinary approach to several key issues and problems in contemporary, postcolonial Micronesia. In critically examining these regional issues, the seminar will focus on the program core areas of cultural ecology and resource management, social and health services, political and economic development, and culture change. We will also address the complex ways in which these contemporary issues link Micronesia to a larger world system, particularly given its long colonial/neocolonial encounter with the United States. Our main objective this semester will be to gain a critical and in-depth understanding of the culturally rich and diverse Micronesian region from the perspective of its current issues and concerns.

Requirements and Expectations

This is a reading seminar which will focus largely on your informed discussion, writings, comments, and questions. Each of the seminar's 15 weeks will deal with a particular topic relevant to our inquiry into contemporary Micronesian issues and problems. Occasionally, we will also have guest speakers with expertise in various seminar topics join the Tuesday sessions. For most sessions, I will offer introductory comments on the topic and lead seminar discussions where you, as the students, will be the main discussants. It is therefore imperative to the success of the seminar that you attend all sessions and that you come prepared having read and reflected upon the assigned readings. More than one unexcused absence will result in no credit being earned for the seminar.

You will also be requested to produce a five to seven page (typewritten) summary/critical analysis of your readings and investigations for two seminar sessions of your choice in consultation with me and the other seminar participants. For these two sessions you will also be asked to give an oral presentation of the readings/writings, 15 to 20 minutes in length, and to lead the seminar discussion (beginning with Week 4, Feb. 9-11). I will hand out theme questions for each topic (a week in advance) to assist you in your written presentation, oral summary, and discussion. The written assignments must be handed in on the day of your presentations with copies for each participant. Late assignments will not be accepted. There will also be a final examination for the seminar, which will be held on the Tuesday of exam week. This will be an essay examination which will cover
all of the seminar readings and discussions. The collection of written summaries will serve as a review and study guide. Your grade will be based on your written and oral presentations, your discussions/interactions within the seminar, and the final examination.

**Readings:** Most of the sessions will have required as well as recommended readings. These reading lists are in no way exhaustive of the vast body of literature on Micronesia, rather they were chosen based on what is important, representative, and relevant to the seminar's objectives. Assigned articles will be xeroxed for you and assigned books will be available through RFK or MARC Libraries, or for purchase at Faith Bookstore, Bestseller, or through <amazon.com>. The several videos that have been assigned are available for viewing also at the RFK or MARC.

**Seminar Schedule**

**Week 1, January 21:** Introduction and Orientation

**Week 2, January 26:** Overview of the Contemporary Pacific: the Micronesian Perspective.

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**

**Week 2, January 28:** Global Climatic Change and Sea Level Warming: Implications for Micronesia. (Guest lecturer: Dr. Harley Manner)

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 3, February 2-4:** Coral Reef Ecology, and Threats to the Marine Environment in Micronesia. (Guest lecturer: Dr. Bob Richmond)

**Required Readings:**


Clive Wilkinson, "Coral reefs of the world are facing widespread devastation: Can we prevent this through sustainable management practices?" *Proceedings of the Seventh International Coral Reef Symposium, University of Guam*, 1993.


**Week 4, February 9-11:** The Culture and Politics of Historic Preservation in Micronesia.

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 5, February 16-18:** Nuclear Militarism in Micronesia.

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**

Stewart Firth, *Nuclear Playground*.


Lynn Wilson, *Speaking to Power: Gender and Politics in the Western Pacific.*

**Week 6, February 23-25:** Alcohol and Abuse Micronesia.

**Required Readings:**


Micronesian Seminar, *Too High!*, Video No. 8.

**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 7, March 2-4:** Suicide in Micronesia (Guest Lecturer: Dr. Don Rubinstein)

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**
Ann Q. Lynn and Blair W. Sparks (eds.) *Death by suicide in Guam and Micronesia: A collection of studies on suicide by students at the University of Guam*, 1985.

**Week 8, March 11:** Language in Micronesia: Issues of Change, Loss, and Survival. (Holiday — March 9)

**Required Readings:**


__________, “Literacy in Micronesia.” *ISLA* 1:2, Dry Season, 1992.

**Week 9, March 16-18:** Changing Gender Relations in Micronesia.

**Required Readings:**


Recommended Readings:

Week 10, March 23-25: Health and Health Care in Micronesia.

Required Readings:

Recommended Viewing:

Week 11, April 6-8: Re-negotiating the Compacts of Free Association: The Politics of (In)dependency and Development.

Required Readings:
Aurelia Brazeal and Allen Stayman, Testimony of Aurelia E. Brazeal, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs; and statement by Alen P. Stayman, Director of Office of Insular Affairs, to the House Committee on International Relations, 1996.

Government of the U.S., and Government of FSM, Agreement between the Government of the U.S. and the Government of the FSM regarding friendship, cooperation, and mutual security concluded pursuant to Sections 321 and 323 of the CFA.


**Week 12, April 13-15:** Custom and Tradition in the Context of Micronesian Nation-Building.

**Required Readings:**
Alain Babadzan, Kastom and Nation-Building in the South Pacific. (n.d.)


Donald R. Shuster, "Custom Versus a New Elite," *JPH*

**Week 13, April 20-22:** Small Island Economies: Are they Sustainable?

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Readings:**

**Week 14, April 27-29:** Migration in Micronesia.

**Required Readings:**


**Week 15, May 4-6:** Negotiating Culture and Identity in Postcolonial Micronesia.

**Required Readings:**
Juliana Flinn, "We Still have our Customs: Being Pulapese," *Cultural Identity and Ethnicity in the Pacific*, Jocelyn Linnekin and Lin Poyer, eds., 1990


**Week 16, May 11-13:** Cultural Continuity in the Face of Change.

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Reading:**

**Week 17, May 17-19:** Final Examination.