

THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENT 2022 COLLOQUIUM SERIES  
PRESENTS:

**Serious Monkey Business: Ethnoprimateology and  
its Role in Integrating the Subfields of Anthropology**

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November 3, 2022, 3:00 p.m., Crawford Hall 115



Anthropologists and others have tended to view humans as a part of nature in terms of evolution, but apart from nature in ecology. Traditionally, in field primatology any human influence on non-human primate populations was considered to be an unnatural disturbance. Ethnoprimateology challenges this discrepancy and offers a provocative alternative perspective with humans as part of community ecology. Comparing the behavior and ecology of coexisting human and nonhuman primate societies in the same area can elucidate the human niche.

Ethnoprimateology also considers the influence of culture in human and nonhuman primate interrelationships within the home range of the latter. In some places they have coexisted for centuries or even millennia. This perspective has applied as well as basic research relevance. It can be crucial in promoting primate conservation since humans increasingly encroach on their range.

Ethnoprimateology raises elemental, pivotal, provocative, and heuristic questions like the place of humans in nature. It can challenge unproductive dualisms such as natural/unnatural. Lastly, it can integrate aspects of two or more of the subfields of anthropology, biology and anthropology, and even the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities.

**Leslie E. Sponsel** earned the B.A. in geology from Indiana University, and the M.A. and Ph.D. from Cornell University specializing in biological anthropology. In 1981 he was hired at the University of Hawai'i in Manoa to develop and direct the Ecological Anthropology Program. He retired early in August 2010 to devote full-time to research and publishing.

Sponsel began his anthropological career with primatology through field research in the Colombian Amazon with squirrel monkeys and in Ethiopia with vervet monkeys before changing directions. Much later while researching cultural ecology in southern Thailand he observed the custom of using macaque monkeys trained to pick coconuts and published an account with Thai colleagues. He was invited to contribute the chapter "The Human Niche in Amazonia" in Warren G. Kinzey's edited book *New World Primates: Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior*. Most surprisingly, that chapter initiated the whole new research arena of ethnoprimateology. In 2020 he wrote an invited Foreword to the coedited book *Neotropical Ethnoprimateology: Indigenous Peoples' Perceptions of and Interactions with Nonhuman Primates*.

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