

Geography 01:450:419
Advanced Conservation and Use of Natural Resources
Spring Semester, 2008

Instructor: Trevor Birkenholtz
Office: B-218 Lucy Stone Hall (Livingston Campus)
Office Phone: (732) 445-2445
Email: trevbirk@rci.rutgers.edu
Office Hours: By appointment only

Class Time: M-W: 1:40 – 3:00
Location: LSH-B120 (Livingston Campus)

Required Materials (available at Livingston Campus Bookstore and on reserve at Kilmer Library)

Robbins, Paul. 2004. *Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction*. London: Blackwell. (ISBN: 1405102667)

Murray Li, Tania. 2007. *The Will to Improve: Government, Development and the Practice of Politics*. (ISBN: 0822340275)

Additional readings will be made available on Sakai and/or I will provide them directly via email.

Course Description & Organization

This course examines the relationship between people and nature through the broadly defined lens of Political Ecology. Political Ecology is a multi-disciplinary approach, spanning Geography, Anthropology and Political Science (among other cognate fields), to the study of access to and control over resources. The field involves an analysis of the social institutions and environmental conditions through which access to resources is mediated. As an evolving field, it frames resource systems within complex networks of processes – political institutions, political economy, globalization, gender/race relations, socially produced discourses/knowledges, and nonhuman agents – to understand the ways that these multiple processes impact the interaction of humans with the nonhuman world.

Historically the discipline has been advanced and deployed in the Global South to understand development processes and livelihood systems. More recently however, the approach is being employed by researchers in the Global North to address questions of conservation, environmental degradation, urbanization, and environmental justice and governance. Therefore, it is a very dynamic field.

This course explores the fields' origins and will apply its analytical tools to a collection of case studies drawn from both the Global North and Global South.

Course Evaluation

20%	Attendance/participation	
40%	Midterm essay exams (two exams worth 20% each)	
40%	Final Paper Project:	
	5% Project Proposal	Due March 26
	10% Project Presentation	Due Weeks of April 21 & 28
	25% Final Paper	Due Last Day of Class: Monday, May 5

Attendance/Participation

This is an upper level course that is designed as a seminar. I expect everyone to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Therefore, attendance and participation is very important. This is worth 20% of the course grade.

Midterm Exams

Exam I	Handed Out in Class: March 5	Due via <u>email</u> (5 pm): March 10
Exam II	Handed Out via email: April 16	Due via <u>email</u> (5 pm): April 21

Final Paper Project

Each participant in this course is required to prepare a final paper project that focuses on the political ecology of conservation, use, and/or representation (politics) of natural resources. The project may be situated in the Global North or South, and may be urban or rural. The goal of the paper project is to challenge participants to explore a political ecological topic of interest by researching the issue and interpreting, analyzing, synthesizing, and comparing and contrasting the competing views (inspired through your research) on that particular topic. In short, it will allow you to engage critically in a project of your making. This should be of your own work. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. **No late papers will be accepted.** This project will be developed in three phases.

First, each participant will prepare a 2 page project proposal statement by Monday, March 31. This is worth 5% of the course grade. The statement should include: 1) a clear statement of the problem/topic to be analyzed (in the form of a research question); 2) an explanation of the ways that this topic connects with the course readings; and 3) a summary of the sources that you will draw on in your analysis.

Second, each participant will give a 15-20 minute oral presentation of their project to the seminar during the weeks of April 21st and 28th. This is worth 10% of the course grade. Participants will be required to respond with questions and comments in an effort to improve participants' projects.

Third, final papers are due the last day of class on Monday, May 5. The papers will be: 1) 12-15 pages in length; 2) double spaced; and 3) 12 point Times New Roman Font. Proper use of citations is required. We will go over this and how to use library research resources in class.

Topic and Reading Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction: January 23

Introductions

Week 2: What is Political Ecology?: January 28, 30

1/28: "Natural Hazards": (Watts 1983)

1/30: Robbins Intro, & Ch. 1

Video: *The Trade Trap or Empty Oceans, Empty Nets*

Week 3: Political Ecology's History and its Toolbox: February 4, 6

2/4: History: Robbins Ch. 2

2/6: Toolbox: Robbins Ch. 3 & 4

Week 4: Representing Nature, February 11, 13

2/11: Destruction of Nature: Robbins Ch. 5

2/13: Socially Constructed Nature: Robbins Ch. 6

Video: *Second Nature*

Week 5: Nature in Conflict, February 18, 20

2/18: Degradation and Marginalization: Robbins Ch. 7

2/20: Conservation and Environmental Conflict: Robbins Ch. 8 & 9

Week 6: The Way Forward, February 25, 27

2/25: Identity and Social Movements: Robbins Ch. 10

2/26: Where to Now?: Robbins Ch. 11 & (Robbins, Polderman et al. 2001)

Week 7: Neoliberalism and the Enclosure of Resources, March 3, 5

3/3: Neolib. & Enclosure: (Heynen, McCarthy et al. 2007) (Robbins and Luginbuhl 2005)

3/5: Fish and Water: (Mansfield 2004; Swyngedouw 2005)

*****Exam I: Distributed March 5, Due March 10**

Week 8: Politics of Climate Change, March 10, 12

(Karl and Trenberth 2003; Trenberth, Moore et al. 2006)

Video: *An Inconvenient Truth*

Week 9: Spring Break: March 17, 19

Spring Break: Relax Responsibly

Week 10: Green Governmentality, Devolution and the State, March 24, 26

3/24: (Li 2007): Introduction - Chapter 2

3/26: No Class – MaGrann Conference

Week 11: Green Governmentality Continued, March 31, April 2

3/31: Li Chapters 3 – 5 (Project Proposal Statement Due)

4/02: Li Chapters 6 - Conclusion

Week 12: Environmental Knowledge & Social Power, April 7, 9

4/07: Expertise: (Birkenholtz 2008)

4/09: Social Power & Subjectivity: (Agrawal 2005)

Week 13: Resistance, April 14, 16

4/14: New Social Movements: (Cupples, Glynn et al. 2007)

4/16: No Class – Association of American Geographers Annual Meeting

*****Exam II: Distributed April 14, Due April 21**

Week 14: Student Presentations, April 21, 23

Presentations

Week 15: Student Presentations, April 28, 30

Presentations

Week 16: May 5

Course Conclusion

Final Papers Due in Class

Reading List

- Agrawal, A. (2005). "Environmentality: Community, Intimate Government, and the Making of Environmental Subjects in Kumaon, India." Current Anthropology 46(2): 161-190.
- Birkenholtz, T. (2008). "Contesting Expertise: The Politics of Environmental Knowledge in Northern Indian Groundwater Practices." Geoforum 39: 466-482.
- Cupples, J., K. Glynn and I. Larios (2007). "Hybrid cultures of postdevelopment: The struggle for popular hegemony in rural Nicaragua." Annals Of The Association Of American Geographers 97(4): 786-801.
- Heynen, N., J. McCarthy, S. Prudham, et al. (2007). Introduction: False Promises. Neoliberal Environments: False Promises and unnatural consequences. N. Heynen, J. McCarthy, S. Prudham and P. Robbins. London and New York, Routledge.
- Karl, T. R. and K. E. Trenberth (2003). "Modern global climate change." Science 302(5651): 1719-1723.
- Li, T. M. (2007). The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics. Durham, Duke University Press.
- Mansfield, B. (2004). "Neoliberalism in the oceans: 'rationalization,' property rights, and the commons question." Geoforum 35: 313-326.
- Robbins, P. and A. Luginbuhl (2005). "The last enclosure: resisting privatization of wildlife in the western United States." Capitalism, Nature, Socialism 16(1): 1-17.
- Robbins, P., A. Polderman and T. Birkenholtz (2001). "Lawns and toxins - An ecology of the city." Cities 18(6): 369-380.
- Swyngedouw, E. (2005). "Dispossessing H2O: The Contested Terrain of Water Privatization." Capitalism, Nature, Socialism 16(1): 81-98.
- Trenberth, K. E., B. Moore, T. R. Karl, et al. (2006). "Monitoring and prediction of the earth's climate: A future perspective." Journal Of Climate 19(20): 5001-5008.
- Watts, M. (1983). On the poverty of theory: natural hazards research in context. Interpretations of Calamity. K. Hewitt. Boston, Allan and Unwin: 231-262.