

* NB: Always “under construction”

ENVS 450/550: POLITICAL ECOLOGY

Winter 2007

Monday/Wednesday 10:00-11:20, 204 Villard

Professor Peter Walker, Dept. of Geography, 107J Condon Hall, pwalker@uoregon.edu
GTF Diana Fischetti, Environmental Studies, 6 Pacific Hall, dfischet@uoregon.edu

Political ecology examines the politics (in the broadest sense of the word) of the environment. Whereas environmental politics courses often focus on the role of government and interest groups in shaping specific environmental policies, political ecology expands our understanding of ‘politics’ to examine the roles of: 1) environmental rhetoric (‘discourse’), ideology, and knowledge; 2) politics and environmental change; 3) economic systems (including ‘globalization’); 4) gender-based dimensions of resource ownership and use; 5) and everyday struggles within communities and households (including ‘community’-based resource management) as they shape human relationships with nature. Although much of the political ecology literature comes from studies of the less-developed ‘third world,’ this course also examines the political ecology of the ‘first world.’

Course requirements:

This is a reading-intensive course, with about 50-60 pages of required reading per class, much of it from academic journals. The materials must be read thoroughly prior to class. *Students who are unable to meet this requirement should not enroll in the class.*

Students will hand in written responses to each reading at the beginning of each class, and will take turns leading discussion (in pairs). Students will also be required to submit a 10-12 page (maximum) term paper that applies at least one set of concepts from the course to a real-world environmental problem chosen by the student. There are no examinations. Course grades will be assigned according to the following weights: reading responses—25%; classroom attendance and participation (including reading presentations)—25%; term paper—50%.

The textbook for this course is Robbins’ *Political Ecology*, which is available at the UO Bookstore now. Additional readings will be posted on the class Blackboard web page.



Above: Poor women in Nigeria seize ChevronTexaco facility and win major concessions (July 2002)

COURSE OUTLINE & READINGS

INTRODUCTION

January 8 – Introduction

I. WHAT IS POLITICAL ECOLOGY?

January 10 – The hatchet and the seed

Robbins, Paul. 2004. Political ecology: a critical introduction. Ch. 1, “The hatchet and the seed: what is political ecology?”

Benjaminsen, T. A., R. Rohde, E. Sjaastad, P. Wisborg, and T. Lebert. 2006. Land reform, range ecology, and carrying capacities in Namaqualand, South Africa. *Annals Of The Association Of American Geographers* 96 (3):524-540.

January 17 – Critical tools

Robbins, Paul. 2004. Political ecology: a critical introduction. Ch. 3, “The critical tools” (pp. 40-70)

Kull, C. A. 2002. Madagascar's burning issue: The persistent conflict over fire. *Environment* 44 (3):8-19.

January 22 – A field crystallizes

Robbins, Paul. 2004. Political ecology: a critical introduction. Ch. 4, “A field crystallizes” (pp. 71-83)

Bassett, T. J. 2005. Card-carrying hunters, rural poverty, and wildlife decline in northern Cote d'Ivoire. *Geographical Journal* 171:24-35.

Moseley, W. G. 2005. Global cotton and local environmental management: the political small-hold farmers ecology of rich and poor in southern Mali. *Geographical Journal* 171:36-55.

II. CONCEPTUAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

January 24

Robbins, Paul. 2004. Political ecology: a critical introduction. Ch. 5, “Destruction of nature: human impact and environmental degradation” (pp. 87-106).

Fairhead, James, and Melissa Leach. 1995. False history, complicit social analysis: rethinking some West African environmental narratives. *World Development* 23 (6):1023-1035.

January 29

Robbins, Paul. 2004. Political ecology: a critical introduction. Ch. 6, "Construction of nature: environmental knowledges and imaginaries" (pp. 107-126).

Robbins, P. 2006. The politics of barstool biology: Environmental knowledge and power in greater Northern Yellowstone. *Geoforum* 37 (2):185-199.

III. POLITICAL ECOLOGY NOW

January 31 – Degradation and marginalization

Robbins, Paul. 2004. Political ecology: a critical introduction. Ch. 7, "Degradation and marginalization" (pp. 126-146).

Awanyo, L. 2001. Labor, ecology, and a failed agenda of market incentives: The political ecology of agrarian reforms in Ghana. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 91 (1):92-121.

February 5 – Regeneration and empowerment

Becker, Constance Dustin. 2003. Grassroots to grassroots: why forest preservation was rapid at Loma Alta, Ecuador. *World Development* 31 (1):163-176.

Hecht, S. B., S. Kandel, I. Gomes, N. Cuellar, and H. Rosa. 2006. Globalization, forest resurgence, and environmental politics in El Salvador. *World Development* 34 (2):308-323.

February 7 – Conservation and control

Robbins, Paul. 2004. Political ecology: a critical introduction. Ch. 8, "Conservation and control" (pp. 147-171).

Nygren, A. 2004. Contested lands and incompatible images: The political ecology of struggles over resources in Nicaragua's Indio-Maiz reserve. *Society & Natural Resources* 17 (3):189-205.

February 12 – Conservation and control Part 2

Archabald, K., and L. Naughton-Treves. 2001. Tourism revenue-sharing around national parks in Western Uganda: early efforts to identify and reward local communities. *Environmental Conservation* 28 (2):135-149.

Adams, William M., and Mark Infield. 2003. Who is on the gorilla's payroll? Claims on Tourist Revenue from a Ugandan National Park. *World Development* 31 (1):177-190.

February 14 – Environmental conflict

Robbins, Paul. 2004. Political ecology: a critical introduction. Ch. 9, "Environmental conflict" (pp. 172-186).

Le Billon, P. 2006. Fatal transactions: Conflict diamonds and the (anti) terrorist consumer. *Antipode* 38 (4):778-801.

February 19 – Environmental conflict Part 2

Le Billon, P. 2001. The political ecology of war: natural resources and armed conflicts. *Political Geography* 20 (5):561-584.

Watts, M. J. 2005. Righteous oil? Human rights, the oil complex, and corporate social responsibility. *Annual Review Of Environment And Resources* 30:373-407.

February 21 – Environmental identity and social movements

Robbins, Paul. 2004. Political ecology: a critical introduction. Ch. 10, "Environmental identity and social movement" (pp. 187-201).

Ishiyama, N. 2003. Environmental justice and American Indian tribal sovereignty: Case study of a land-use conflict in skull valley, Utah. *Antipode* 35 (1):119-139.

IV. REGIONAL POLITICAL ECOLOGY

February 26 – China

Muldavin, J. 2000. The paradoxes of environmental policy and resource management in reform-era China. *Economic Geography* 76 (3):244-271.

Blaikie, P. M., and J. S. S. Muldavin. 2004. Upstream, downstream, China, India: The politics of environment in the Himalayan region. *Annals Of The Association Of American Geographers* 94 (3):520-548.

February 28 – The American West

Sayre, N. 1999. The cattle boom in southern Arizona: Towards a critical political ecology. *Journal of the Southwest* 41 (2):239-271.

Sheridan, T. E. 2001. Cows, condos, and the contested commons: The political ecology of ranching on the Arizona-Sonora borderlands. *Human Organization* 60 (2):141-152.

March 5 – The American West Part 2

Walker, Peter A., and Louise P. Fortmann. 2003. Whose landscape? A political ecology of the 'exurban' Sierra. *Cultural Geographies* 10 (4):469-491.

Walker, P. A., and P. T. Hurley. 2004. Collaboration derailed: The politics of "community-based" resource management in Nevada County. *Society & Natural Resources* 17 (8):735-751.

March 7 – The American West Part 3

Gosnell, H., J. H. Haggerty, and W. R. Travis. 2006. Ranchland ownership change in the greater yellowstone ecosystem, 1990-2001: Implications for conservation. *Society & Natural Resources* 19 (8):743-758.

Haggerty, J. H., and W. R. Travis. 2006. Out of administrative control: Absentee owners, resident elk and the shifting nature of wildlife management in southwestern Montana. *Geoforum* 37 (5):816-830.

V. BRINGING IT HOME: CONSCIOUSNESS IN A GLOBAL CONSUMER SOCIETY

March 12 – Fair trade

Goodman, M. K. 2004. Reading fair trade: political ecological imaginary and the moral economy of fair trade foods. *Political Geography* 23 (7):891-915.

Klooster, D. 2006. Environmental certification of forests in Mexico: The political ecology of a nongovernmental market intervention. *Annals Of The Association Of American Geographers* 96 (3):541-565.

March 14 – Urban political ecology

Robbins, P., and J. T. Sharp. 2003. Producing and consuming chemicals: The moral economy of the American lawn. *Economic Geography* 79 (4):425-451.

Robbins, P., and J. Sharp. 2003. The lawn-chemical economy and its discontents. *Antipode* 35 (5):955-979.