

The Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change: Syllabus

16:920:575:01

Instructor: Tom Rudel

Class meetings: Thursdays, beginning October 25th, 9:50AM to 12:30PM, Davison Hall 128

Course Credits: 1.5

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Office Hours: Mondays, 2:00-3:30PM and by Appointment.

Substantive Focus: During the past half century the human impact on our larger biophysical environment has grown to the point where we are now, by general acknowledgement, living in the ‘Anthropocene’, a geological era in which humans have become a key driver in the Earth’s system. In response, scholars, disciplines, universities, and other organizations have developed subfields, centers, funding programs, and intellectual approaches to investigate how humans interact with their natural environment. In this course we review what social scientists have done to better understand the human dimensions of environmental change. Each week we will analyze a different social scientific approach to the study of environmental issues. These classes should expand your intellectual toolkit. If they introduce you to an approach that you later go on to use in your own work, then the course will have been a success! The more specific objectives of the course are outlined below.

Course Objectives: Help the members of the class

1. become conversant in the major theoretical traditions used to study the political economy of the environment at local, regional, and global scales.
2. appreciate the major differences in environment – society relations between the Global South and the Global North.
3. understand the social dynamics that generate environmental injustices at local, regional, and global scales.
4. assess the capacity of the different strands of the environmental movement to effect meaningful change in environment – society relations.
5. recognize the regulatory patterns that governments use in attempting to control major polluters.
6. characterize the social conditions that enable states, under NGO pressures, to scale up the level of environmental governance

Requirements:

The course requirements are designed to help students meet the objectives outlined above. To these ends, the students will have to (1) lead a class discussion on a week of their own choosing,

(2) participate in class discussions, and (3) write four discussion papers (~5-6 pages each), one of which will focus on your own special interests in the human dimensions of environmental change. Your participation in class discussions, as a leader and as a contributor, will count for 20% of the final grade. We will set up a schedule about who will lead which class at our first class meeting.

The four short papers will account for 80% of your grade. If you are carrying out a semester long research project in concert with Norah MacKendrick's 'Food and the Environment' course, then you will only have to write two short papers for this course. In this circumstance the semester long research paper will count for 40% of your grade in this course. I will hand the topics for the short papers beginning during the first week and the papers will be due two weeks later. These papers will ask you to (1) to describe arguments in the readings and (2) evaluate them on both theoretical and empirical grounds.

Readings

All of the readings listed below are required for the course. There are three books to purchase. Freudenburg, Wm. and R. Gramling, 2010. *Blowout in the Gulf*; Guha, Ramachandra, 2000, *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya*; Markowitz, Gerald and David Rosner, 2003. *Deceit and Denial: The Deadly Politics of Industrial Pollution*. All of the other readings for the course are .pdfs that I will upload to the course website later in the semester.

Schedule of Readings and Discussions

Week 1 (October 25th): The Treadmill of Production and Ecological Modernization

Readings: Markowitz, Gerald and David Rosner, 2003. *Deceit and Denial: The Deadly Politics of Industrial Pollution*, pp. 1-233; Pulver, Simone, N. Hultman and L. Guimaraes. 2010. Carbon Market Participation by Sugar Mills in Brazil. *Climate and Development*. 2(3):248-262.

Week 2 (November 1st): Political Ecology / Environmental Injustice / Defensive Environmentalism

Readings: Markowitz and Rosner, 'Ol' Man River or Cancer Alley?' *Deceit and Denial* Pp. 234-262; Dauvergne, Peter, 1998. Globalization and Deforestation in the Asia-Pacific. *Environmental Politics*, 7(4):113-134.

Week 3 (November 8th): Land Cover Change: Sprawl and Deforestation

Readings: Logan, John and H. Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: the Political Economy of Place*, preface to the updated edition; Guha, Ramachandra, 2000, *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya*, pp. 1-8, 35-137.

Week 4 (November 15th): Common Pool Resources and Common Property Institutions

Readings: Berkes, Fikret, 2006, T. Hughes, R. Steneck, J. Wilson. D. Bellwood, B. Crona, C. Folke, L. Gunderson, H. Leslie, J. Norberg, M. Nystrom, P. Olsson, H. Osterblom, M. Scheffer, B. Worm. Globalization, roving bandits, and marine resources. *Science*. 311:1557-1558. Princen, Thomas. 2005. Monhegan lobstering: Self-management meets co-management. *The Logic of Sufficiency*, pp. 223-290.

Week 5 (November 20th): Normal Accidents, Disasters, and Resilience

Readings: Perrow, Charles. 1984 (1999) *Normal Accidents: Living with High Risk Technologies*, pp. 101-123; Freudenburg, Wm. and R. Gramling, 2010. *Blowout in the Gulf*, pp. 1-61. Farmer. Tim Schwartz, 2011. First, we need taxis. Pp.342-355 in Paul Farmer, *Haiti: After the Earthquake*. Jedane Sedky, 2011. Building back better. Pp. 363-372 in Paul Farmer, *Haiti: After the Earthquake*.

Week 6 (November 29th): Coupled Natural and Human Systems

Readings: Coughenour, C. Milton. 2003. Innovating Conservation Agriculture: The Case of No-till Cropping. *Rural Sociology* 68(2):278-304. Carlson, Kimberly et al. 2012. Committed carbon emissions, deforestation, and community land conversion from oil palm plantation expansion in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.1200452109.

Week 7 (December 6th): Globalization and the Paths to Global Environmental Reform

Readings: Stern, Paul. 2012. Fear and Hope in Climate Messages. *Nature – Climate Change*. Nepstad, Daniel C. et al. 2006. Globalization of the Amazon Soy and Beef Industries: Opportunities for Conservation. *Conservation Biology*. 20(6): 1595-1603; Ostrom, Elinor. 2010. Polycentric Systems for Coping with Collective Action and Global Environmental Change. *Global Environmental Change*. 20(4): 550–57.