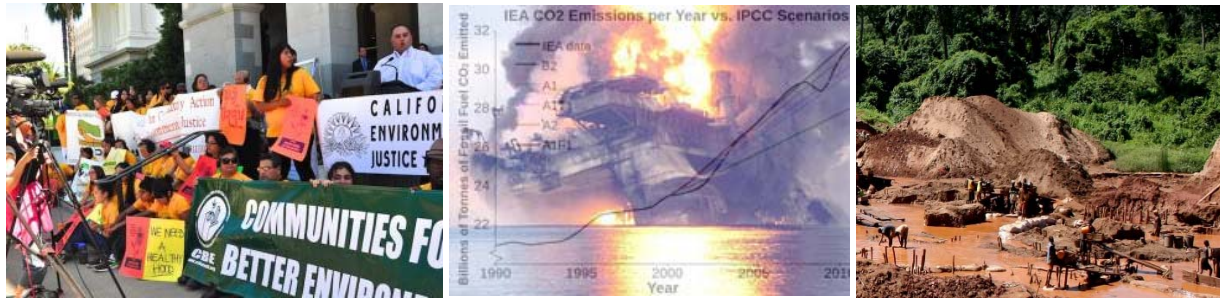


# GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS



Geography 138

July 7<sup>th</sup> – August 13<sup>th</sup>

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 11:30-2:00, 143 McCone

Instructor: Aharon de Grassi, [adegrassi@berkeley.edu](mailto:adegrassi@berkeley.edu)

Office Hours: Thursday, 2:15-3:15 pm, 197 McCone (and by appointment)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course addresses the important and complex relationships between societies and environments. It will examine how such relationships are shaped by political, economic, and cultural processes that are both historical and geographical. Some of these processes include trade, property systems, and representations of nature, race and gender. Material includes examples from Europe, Asia, the Americas, and Africa. The course begins by using case studies to understand key theories and concepts, then turns to the question of knowledge, power, and identity before concluding with a focus on advocacy. The aim is for students to develop critical thinking with regard to the multiple drivers, dynamics, and understandings of environmental issues. The course considers questions such as who is portraying which environments, in which ways, why, and with which effects? The first part of the course provides a broad introduction to key theories, grounded in examples of population, two examples of oil extraction, and climate change. The middle part of the course 'zooms in' in order to deepen and apply the approaches from Part I through a consideration of deforestation, conservation, mining, race, gender, and violence. Lastly, we will then use these deeper understandings in Part III of the course as we zoom back out to consider China and questions of advocacy.

## GRADING

Attendance	10%	
Participation	10%	
Reading Presentation	5%	dates vary
Quiz	15%	Tuesday, July 28 <sup>th</sup>
Abstract & Bibliography	10%	Thursday, July 30 <sup>th</sup>
Final paper	45%	Tuesday, August 11 <sup>th</sup>
Paper presentation	5%	Wednesday and Thursday, August 12 <sup>th</sup> & 13 <sup>th</sup>

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Given that different students learn different sorts of materials in different ways, the course engages multiple methods of teaching and learning. In addition to the standard lecture, there will be group work, peer reviews, short exercises, audio and visual pieces, and group and class discussion. It is essential to participate in all of these. We as humans are complex creatures, and pushing learning in different ways helps us to reflect on our complexity and differing advantages and limits.

### Attendance & Discussion

Students are expected to attend all the classes and to arrive on time. Repeated absences without legitimate documented reasons will result in 5% reduction of the course grade for each absence.

Your active participation in discussion is a key component of this course. The summer schedule is condensed, and consequently it is crucial that students keep up with the concepts and material in the course – discussion is one of the most important ways to do this because it allows students to clarify, compare, and deepen their understanding.

### Readings

Course materials are available as pdf downloads from Bcourses and also as a reader from Vick Copy at 1879 Euclid Avenue.

Readings must be done prior to lecture. Given the limited time, I will not be summarizing the readings in any depth, but rather class lecture will work through key concepts and arguments exemplified and discussed in the readings - the class sessions will be the opportunity to ask questions in order to clarify readings *that you have already read in advance* for that day. Readings will also form the basis of some group exercises in class, therefore it is imperative to have read the materials beforehand.

At the end of each Thursday, I will give an overview of the next week's readings. There are different types of written materials, and different ways of reading, and I strongly encourage you to both explore these and to come speak with me regarding any challenges or interest in the readings. While critically reading the materials for the class, students should ask themselves, what is the author's main argument, who and what is the author responding to, how is the argument structured, what sorts of material is the author drawing on, are there relevant issues that the author does not address or which contradict the

argument. The readings are provided both to inform students and for students to critically evaluate. The readings are NOT presented as absolute truth.

### Reading Presentation

Groups of 3 students will make short (6 minute) presentations each class of the readings for that day (beginning July 15<sup>th</sup>). It is up to students to decide how to organize the presentation, but it should include *brief* statements of what you think are the 2 most important or interesting points in the readings, 2 questions or critiques, and 2 related current events.

### Quiz

A quiz with several short-answer questions will be given during the middle of the course in order to assess students' understanding of the lectures and reading materials.

### Paper Proposal & Bibliography

In order to ensure progress and focus in the final paper, students will first submit a short 1-page proposal summarizing their paper topic, argument, and evidence, as well as a list of several academic references to be used in support of their argument.

### Final Paper

Students will write a final research paper of 8-10 pages (double spaced) on a topic of their choosing that addresses a specific theme related to the course. Further details will be provided.

### Paper Presentation

Students will make a short 5 minute presentation of their final research paper. The presentation should state the main question, argument, evidence, and may include audio/visual materials (but that is not necessary).

## **PLAGARISM**

Academic honesty is a highly important in this class and University. Disciplinary action with serious consequences will be taken if there is academic misconduct. If you are experiencing overwhelming stress or too much pressure, please come talk with me sooner rather than later. See the following website for clarification on proper citation rules, writing style, and grammar:

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/instruct/guides/citations.html>

## **ACCOMODATION**

If you need special arrangements, please send me an email or speak with me privately after class or in office hours. It is important to speak with me sooner rather than in order to be able to accommodate you in an appropriate and timely manner.

## COURSE SCHEDULE & READINGS

### PART I

#### WEEK 1

Tuesday, July 7<sup>th</sup> : Introduction & Course Overview

Wednesday, July 8<sup>th</sup> : Introduction

- Readings: Chabal, Patrick (1983) *Amílcar Cabral: Revolutionary Leadership and People's War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 35-39, 46-53.
- Robbins, Paul (2012) "Political versus Apolitical Ecologies," in *Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 11-24.
- Bridge, G. et al (2015) "Editor's Introduction," in Perreault, T. et al (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of Political Ecology*, London: Routledge, pp. 1-11.

Thursday, July 9<sup>th</sup> : Malthus

- Readings: Foster, John Bellamy (1998) "Malthus' 'Essay on Population' at Age 200: A Marxian View," *Monthly Review* 50(7).
- Davis, Mike (2004) "The Political Ecology of Famine: The Origins of the Third World," in Richard Peet and Michael Watts (eds) *Liberation Ecologies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, London: Routledge, pp. 44-57.

Guest Lecture: Meleiza Figueroa

#### WEEK 2

Tuesday July 14<sup>th</sup> : Oil, Resource Curse, and the Niger Delta

- Reading: Watts, Michael (2012) "A Tale of Two Gulfs: Life, Death, and Dispossession along Two Oil Frontiers," *American Quarterly* 64(3): 437-467.
- Bridge, Gavin (2011) "Past Peak Oil: Political Economy of Energy Crises," in Peet, R. et al. (eds) *Global Political Ecology*, London: Routledge, pp. 307-325.

Guest Lecture: Elias Courson

Film: *Sweet Crude*

Wednesday July 15<sup>th</sup> : Theories Part I

- Readings:       Blaikie, Piers (1985) "The Issues Addressed," in *The Political Ecology of Soil Erosion*, London: Longman, pp. 1-11.
- Robbins, Paul (2012) "A Tree with Deep Roots" and "The Critical Tools," in *Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 25-48, 49-81.
- Keywords:       Enclosure, Environmental Determinism, Commodity, Capitalism, Historical Materialism

Thursday July 16<sup>th</sup> : Theories Part II

- Reading:        Watts, Michael, and Richard Peet (2004) "Liberating Political Ecology," in *Liberation Ecologies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, London: Routledge, pp. 3-26, especially pp. 12-26.
- Keywords:       Modernity, Post-Structuralism, Governmentality

**WEEK 3**

Tuesday July 21<sup>st</sup> : Climate Change

- Readings:       Klein, Naomi (2014) Interview, *Der Spiegel*, February 25.
- Klein, Naomi (2014) "Introduction: One Way or Another, Everything Changes," in *This Changes Everything*, New York: Penguin, pdf pp 4-20, or mp3.
- Peet, Richard, et al. (2011) "Global Nature," in Peet, R. et al. (eds) *Global Political Ecology*, London: Routledge, pp. 1-30.
- Solnit, Rebecca (2006) "The Uses of Disaster," *Harpers*.
- Keywords:       Scale

## PART II

### Wednesday July 22<sup>nd</sup> : Expertise & Practice

Readings: Leach, Melissa and Robin Mearns (1996) "Challenging Received Wisdom in Africa," in *The Lie of the Land: Challenging Received Wisdom on the African Environment*, Oxford: James Currey, pp. 1-33.

Fairhead, James, and Melissa Leach (1995) "False Forest History, Complicit Social Analysis: Rethinking Some West African Environmental Narratives," *World Development* 23(6): 1023-1035.

Robbins, Paul (2012) "Amazonian Deforestation," in *Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 162-7.

Keywords: Reflexivity, Positivism

Film: *Second Nature*

\*\* FEEDBACK \*\*

### Thursday July 23<sup>rd</sup> : Conservation, Race & Power

Readings: Kosek, Jake (2006) "Racial Degradation and Environmental Anxieties," in *Understories: The Political Life of Forests in Northern New Mexico*, Duke University Press, pp. 142-182.

Neuman, Roderick (1997) "Primitive Ideas: Protected Area Buffer Zones and the Politics of Land in Africa," *Development and Change* 28(3): 559-582.

## WEEK 4

### Tuesday July 28<sup>th</sup> : Provincializing Political Ecology

\*\* QUIZ \*\*

Readings: Burgis, Tom (2015) "The Steinmetz Affair," *Financial Times*, 4 Podcasts, <http://www.ft.com/intl/indepth/the-steinmetz-affair>

Orwell, George (1946) "Politics and the English language," *Horizon* (London): April.

Bebbington, Tony "At the Boundaries of *La Política*: Political Ecology, Policy Networks and Moments of Government," in Perreault, T. et al (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of Political Ecology*, London: Routledge, 198-9.

Braun, Bruce "From Critique to Experiment?" in Perreault, T. et al (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of Political Ecology*, London: Routledge, 102-3.

Lawhorn, Mary, et al. (2014) "Provincializing Urban Political Ecology: Towards a Situated UPE through African Urbanism," *Antipode* 46(2): 497-516.

Wednesday July 29<sup>th</sup> : The City & Environmental Racism

Reading: Pulido, Laura. "Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California." In *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 90, No. 1 (March 2000), pp. 12-40.

Thursday July 30<sup>th</sup> : Gender

\*\* PAPER PROPOSALS DUE \*\*

Readings: Robbins, Paul (2012) "Breaking Open the Household: Feminist Development Studies," in *Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 63-65.

Muthuki, Janet (2006) "Challenging Patriarchal Structures: Wangari Maathai and the Green Belt Movement in Kenya," *Agenda*, pp. 83-91.

**WEEK 5:**

Tuesday August 4<sup>th</sup>: Resource Conflicts

Readings: Reading: Peluso, Nancy Lee, and Michael Watts (2001) "Violent Environments," in *Violent Environments*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 3-30.

Wolfe, Lauren (2015) "How Dodd-Frank is Failing Congo," *Foreign Policy*, February 2.

Film: *The Burning Season*

## PART III

### Wednesday August 5th: China

- Reading: Shapiro, Judith (2012) "Introduction: The Big Picture," in *China's Environmental Challenges*, Cambridge: Polity, pp. 1-32 (and possibly 33-56).
- Chen, Jia-Ching (2013) "Sustainable Territories: Rural Dispossession, Land Enclosures and the Construction of Environmental Resources in China," *Human Geography* 6(1): 102-118.
- Yeh, Emily (2015) "Political Ecology in and of China," in Raymond Bryant (ed) *The International Handbook of Political Ecology*, Edward Elgar. (tbc)
- Shinn, David (2015) "The Environmental Impact of China's Investment in Africa," *International Policy Digest*.

### Thursday August 6th: Advocacy I & Course Review

- Reading: Flacks, Richard (2005) "The Question of Relevance in Social Movement Studies," in David Cruoteau et al. (eds) *Rhyming Hope and History*, University of Minnesota Press, 3-19.
- Harvey, David (2015) *Seventeen Contradictions and the End of Capitalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, selections.

## WEEK 6:

### Tuesday August 11<sup>th</sup> : Advocacy II

**\*\* FINAL PAPERS DUE \*\***

- Readings: Pulido, Laura (2008) FAQs: Frequently (Un)Asked Questions About Being a Scholar Activist," in Charles Hale (ed) *Engaging Contradictions*, Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 341-366
- Cowen, Deborah (2014) *The Deadly Life of Logistics*, University of Minnesota Press, selections.

### Wednesday August 12<sup>th</sup> & Thursday August 13<sup>th</sup>

**\*\* PRESENTATIONS \*\***