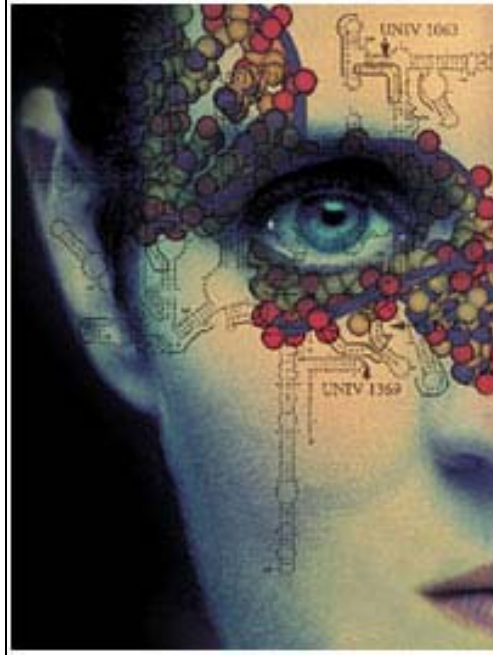


**ENVS 607: GRADUATE SEMINAR IN POLITICAL ECOLOGY:  
SOCIETY, ECOLOGY, AND THE POLITICS OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE**

**Spring 2004, Fridays 2:00-4:50, 160 Condon**

**Peter Walker, Dept. of Geography, 107J Condon Hall, 6-4541, [pwalker@uoregon.edu](mailto:pwalker@uoregon.edu)**



Political ecology examines how politics—in the broadest sense of the word—shapes human knowledge of, and interactions with, the physical environment. Political ecology expands our understanding of ‘politics’ to examine the broad historical role of economic systems, science, language and discourse, ideology, property rights, social movements and resistance, and the politics of local communities in shaping our human knowledge and interactions with the physical environment. **This year, the seminar has two broad goals: 1) to assess the current state of political-ecological knowledge; and 2) to examine how politics shapes, and is shaped by, *environmental science*, in order to critically appraise the condition of human-environmental knowledge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

***This course is open only to graduate students.*** Graduate students who took the ENVS 450/550 version of this course may re-enroll for credit (all readings are new in 607).

**Course requirements:** This is a student-led course. Students will take turns leading class discussions on assigned readings, and all students will be required to submit a 1-2 paragraph synopsis of each reading at the beginning of each class. Students will also write a 15-page term paper that applies concepts from the course to a specific real-world environmental issue. Students will select their own term paper topic in consultation with the instructor, and will present their topic to the class for discussion. Course grades will be assigned according to the following weights: synopses and classroom participation—50%; term paper—50%.

**Textbooks** (available in the UO Bookstore):

Tim Forsyth, *Critical Political Ecology*, 2003

Karl S. Zimmerer and Thomas J. Bassett, *Political Ecology*, 2003

**Selected readings** are available at Knight Library Reserve.

## **COURSE OUTLINE & READINGS**

### **Week 1: Introduction: what is political ecology?**

#### **Recommended background for Week 1:**

Walker, Peter A. Forthcoming. Roots of crisis: historical narratives of tree planting in Malawi. *Historical Geography*.

#### **Recommended introduction to political ecology:**

Watts, Michael. 2000. Political ecology. In *A Companion to Economic Geography*, edited by T. Barnes and E. Sheppard. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 257-274.

## **PART I: A GUIDED TOUR OF POLITICAL ECOLOGY**

### **Week 2: Protected Areas and Conservation & Urban and Industrial Environments**

Emily H. Young “Balancing conservation with development in marine-dependent communities: is ecotourism an empty promise?” in Zimmerer, Karl S., and Thomas J. Bassett. 2003. *Political ecology: an integrative approach to geography and environment-development studies*. New York: Guilford Press, pp. 29-49

Juanita Sundberg “Strategies for authenticity and space in the Maya Biosphere Reserve, Petén, Guatemala” in Zimmerer, Karl S., and Thomas J. Bassett. 2003. *Political ecology: an integrative approach to geography and environment-development studies*. New York: Guilford Press, pp. 50-69

Mark Pelling “Toward a political ecology of urban environmental risk: the case of Guyana” in Zimmerer, Karl S., and Thomas J. Bassett. 2003. *Political ecology: an integrative approach to geography and environment-development studies*. New York: Guilford Press, pp. 73-93

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

### **Week 3: Ecological Analysis and Theory in Resource Management and Conservation & Geospatial Technologies and Knowledges**

Thomas Bassett & Koli Zuéli “The Ivorian savanna: global narratives and local knowledge of environmental change” in Zimmerer, Karl S., and Thomas J. Bassett. 2003. *Political ecology: an integrative approach to geography and environment-development studies*. New York: Guilford Press, pp. 115-136

Karl Zimmerer “Environmental zonation and mountain agriculture in Peru and Bolivia: socioenvironmental dynamics of overlapping patchworks and agrobiodiversity conservation” in Zimmerer, Karl S., and Thomas J. Bassett. 2003. *Political ecology: an integrative approach to geography and environment-development studies*. New York: Guilford Press, pp. 137-158

Paul Robbins "Fixed categories in a portable landscape: the causes and consequences of land cover categorization" in Zimmerer, Karl S., and Thomas J. Bassett. 2003. *Political ecology: an integrative approach to geography and environment-development studies*. New York: Guilford Press, pp. 181-200

Brent McCusker and Daniel Weiner "GIS representations of nature, political ecology, and the study of land use and land cover change in South Africa" in Zimmerer, Karl S., and Thomas J. Bassett. 2003. *Political ecology: an integrative approach to geography and environment-development studies*. New York: Guilford Press, pp. 201-218

#### **Week 4: North-South Environmental Histories**

Andrew Sluyter "Material-conceptual landscape transformation and the emergence of the pristine myth in early colonial Mexico" in Zimmerer, Karl S., and Thomas J. Bassett. 2003. *Political ecology: an integrative approach to geography and environment-development studies*. New York: Guilford Press, p. 221-239

Roderick Neumann "The production of nature: colonial recasting of the African landscape in Serengeti National Park" in Zimmerer, Karl S., and Thomas J. Bassett. 2003. *Political ecology: an integrative approach to geography and environment-development studies*. New York: Guilford Press, pp. 240-255

Judith Carney "Agroenvironmental and slave strategies in the diffusion of rice culture to the Americas" in Zimmerer, Karl S., and Thomas J. Bassett. 2003. *Political ecology: an integrative approach to geography and environment-development studies*. New York: Guilford Press, pp. 256-273

Karl Zimmerer and Thomas Bassett "Future directions in political ecology: nature-society fusions and scale of interactions" in Zimmerer, Karl S., and Thomas J. Bassett. 2003. *Political ecology: an integrative approach to geography and environment-development studies*. New York: Guilford Press, pp. 274-295

## **PART II: CRITICAL VIEWS OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE**

#### **Week 5: Political ecology and 'myths' in environmental science**

Forsyth, Tim. 2003. *Critical political ecology: the politics of environmental science*. London; New York: Routledge, Chs. 1 & 2

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

## **Week 6: “Laws”, generalizations, and social framings in environmental science**

Forsyth, Tim. 2003. *Critical political ecology: the politics of environmental science*. London; New York: Routledge, Chs. 3 & 4

Turner, M. D. 1999. Conflict, environmental change, and social institutions in dryland Africa: Limitations of the community resource management approach. *Society & Natural Resources* 12 (7):643-657.

## **Week 7: “Co-production” of environmental knowledge, boundaries, & social movements**

Forsyth, Tim. 2003. *Critical political ecology: the politics of environmental science*. London; New York: Routledge, Chs. 5 & 6

McAfee, K. 2003. Neoliberalism on the molecular scale. Economic and genetic reductionism in biotechnology battles. *Geoforum* 34 (2):203-219.

## **Week 8: Student presentations of research papers in-progress**

## **Week 9: Democratizing environmental science**

Forsyth, Tim. 2003. *Critical political ecology: the politics of environmental science*. London; New York: Routledge, Chs. 8 & 9

Robbins, P. 2003. Beyond ground truth: GIS and the environmental knowledge of herders, professional foresters, and other traditional communities. *Human Ecology* 31 (2):233-253.

## **Week 10: Conclusions: political-ecological understanding in a globalizing world**

Forsyth, Tim. 2003. *Critical political ecology: the politics of environmental science*. London; New York: Routledge, Chs. 7 & 10