

Department of Geography
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Geography 520
Spring 2005

Political Ecology

Instructor: Prof. Tom Bassett

Office Hours: Thursday: 1-3:00 or by appt (bassett@uiuc.edu), 125 Davenport Hall.

Organization: Political ecology integrates social and biophysical processes in the study of environmental problems at multiple scales. This seminar explores the conceptual origins of political ecology, its problem areas and research gaps, and identifies influential bodies of research and promising research directions. Readings will focus on the emergence of political ecology as a sub-field of Geography, the different emphases of this approach within Geography, and its cross-fertilization with similar but distinctive approaches in History, Sociology, and related fields. Emphasis is placed on the contributions of political ecological research to explaining nature-society relations.

Course Requirements

Grades will be based on weekly 2-page written commentaries on assigned readings (60%) and a 15-20 page research paper (40%).

a) Commentaries should focus on conceptual, theoretical, or methodological aspects of the readings scheduled for that week. They are due on Tuesday (no later than 5:00) and should be sent via e-mail to each member of the class. These commentaries will serve as a basis of discussion of our meetings.

b) Term papers can take a variety of forms: a chapter in a M.A. thesis, a journal article, or a research paper. Whatever the project, its core should reflect an engagement with the readings and discussions of this course. Be sure to discuss your project with me early in the semester. Term papers are due in class on May 1.

Course Texts

Tim Forsyth (2003) *Critical Political Ecology: The politics of environmental science* (London/New York: Routledge)

Richard Peet and Michael Watts (2004) *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, development and social movements* ((London/New York: Routledge).

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

Karl S. Zimmerer and Thomas J. Bassett (eds) (2003) *Political Ecology: An integrative approach to Geography and environment-development studies* (New York: Guilford Press).

Course Themes and Readings

What is Political Ecology?

Readings: Robbins, Chap. 1-4; Zimmer and Bassett, Chap 1.

Cultural & Political Ecology in Geography

Readings: Peet and Watts, Chap. 1

K. Butzer 1989 "Cultural ecology" in G. Gaile and C. Willmott (eds.) *Geography in America* (Columbus, OH: Merrill Pub. Co), 192-208.

T. Bassett & K. Zimmerer, (2004) Cultural Ecology," in G. Gaile & C. Willmott (eds.) *Geography in America at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 97-112.

Conceptual and Methodological Challenges

Readings: Robbins, Chaps. 2-3;

P. Blaikie (1994) "Political ecology in the 1990s: An evolving view of nature and society," *CASID Distinguished speaker series, No. 13*. Michigan State University

Ecological Analysis and Theory in Resource Management

Readings: Zimmer and Bassett, Chaps 6-8; Robbins Chap. 7

Protected Areas and Conservation

Readings: Zimmer and Bassett, Chaps 2-3; Robbins. Cap. 8

Political Ecology and the Politics of Environmental Science I

Readings: Forsyth, Chaps 1-4

Political Ecology and the Politics of Environmental Science II

Readings: Forsyth, Chaps 5-7

Urban and Industrial Environments

Readings: Zimmer and Bassett, Chaps 4-5

Geospatial Technologies and Knowledges

Readings: Zimmer and Bassett, Chaps 9-10

North-South Environmental Histories

Readings: Zimmer and Bassett, Chaps 11-13

Democratizing Environmental Explanations

Readings: Forsyth, Chaps 8-10

Environmental Discourses and Practices

Readings: Peet and Watts, Chaps 4-6

Environmental Institutions and Governance

Readings: Peet and Watts, Chaps 7-9

Environmental Conflict and Struggle

Readings: Peet and Watts, Chaps 10-12, Robbins, Chap. 9.

Environmental Social Movements

Readings: Peet and Watts, Chaps 13-15, Robbins, Chap. 10

Future Directions in Political Ecology

Readings: Zimmer and Bassett, Chap 14; Robbins, Chap. 11

Recommended Readings

Texts

R. Neumann (2004) *Making Political Ecology* (London/New York: Hodder Arnold).

P. Stott & S. Sullivan (2000) *Political Ecology: Science, Myth and Power* (London:Arnold)

R. L. Bryant & S. Bailey (1997) *Third World Political Ecology* (London/NY: Routledge).

S.R. Brechin, P. R. Wilshusen, C. Fortwangler, P.C. West, (Eds.) (2003). *Contested Nature: Power and the Dispossessed – Promoting International Conservation with Social Justice in the 21st Century* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press).

What is Political Ecology?

T. Forsyth (2001). Critical realism and political ecology. In J. Lopez & G. Potter (Eds.) *After Postmodernism: an introduction to critical realism* (pp. 146-154).

M. Watts 1997 "Politics, political ecology and practical pessimism," *Progress in Human Geography*, 20(4).

M. Watts (2000) "Political Ecology," in E. Sheppard and T. Barnes (eds.) *A Companion to Economic Geography* (London: Blackwell).

P. Blaikie (1995) "Changing environments or changing views: A political ecology of developing countries," *Geography* 80(348):203214.

Cultural & Political Ecology in Geography

K. Butzer (1990) "The realm of cultural-human ecology: Adaptation and change in historical perspective," in B. Turner, et al (eds.) *The earth as transformed by human action: Global and regional changes in the biosphere over the past 300 years* (Cambridge: CUP), 685-701.

P. Porter (1991) "Cultural ecology" in G. Dunbar (ed.) *Modern geography: An encyclopedic survey* (New York: Garland), 38-39.

B. L. Turner II (1997) "Spirals, bridges, and tunnels: Engaging human-environment perspectives in geography" *Ecumena* 4(2): 196-217.

P. Blaikie (1994) "Political ecology in the 1990s" An evolving view of nature and society," *CASID Distinguished speaker series, No. 13*. Michigan State University.

Conceptual and Methodological Challenges

S. Batterbury, Forsyth, T., & K. Thomson. (1997). Environmental transformations in developing countries: Hybrid research and democratic policy. *Geographical Journal*, 163(2), 126-132.

P. Blaikie (1999) "A review of political ecology: Issues, epistemology and analytical narratives," *Zeitschrift für Wirtschaftsgeographie* 43 (3-4): 131-147.

R. Bryant (1998). Power, knowledge, and political ecology in the third world: a review. *Progress in Human Geography* 22(1), 79-94.

R. Bryant (2001). Politicized moral geographies: Debating biodiversity conservation and ancestral domain. *Political Geography*, 19, 673-705.

M. Watts (2000) "Political Ecology," in E. Sheppard and T. Barnes (eds.) *A Companion to Economic Geography* (London: Blackwell).

Ecological Analysis and Theory in Resource Management

S. Eden, S. (2001) Environmental issues: nature versus the environment? *Progress in Human Geography*, 25(1), 79-85.

M. Turner (1993) "Overstocking the range: A critical analysis of the environmental science of sahelian pastoralism," *Economic Geography* 69 (4): 402-421.

K. Zimmerer (1994) "Human geography and the 'new ecology:' the prospect and promise of integration," *Annals of the AAG* 84: 108-125.

L. Heasley & J. Delehanty (1996) "The politics of manure: Resource tenure and the agropastoral economy in southwestern Niger," *Society and Natural Resources* 9: 31-46.

W. Meyer and B. Turner (1992) "Human population growth and global land-use/cover change," *Annual Review of Ecological Systems* 23: 39-61.

Protected Areas and Conservation

P. Vandergeest (1996) "Mapping Nature: Territorialization of Forest Rights in Thailand," *Society and Natural Resources* 9:159-175.

R. Schroeder (1999) "Geographies of environmental intervention in Africa," *Progress in Human Geography* 23(3): 359-378.

K. Zimmerer (2000) "The reworking of conservation geographies: Nonequilibrium landscapes and nature-society hybrids," *Annals of the Assoc. of Am. Geog.* 90(2): 356-69.

J. Fischer (2000) "Creating common spaces: Natural resource management in Fuuta Jalon, Guinea," *Society and Natural Resources* 13: 567-577.

S. Stevens (1997a) "The legacy of Yellowstone," in S. Stevens (ed) *Conservation through survival: indigenous peoples and protected areas* (Washington, D. C. Island Press), pp.1 3-32.

S. Stevens (1997b) "New alliances for conservation," in S. Stevens (ed) *Conservation through survival: indigenous peoples and protected areas* (Washington, D. C. Island Press), pp. 33-62.

B. Nietschmann (1997) "Protecting indigenous coral reefs and sea territories, Miskito Coast, RAAN, Nicaragua," in S. Stevens (ed) *Conservation through survival: indigenous peoples and protected areas* (Washington, D. C. Island Press), pp. 193-224.

Zerner, C. (Ed.) 2000. *People, Plants, and Justice: The Politics of Nature Conservation*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Political Ecology and the Politics of Environmental Science

D. Demeritt (1996) "Social theory and the reconstruction of science in geography" *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 21 (3) 484-503.

M. Gandy (1996) "Crumbling land: the postmodernity debate and the analysis of environmental problems" *Progress in Human Geography* 20(1): 23-40.

B. Latour (1998) "To modernize or ecologise" That is the question" (translated by C. Sussins) in B. Braun and N. Castree (eds.) *Remaking reality: nature at the millenium* (London: Routledge), pp. 221-42.

Urban and Industrial Environments

J. McCarthy, (2002) First World Political Ecology: Lessons form the Wise Use Movement," *Environment and Planning A* 34(7): 1281-1302.

G. Myers (1999) 'Political Ecology and Urbanization: Zanzibar's construction materials industry," *J. of Modern African Studies* 37(1): 83-108.

P. Robbins (2002) "Obstacles to First World Political Ecology: Looking near without looking up," *Environment and Planning A* 34: 1509-1513.

P. Robbins, A. Polderman, & T. Birkenholtz (2001). Lawns and toxins: An ecology of the city. *Cities*, 18 (6), 369-380.

P. Walker (2003) "Reconsidering regional political ecologies: Toward a political ecology of the rural American West," *Progress in Human Geography* 27 (1): 7-24.

Geospatial Technologies and Knowledges

N. Peluso (1995) "Whose woods are these? Counter-mapping of forest territories in Kalimantan, Indonesia," *Antipode* 27(4): 383-406.

P. Walker and P. Peters (2001) "Maps, metaphors, and meanings: Boundary struggles and village forest use on private and state land in Malawi," *Society and Natural Resources* 14: 411-424.

J. Crampton (2001) "Maps as social constructions: power, communication and visualization," *Progress in Human Geography* 25(2): 235-252.

J. Pickles (1992) "Texts, hermeneutics and propaganda maps," in T. Barnes and J. Duncan (eds.) *Writing Worlds: Discourse, text and metaphor in the representation of landscape* (London: Routledge), pp. 193-247.

D. Cosgrove (1999) "Introduction: Mapping Meaning," in D. Cosgrove (ed.) *Mappings* (London: Reaktion Books), pp. 1-23.

R.R. Rindfuss and P. C. Stern (1998) Linking remote sensing and social science: the need and the challenges. In D. Liverman, et al., (Eds) *People and Pixels: Linking Remote Sensing and Social Science*. (pp. 1-27) Washington, D.C. National Academy Press.

North-South Environmental Histories

Butzer, K. W., & E. K. Butzer. (1993). The sixteenth-century environment of the central Mexican Bajío: Archival reconstruction from colonial land grants and the question of Spanish ecological impact, in K. Mathewson (Ed.), *Culture, form, and place: Essays in cultural and historical geography*. Geoscience and Man, Vol. 32, 89-124. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University.

Carney, J.A. (1996). Rice milling, gender, and slave labor in colonial South Carolina. *Past and Present*, 153, 108-34.

Carney, J.A. (2001). *Black rice: The African origins of rice cultivation in the Americas*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press).

Gade, D.W. (1999). *Nature and culture convergent: Geography, historical ecology, and ethnobiology in the Andes*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Grove, R.H. (1995). *Green imperialism: Colonial expansion, tropical island Edens, and the origins of environmentalism, 1600-1860*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Environmental Discourses and Practices

T. Bassett & Z. Koli Bi (2002) "Environmental discourses and the Ivorian savanna," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 90(1): 67-95.

J. Crush (ed.) (1995) *Power of Development* (London/New York: Routledge).

T. Forsyth (1996). Science, myth and knowledge: Testing Himalayan environmental degradation in Thailand. *Geoforum*, 27(3), 375-392.

Environmental Institutions and Governance

M. Goldman (Ed.) (1998). *Privatizing nature: Political struggles for the global commons*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.

T. Mutersbaugh,(2002b). 'The number is the beast': A political economy of transnational certified organic coffee and coffee producer unionism. *Environment and Planning A*, 34, 1165-1184.

Environmental Conflict and Struggle

S. B Hecht & A. Cockburn. (1990). *Fate of the forest* . 2nd Ed. New York: Harper Collins.

N.L., Peluso (1992). *Rich forests, poor people*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

N.L. Peluso, & M. Watts (Eds.) (2001). *Violent environments*. Ithaca: Cornell U. Press.

D. Rocheleau, B. Thomas-Slayter, and E. Wangari (Eds.) (1996). *Feminist political ecology: Global issues and local experience*. London: Routledge.