Cultural and Political Ecology

Tentative Syllabus – Subject to Change

Spring, 2009 (Geog 450:360; 3.0 credits)

Instructor: Elizabeth S. Barron  
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Class Time: M, W – 1:40-3:00  
Location: Livingston Campus, Lucy Stone Hall B-269  
Office hours: T, 10:00-12:00, and by appointment

About the course:
This course features the growing subfield of geography known as political ecology. Throughout the term we will explore this field’s origins and apply its analytical tools to a range of empirical circumstances drawn from both first and third world settings. Some of the key questions we will address include: How are natural resources valued? Who has the power to define resource management problems? Who benefits and who loses when management plans are implemented? What is the relationship between the control over resources and control over people? How is such control obtained? This is a writing intensive course and fulfills a writing requirement towards your undergraduate degree.

Required text: (available at Livingston Campus Bookstore and on reserve at Kilmer Library)

Additional readings:
Additional readings will be made available on Sakai and/or through email.

Course evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>% of final grade</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance &amp; participation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First midterm exam</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>March 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper Project: project statement</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>March 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second midterm exam</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>April 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper Project: presentations</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>April 20 &amp;27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper Project: paper</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>May 4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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No late assignments will be accepted without prior permission or a note from the Dean  
All assignments are due at the beginning of class  
There is no extra credit in this course
Attendance/participation:
This upper level course is designed as a seminar with some lecturing. My expectation is that everyone will come to class on time and be prepared to discuss the assigned readings for each week. In order to facilitate group discussion students are expected to bring their note cards (available at the Kilmer bookstore) to every class for in-class writing assignments. These 5 – 10 minute writing assignments will be handed in at the end of each class and will be used for attendance purposes and to monitor student progress. Attendance and participation are accordingly worth 20% of the course grade.

Midterm exams:
There will be two midterm exams for this course, each worth 20% of your final grade. Both will take the form of take-home short answer and essay questions based on assigned readings, in-class discussions and video presentations. The exam schedule is as follows:

Final paper project:
Each participant in this course is required to prepare a final paper that focuses on the political ecology of conservation, use, and/or representation of natural resources. The goal of the paper project is for students to explore a political ecological topic of interest by researching the issue and synthesizing the competing views on that particular topic. The issue may be domestic or international, urban or rural. Some possible topics include: the politics of access to natural resources; the distribution of water rights; or conflicts over wildlife. Your paper should be informed by the class readings and inspired through your own research. I encourage you to come talk to me about possible paper topics and ideas. This project will be developed in three phases, but given the demands of the second half of the semester, to insure a good grade you will need to work steadily on your paper throughout the semester.

First, each participant will prepare a 1-2 page project proposal statement by Monday, March 23. This is worth 5% of the course grade. The statement should include: 1) a clear statement of the problem/topic to be analyzed (in the form of a research question); 2) an explanation of this topic that connects it with the course readings; and 3) a summary of the sources that you will draw on in your analysis. You must have a minimum of 12 sources referenced in your final paper; all of which must be journal articles or books. You are free to have additional electronic sources.

Second, due to the large enrollment in this class, students will be working in groups for peer review and presentations. A first draft of your paper will be due in class on April 13th. We will spend class that day on peer-review. At the end of that day each group must select one paper to prepare for presentation to the class. Each group will give a 20 minute oral presentation of their chosen paper to the seminar during the weeks of April 20th and 27th. This process is worth 10% of the course grade. You will be graded on the clarity and content of your presentation, and how well you worked together as a group. More details will follow on this assignment as the time draws nearer.

Third, final papers are due the last day of class, Monday, May 4. All papers should be 10-12 pages in length (not including a title page and citations), double spaced; and 12 point font. Proper use of citations and footnotes is required. We will briefly review this and how to use library research resources in class if necessary. In addition to the structure of your argument and paper, you will also be graded on grammar, spelling, and proper word usage. More to follow…
**Topic and Reading Schedule:**

**WEEK 1:**  **Introductions**  
January 21: Introduction, overview of course

**WEEK 2:**  **An Introduction to Political Ecology**  
January 26: Reading: Robbins: Intro, & Ch. 1  
In-class video: *Empty Oceans, Empty Nets*

**WEEK 3:**  **Political Ecology: History and Background**  
February 2: Reading: Robbins: Ch. 2  
February 4: Reading: Watts, M and Peet, R. 2004

**WEEK 4:**  **Nature in Conflict**  
February 9: Reading: Robbins: Ch. 3  
February 11: Reading: Robbins Ch. 4  
In-class video: *Second Nature*

**WEEK 5:**  **Representing Nature**  
February 16: Reading: Robbins: Ch. 5 & 6  

**WEEK 6:**  **Marginalized Spaces and Places**  
***Exam I: Distributed February 25, due in class Monday, March 2***  
February 23: Reading: Robbins: Ch. 7  

**WEEK 7:**  **Conservation and Environmental Conflict**  
March 2: Reading: Robbins: Ch. 8 & 9  

**WEEK 8:**  **Knowledge and Identity**  
March 9: Reading: Identity and Social Movements: Robbins Ch. 10  

**WEEK 9:**  **Spring Break**  
March 16&18: Relax Responsibly

**WEEK 10:**  **“First World” Political Ecologies**  
***March 23: Project Proposal Statement Due***  
March 23: Reading: Robbins: Ch. 11  
March 25: Reading: Kosek: Introduction and Ch. 1  
In-class video: *The Greatest Good*
WEEK 11: Political Ecology: Where is the Ecology?
***Exam II: Distributed April 1, due in class April 6

WEEK 12: Environmental Knowledge & Social Power
April 6: Reading: Kosek: Ch. 2 & 3
April 8: Reading: Kosek: Ch. 4

WEEK 13: Community Based Conservation
April 13: peer review of first drafts
April 15: Reading: Kosek: Ch. 5

WEEK 14: Student Presentations
April 20: Reading: Kosek: Ch. 6 & conclusion
April 22: Presentations

WEEK 15: Student Presentations
April 27: Presentations
April 29: Presentations

WEEK 16: Conclusions
May 4: ***Final Papers Due in Class
May 4: Course Conclusion
Complete Citations for Course Readings:


