

Environmental Geography

POLI 397
1:40-2:55 TR
Maybank 207

Instructor: Dr. Annette Watson
953-5864 (office)
WatsonAM@cofc.edu
Office: Political Science Dept, 114 Wentworth St., Rm. 207
Office hours: Tuesdays 3-5 and Wednesdays 2-3, or by appointment

Class Syllabus

Course Description

How do humans and ecologies interact to shape global and local environments, and how do these local and global geographies shape ecosystems and social life? How are global political and economic processes connected to local political and environmental struggles, and how does “the local” matter?

This class critically examines the relationship between humans and their environments, focusing on the politically volatile nature of human resource use. How resource distribution occurs (evenly or unevenly), who controls the distribution, and how the distribution impacts economic, social, and ecological systems are often the source of political conflict and environmental problems. We will study how these political problems interrelate across different spatial and temporal scales, from the individual resource user to international regulatory bodies, and from colonial times to the present day. Our aim is to understand the complexity of such multi-scale, multi-cultural dynamics.

We will question conventional, simplistic explanations of environmental problems, such as “overpopulation,” as well as question traditional categories such as “wilderness” and “the commons.” The goals of this class are thus to challenge students' thinking about environmental problems, develop new frameworks for critical analysis, and discuss practical and conceptual alternatives. Differing ways of explaining environmental problems are important because they form the basis for new political solutions.

The class time will be discussion-driven, punctuated with lectures, group discussions, active learning exercises, student presentations, and video. Students will be evaluated based on their ability to critically approach questions, problems, and solutions to environmental conflicts through written assignments, oral participation and presentations, and projects.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Knowledge: Describe key issues in environmental geography; [assessment: exams, project]
- Comprehend: Explain environmental politics in the context of broader social and political geographies; [assessment: exams, project]
- Application: Illustrate the multi-scale nature of resource use and the political struggles for control of resources; [assessment: exams, project]

- Analysis: Analyze the multi-scale environmental problems using geographical methods and theories, often called “political ecology” approaches; [assessment: project]
- Synthesis: Develop skills in critical reading, research, and oral presentation to construct, communicate and present complicated ideas to a lay public audience; [assessment: questions, project]

Course Relevance:

Of interest to students pursuing careers in government, political economics, natural resource management, environmental advocacy, geography, planning, journalism.

Readings

You will be expected to read on average about 70 pages per week; sometimes more, sometimes less. Readings are *preparatory*; that is they must be read by the date they are listed in the syllabus (by Tuesday or Thursday). Exams and Questions for class discussion are directly tied to the readings, so stay on schedule with the readings. **Be sure to have either the digital or hard copy of readings with you when you come to class, even if they are posted on OAKS !**

Required texts:

Robbins, Paul. 2007. *Lawn People*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
Available at the College Bookstore on Calhoun

All other required readings will be available on OAKS

Assignments and Grading

Short breakdown:

Exams:	32% (two at 10%; final at 12%)
Questions:	20% (2% each)
Participation:	5%
Project Proposal:	7%
Project annotated bibliography:	8%
Project final:	20%
Presentation of project:	8%

This class will be highly **interactive**, which means that your participation in class will be central to the success of the course (and also to how much you learn). I will expect you to ask questions of me, of the readings, and I will expect you to engage with each others’ ideas. Although I understand that sometimes it can be difficult to speak out in class, everyone is expected to participate in class discussion. If you *really* fear public speaking, participation also includes emailing me questions before class about terms or points of clarifications you’d like us to cover during class discussion, or even posting on the Geography at CofC facebook page. To succeed in this class you will need to critically evaluate ideas, question them, dispute them, or make them your own. Speak out!

Attendance is mandatory; you may request that your absence be excused only if you are required to participate in college-sponsored activities. If so, you must fill out the appropriate forms at 67 George St., or call Constance Nelson (953-3390). **Notices I receive from the Absent Memo Office do not constitute excused absences**, and you will be penalized for all unexcused absences.

Questions (20%)

Worth 20% of your final grade; you **must** complete 10 (2pts each), due in class. You are expected to base your question on the day's readings. What question, if answered, would allow you to understand the main argument of the author(s)? What concepts are the author(s) introducing that would be significant to understand these environmental politics? You are not expected to cover every single aspect of what we read, but shape a question that would allow the class to better understand the material, NOT debate personal opinions. I will ask you to share your questions in class, at the start of the class period.

Rubric for quality questions brought in to class:

2= Question(s) thoughtfully engaged readings by developing a thematic question relevant to all readings (not specific to one reading); identified key terms to understanding the text/argument; likely introduces the question with some summary of the author(s) purpose to contextualize the question(s)

1.5= Question(s) engage readings by developing a thematic question, or identify key terms to understanding a text/argument

1= Student asked a brief question relevant to one of the readings, but without fully forming a context from which to ask that question

.5= Student asked a question that had little direct relevance to understand the readings, or asked a question that brings in issues from outside of the course.

Exams (32%)

The exams will be both in-class and take home, and will be a mixture of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions. Worth a total of **32 points**.

Project Proposal (7%)

See separate instructions on creating a professional-quality proposal for the project you wish to do. Grade includes mandatory meeting with professor to discuss the proposal.

Project Annotated Bibliography (8%)

Students will develop an annotated bibliography of 20 peer-review sources that is relevant to your case study or the environmental problems your organization aims to solve. See separate instructions and rubric.

Project (28%, including 8% for final presentation of your project)

This project will build/develop your:

Verbal, written, and visual communication skills

Data-gathering skills (primary sources) and reviews of secondary literature

Skills in different analytical techniques used by geographers/political ecologists.

Knowledge about at least one environmental issue in depth

You MUST choose **one** project, and read the further instructions for each, as each have different components, requirements, and rubrics.

- A. Service Learning project: you may volunteer for a local environmental group, dedicating at least 15 hours over the semester (it cannot be a one-day event, though a ‘clean up’ or other such one-day project might comprise *part* of your volunteer effort). You will be required to complete your volunteer assignment, complete an annotated bibliography, write a journal of your experiences and thoughts arising from the assignment, and write a 6-page paper based on a specific questions I ask of you, tailored to your volunteer assignment. [READ instructions #A for more details]
- B. Research a case study and develop a geographical analysis of that issue. Write a cartoon book, similar to *Marx for Beginners* or *Foucault for Beginners*; maybe call yours *Political Ecology for Beginners*. [READ #B]
- C. Create a 5-7 minute short film depicting a case study and develop a geographical analysis of that issue [READ #C]
- D. Research a case study. Write a series (3-5) of op-ed news pieces highlighting the analytical tools of geographers. Automatic “A” on the project if you can get at least one in print somewhere (within the semester) with a readership of more than 15,000 people. [READ #E]

General guidelines for grades:

A – achievement is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirement

B – achievement is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.

C – achievement meets the course requirements in every respect.

D – achievement is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.

S/P – achievement is satisfactory which is equivalent to a C- or better.

F – achievement is inadequate and no credit will be given for the course.

I (Incomplete) – assigned due to extraordinary circumstances, e.g., hospitalization, which prevent the completion of work on time. Requires an agreement between student and instructor.

This course will use +/- grades, allocated as follows:

A =92% or above	C =77-72%
A- =91-90%	C- =71-70%
B+ =89-88%	D+ =69-68%
B =87-82%	D =67-62%
B- =81-80%	D- =61-60%
C+ =79-78%	F =below 59%

Other Class Policies:

Computers/IPAD/ETC: use of such devices are **HIGHLY** encouraged, particularly if it saves you from printing all the readings. **HOWEVER**, if I find you surfing or chatting or other such unauthorized use of any internet-capable or text-capable device, you will lose privileges to use your devices in class. Class time is not passive learning, but you are expected to be active and engaged and working on the issues at hand. Texting or facebook-ing distracts you and others from the tasks you are expected to complete, and research has shown that such activities detract from your learning/retention of content. I will play bad cop if I have to, to maintain respect for the classroom space.

It is assumed that all students will act with academic integrity and will not engage in behavior such as plagiarism, academic dishonesty, misrepresentation, or cheating. Please refer to the college's policy on academic honesty. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will result in an XF in the class. The entire purpose of this class is to acquire useful skills; to cheat is to lose the opportunity to improve these skills. Please refer to the campus honor code for questions about academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism refers to the presentation of someone else's ideas, work, or words as your own, without attribution. If you use someone else's exact words, then you must use quotation marks in addition to a citation; simply naming the source is not enough. If you completely paraphrase someone else's ideas in your own words, then you still have to cite the source, but you do not have to use quotations. When in doubt, cite the source. If you have questions about whether you have provided adequate citation, consult with me before the assignment is due.

Support Services:

Please take advantage of the College's Center for Student Learning; they have walk-in labs for writing and speaking—two skills you will need to improve (and be graded on!) during this semester. The Center for Student Learning is located in the Addlestone Library (953-5635).

The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should apply at the Center for Disability Services/SNAP located on the first floor of the

Lightsey Center, Suite 104. Students approved for accommodations are responsible for notifying me as soon as possible and for contacting me one week before accommodation is needed.

Class Outline

Readings must be completed by the first class they are listed to be discussed. Even though some of the readings are online, you are responsible for having a digital or hard copy DURING CLASS.

Week 1: Situating Environmental Geography

Tuesday, August 23rd

Introductions and explanation of syllabus

Foucault said that “space is fundamental to the exercise of power” (1980, 149)

Intro to geographical thinking—Space, place, scale, Nature-society relationships/human-environment studies

I will introduce the project ideas for you to choose from; **write a project proposal DUE no later than September 20th** by 11:59 pm (see instructions on how to write a proposal; worth 7% of your course grade; be sure to schedule individual meeting with me once you submit your proposal via OAKS).

McIlwraith, Thomas. 2004. “Natural and Cultural Landscapes: One Heritage or Two?” in Janelle et al (eds.), *WorldMinds: Geographical Perspectives on 100 Problems*, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers: 613-617.

Thursday, August 25th

Castree, Noel, et al. 2009. “Making Sense of Environmental Geography,” in Castree et al, *A Companion to Environmental Geography*, Wiley-Blackwell: 1-16.

Alderman, Derek, and Donna Alderman. 2001. “Kudzu: A Tale of Two Vines,” *Southern Cultures*, Fall 2001: 49-64.

Week 2: Fundamental Concepts of Environmental Geography

Tuesday, August 30th

Gregory, Ken. 2009. “Place: The Management of Sustainable Physical Environments,” in Clifford et al, eds., *Key Concepts in Geography*, London: Sage, 173-198.

Thornes, John. 2009. “Time: Change and Stability in Environmental Systems,” in Clifford et al., eds., *Key Concepts in Geography*, London: Sage, 119-139.

Thursday, September 1st

Herod, Andrew. 2009. "Scale: The Local and the Global," in Clifford et al, eds., *Key Concepts in Geography*, London: Sage, 217-235.

Week 3: "Nature" as a Socio-cultural phenomenon

Tuesday, September 6th

Ginn, Franklin, and David Demeritt. 2009. "Nature: A Contested Concept," in Clifford et al, eds., *Key Concepts in Geography*, London: Sage, 300-311.

Cronon, William. 1996. "The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," *Environmental History*, Vol. 1(1): 7-28.

Thursday, September 8th

Robbins, Paul, et al. 2010. "Chapter 8: Social Construction of Nature," in *Environment and Society*, Wiley-Blackwell, pgs 116-133.

Week 4:

Tuesday, September 13th

Exam 1 : multiple choice, short answer, short essay (worth 10%)

Thursday, September 15th

No class: Work on your project proposals (Due Sept 20th)

Week 5: Land Tenure, Land Use, Ethics

Tuesday, September 20th

William Cronon. 1983. *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, Chapter 3, "Seasons of Want and Plenty," pgs 34-53. [uploaded is a larger selection of more chapters, and those are optional; just read chapter 3]

Project proposals **DUE** by 11:59 pm; you **MUST** email watsonam@cofc.edu to schedule in-person meeting to receive a grade for this proposal.

Thursday, September 22nd

Leopold, Aldo. 1948. "The Land Ethic," from *Sand County Almanac*. Text available at: <http://home.btconnect.com/tipiglen/landethic.html>

Week 6: "Local" Communities, Knowledges, and Subsistence Economies

Tuesday September 27th

Alcorn, Janis. 1993. "Indigenous Peoples and Conservation," *Conservation Biology* 7 (2): 424-426.

Watson, A., and Huntington, O. 2008. "They're Here, I Can Feel Them: The Epistemic Spaces of Indigenous and Western Knowledges," *Social and Cultural Geography*.

Thursday September 29th

Berkes, Fikret. 1999. Selections from *Sacred Ecologies*: "Defining Traditional Ecological Knowledge," pgs. 5-9; Ch. 5: "Cree Worldview 'From the Inside,'" pgs. 79-93.

Huntington, Henry, 2000. "Using Traditional Ecological Knowledge in Science: Methods and Applications," *Ecological Applications* 10(5): 1270-1274.

Week 7: Economic Geography and Uneven Development

Tuesday October 4th

Selections from *Marx for Beginners*

Robbins, Paul, et al. 2010. "Chapter 7: Political Economy," in *Environment and Society*, Wiley-Blackwell, pgs 96-115.

Thursday October 6th

Willis, Katie. 2009. "Development: Critical Approaches in Human Geography," in Clifford et al, eds., *Key Concepts in Geography*, London: Sage, 365-377.

Cravey, Altha. 2004. "Gender and Globalization: Maquila Geographies," in Janelle et al (eds.), *WorldMinds: Geographical Perspectives on 100 Problems*, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, pgs 249-253.

Week 8: Development and Environmental Justice

Tuesday October 11th

Heyman, Josiah. 2005. "The Political Ecology of Consumption: Beyond Greed and Guilt," in Paulson and Gezon, eds. *Political Ecology Across Spaces, Scales, and Social Groups*, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 113-132.

Thursday October 13th

Maantay, Juliana. 2004. "The Geography of Environmental Injustice in the Bronx, New York City," in Janelle et al (eds.), *WorldMinds: Geographical Perspectives on 100 Problems*, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers: 163-169.

Jerrett, M., Burnett, R. T., Kanaroglou, P., Eyles, J., Finkelstein, N., Giovis, C., & Brook, J. R. (2001). A GIS-environmental justice analysis of particulate air pollution in Hamilton, Canada. *Environment and Planning A*, 33(6), 955-973.

Week 9: Geographies of Power

Tuesday, October 18th

Selections from *Foucault for Beginners*.

Neumann, Roderick. 2004. "Nature-State-Territory: Toward a Critical Theorization of Conservation Enclosures," in Peet and Watts, eds. *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, and Social Movements*, New York: Routledge: 195-217.

Thursday October 20th

Bassett, Thomas, and Koli Zueli. 2000. "Environmental Discourses and the Ivorian Savannah" *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90 (1): 67-95.

Week 10: The Commons and Formal/Informal Environmental Institutions

Tuesday October 25th

Robbins, "Chapter 4: Institutions and 'The Commons,'" 46-62

Annotated bibliographies **DUE** 11:59 pm in the Dropbox

Thursday October 27th

St. Martin, Kevin. 2001. "Making space for community resource management in fisheries," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 91 (1): 122–142.

Walker, Peter, and Patrick Hurley. 2004. "Collaboration Derailed: The politics of 'community-based' resource management in Nevada County," *Society and Natural Resources* 17: 735-751.

Week 11: Political Ecologies and Apolitical Ecologies

Tuesday November 1st

Robbins, Paul, et al. 2010. "Chapter 2: Population and Scarcity," in *Environment and Society*, Wiley-Blackwell, pgs 11-27.

Thursday November 3rd

Beach, Hugh. 2004. "Political Ecology in Swedish Saamiland," in Anderson and Nuttall, eds., *Cultivating Arctic Landscapes: Knowing and Managing Animals in the Circumpolar North*, New York: Bergham Books, p. 110-123.

Week 12:

Tuesday, November 8th

NO Class: Fall Break, voting

Thursday, November 10th:

Exam #2: multiple choice, short answer, essay

Week 13: Lawn People, part 1

Tuesday November 15th

Chapters 1-4, *Lawn People* by Paul Robbins

Thursday, November 17th

Student Presentation Day #1

Week 14:

Tuesday, November 22nd

Student Presentation Day #2

Thursday, November 24th

NO Class, Thanksgiving

Week 15: Lawn People, part 2

Tuesday, November 29th

Chapters 5-8, *Lawn People*, plus appendices

Thursday, December 1st

Student Presentation Day #3

Final Exam #3: Take Home Essays

Due December 10th in the OAKS dropbox by 11:59 pm.

Have a Great Winter Break!