GEOG 466 Syllabus
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY (Spring 2010)

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Lectures: Tu-Th 11:00AM - 12:20 PM, 204 Transportation Building

Office hours: W 3:00-4:00 PM; Th 2:00-3:00 PM; or by appointment
232 Davenport, Tel: 224 3485

Course Description: This course deals with politics of environmental degradation and the choice for “sustainable development” in developing countries. The emphasis of the course is on understanding why environmental problems arise and persist – that is, not the natural scientific causes but the social, political, and economic reasons these problems are not quickly prevented or corrected even when people should want to prevent or correct them. Our focus then is on the human element: what political and economic conditions enable people to solve these problems, and what conditions force them to resign themselves to trying to survive with the problems unsolved? How do societies choose among sustainable development (if that option exists), unsustainable development, sustainable non-development, and unsustainable non-development? Do free markets, government intervention in economies, powerful governments, weak governments, democratic processes, unequal distribution of wealth, resource endowments, population density, and so on exacerbate these problems, promote solutions, or turn out to be irrelevant to a society's capacity to solve these problems? If one wanted to solve these problems, where should effort – and whose effort? – be directed? Our attempt to explore these questions should improve our understanding of how societies work (and don't work), and will also be a crucial foundation for practical solutions – for designing remedies that those involved might actually have the incentive to adopt. Topics covered will include debates over sustainable development and alternative strategies for development, appropriate technology, sustainable agriculture, irrigation, deforestation, biodiversity conservation, desertification, indigenous knowledge, and decentralization. Along the way we will necessarily touch upon environmental economics and development economics as well as theories of political development. To do this in some depth so that we can appreciate the political and economic context provided by real societies, we will explore these issues through focused case studies, including Sub-Saharan Africa, Brazil, the Philippines, India, and China. This array of case studies incorporates a tremendous "spread" in terms of economic development, from desperate poverty to rapid economic growth, as well as variety in political forms, from dictatorship to established democracy. These variations will allow us to consider whether economic growth causes or solves environmental problems and whether democratic processes are helpful, damaging, or irrelevant in addressing environmental problems.
Biographical Information: I would like every student to fill out a form (Bio_form.doc on the COMPASS course website) giving details about their prior experience, exposure, knowledge, and interest in politics, environment, economics, and developing countries. This information will help me to tailor the lectures to the general orientation of as many students as possible, as well as provide a good insight into possible issues to focus on during class discussions. Every student must fill out the form and submit it to the COMPASS website. Specific directions will be provided in the form itself.

Assignments: In order to minimize risk and maximize student resilience during the term, we will have a lot of little assignments. This should help to keep the workload as even as possible throughout the term (prevents nervous breakdowns at the end), and the assignments are structured to give you the incentive to start early and keep up. We will be using COMPASS for most communications, so please get used to checking our course site for announcements and news.

Weekly assignments: There will be very short written assignment due at the end of every week to provide you with an incentive to keep up with readings. These assignments will take the form of a one-paragraph (less than 300 words, enforced strictly) comment on the week's readings and/or class lecture and discussions. It is designed to help you wrap up the week in a written form that you can access later for writing the mid-term and the final exams. Also, it should also give shy people a chance to shine, and to become less shy! (30% of course grade). I will give feedback on the weekly assignments approximately once a month. In order to get everyone up to speed, the first two assignments will not be graded (practice assignments), and only the best 8 weekly assignments will be included in the final grade. There will be no assignment for the first week.

Examinations: There will be three ‘midterm’ exams spaced across the term so that each one covers only one-third of the course material. These three exams correspond to the three main units into which the course is divided – 1) Sub-Saharan Africa, 2) Latin America and South-East Asia, and 3) India and China. All three exams will be take-home essays (less than 1000 words, enforced strictly), with plenty of choice and opportunity to construct individualized essays. Questions will be posted on Compass at least five days before the exam is due. Each exam will be 15% of total grade.

There will be no make-up exams. All assignments are due by the due date/time given; late assignments will incur a penalty. Any questions about grading of course work must be asked within two weeks after the grade was given. If you know in advance that you will miss a lecture, quiz, or assignment due date, notify me as soon as possible.

Conservation Social Science Lexicon Project: The CSS Lexicon Project is an initiative of the Society for Conservation Biology’s Social Science Working Group to construct an authoritative reference guide to terms and concepts in Conservation Social Science. The Lexicon Project is designed to facilitate communication among conservation scholars and practitioners, and is designed to be a dynamic resource, relying upon users for continual improvement. Each student will identify and upload TEN definitions of terms and concepts relevant to Conservation Social Science from the readings assigned for this course. These TEN terms should not already be defined on the CSS Lexicon website, and should also be different than those identified by other students in the class. At least TWO but no more than FOUR definitions from each of the three units into which the course is divided. Worth 15% of total grade.
Participation in class: Attendance in class is expected. Lectures will be designed to encourage vigorous participation, and the content and quality of participation will be evaluated weekly. This is your opportunity to get clarifications, ask questions that trouble you, solicit reactions from others on contradictions among different arguments and perspectives you have observed.

i>clicker: Students are required to purchase an i>clicker remote for in-class participation. i>clicker is a response system that allows individual students to respond to questions posed during class, and students will be graded on that feedback and/or in-class participation. In order to receive this credit, every student will need to register the i>clicker remote online within the first two weeks of class. You must have come to class at least once and voted on at least one question in order to complete this registration properly. Once you have voted on a question in the class, go to http://www.iclicker.com/registration. Complete the fields with your first name, last name, student ID, and remote ID. Your student ID should be your netID. Your netID is the first element of your Illinois email address (for example, my netID is achhatre and my email address is achhatre@illinois.edu). The remote ID is the series of numbers and sometimes letters found on the bottom of the back of your i>clicker remote. i>clicker will be used in every lecture, and you are responsible for bringing your remote to class.

There will be questions in almost every lecture, which students will answer using the i>clicker. I will ask a few questions based on readings or previous lectures, primarily to generate discussion but also to jog students’ memory. Grades will be assigned based on both participation and performance. The best-scoring 15 lectures will be counted out of a total of approximately 20 lectures with i>clicker points. Worth 10% of final grade.

Class etiquette: You would not expect your professor to eat meals during class, read a newspaper in the middle of a lecture, or be unprepared. Your professor deserves the same respect from you.

Required readings
Melissa Leach and Robin Mearns, editors, The Lie of the Land: Challenging Received Wisdom on the African Environment
Robin Broad with John Cavanagh, Plundering Paradise: The Struggle for the Environment in the Philippines
SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Introduction to Environmental Policy and Politics

Week 1: January 19, 21


Unit I: Environmental Politics and Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa

Week 2: January 26, 28

Environmental Narratives


Daniel Brockington and Katherine Homewood, “Wildlife, Pastoralists, and Science: Debates Concerning Mkomazi Game Reserve, Tanzania,” in Leach and Mearns, Lie of the Land, 91-104

James Fairhead and Melissa Leach, “Rethinking the Forest-Savanna Mosaic: Colonial Science and its Relics in West Africa,” in Leach and Mearns, Lie of the Land, 105-121


Allan Hoben, “The Cultural Construction of Environmental Policy: Paradigms and Politics in Ethiopia,” in Leach and Mearns, Lie of the Land, 186-208

Week 3: February 2, 4

Matters of State: Legibility and state control

James Scott, “Nature and Space,” Chapter 1 in James Scott, Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed (New Haven: Yale University Press), 11-52

Matters of State: African experience


Week 4: February 9, 11

New directions – Community-based natural resource management


Week 5: February 16, 18

Towards ecological co-governance


First Midterm due on Compass on or before Monday, February 22, 11:00AM.
Unit II: Environment and Development in Tropical Forests – Latin America and South-East Asia

Week 6: February 23, 25

Fate of the Amazon: National development and the environment


Social movements and struggle for resources in Latin America


Recommended Readings


Paige West and James Carrier, “Ecotourism and Authenticity: Getting away from it all?” Current Anthropology 45(4): 483-498, Aug-Oct 2004 (including responses)


Week 7: March 2, 4

Scientists, NGOs, and Indigenous Peoples


Responses to Mac Chapin, “A Challenge to Conservationists: Phase II,” World Watch 18(1): , Jan/Feb 2005 (Read the following responses:
1. From Conservation International
2. From the World Wildlife Fund (WWF)
3. From The Nature Conservancy
4. From the Ford Foundation
5. From the Congo Basin
6. From the First Nations Development Institute
7. The Author’s Response

Week 8: March 9, 11

Predicting dissipation of resource rents in the Philippines


Michael Ross, “The Philippines: The Legal Slaughter of the Forests,” Chapter 4 in Ross, Timber Booms, 54-86

**The Consequences of Tropical Deforestation**


**Week 9: March 16, 18**

**Oppression, Rebellion, and Democratization**


**Second Midterm due on Compass on or before Tuesday, March 30, 11:00AM. No class on March 30.**
Unit III: Environmental Politics in Mega Countries – India and China

Week 10-13: April 1-22

April 1
April 6 and 8 India
April 13 and 15 China
April 20 and 22 India and China compared

Readings to be selected by students based on their interests and shared with the rest of the class.

Week 14: April 27, 29

Conclusion: Science, scientists, and politics – lessons, warnings, pitfalls


Third Midterm due on Compass on or before Monday, May 4, 11:00AM. No class on May 4.