

PhD Course in

Political Ecology

Organized by

The Graduate School of International Development Studies, Roskilde University and Centre for Forests, Landscape and Planning, University of Copenhagen

June 4-8, 2012

Environmental conflict, land degradation, and environmental change are often defined in ‘apolitical’ terms such as ‘ecoscarcity’ or ‘modernisation’ and purported to be driven, among other things, by population growth; marginal people’s resource management; and lack of adoption and implementation of modern economic and scientific techniques. Political Ecology (PE) however, asserts that these environmental issues are inherently political and intrinsically linked to the political, economic and social context. Scholars from various disciplines and from different regions of the world have used PE to frame studies on resource and management challenges in fields such as environment and development, climate change, land-use, and conservation. This course will examine how PE has been used to frame research into natural resource management, including research design and methodologies, and will challenge students to explore the various ways this frame can be applied to their own projects.

This course aims to provide students with a general understanding of the main arguments within the discipline of PE while also allowing students to delve more deeply into the context of their individual PhD projects.

Themes covered

The course will provide an overview of the various PE theses of: degradation and marginalization; environmental conflict; conservation and control of and access to natural resources; and environmental identity and social movement. Some examples of relevant questions addressed by the course include:

- What insights into environmental and social challenges can be gained from a PE perspective?
- How does PE link to major ‘schools’ of social science, e.g. political economy, science studies, and critical theory?
- What are the implications of PE for choice of theory, concepts, research design, and methods in empirical research?

The course will explore these questions through both theoretical and empirical lenses, while also illustrating how PE relates to and is distinguished from other research areas that transcend the social and natural science disciplines.

Lecturers

Tim Forsyth

Dr Forsyth is a specialist on environment and development, with a focus on social and political theory and environmental governance. He has written on political ecology and environmental science, and on new ways to implement global environmental policy (such as the climate change convention) in developing countries through partnerships between state and non-state actors. He has degrees from the Universities of Oxford and London, and has held positions at the London School of Economics since 1995. He has also worked as a fellow at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House); the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex; and at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. He has more than five years' work and research experience in Asia.

Christian Lund

Christian is professor in International Development Studies at Roskilde University, Denmark. He has a keen interest in discussions about the state and politico-legal institutions, and the ways in which social action produces institutions of public authority. His research focuses on local politics and state formation: in particular socio-legal processes of conflict and their relationship to policy and politics as well as institutional arrangements pertaining to property and natural resources management. For close to two decades, Christian has worked on land and politics issues in West Africa with a particular interest in local politics and conflicts over natural resources.

Anja Nygren

Anja is associate Professor in Development Studies at the Department of Political and Economic Studies, University of Helsinki, Finland. Her areas of research expertise include environmental anthropology, political ecology, environmental governance, schemes of certification, global value chains, urban ethnography, protected area management, community forestry, decentralization, people-forest relations, livelihood strategies, local knowledge, and social justice. Her countries of experience are Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Mexico, and French Antilles.

Jesse Ribot

Jesse is professor of Geography at the Department of Geography, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research interests include; decentralization and democratic local government; natural resource tenure and access; distribution along natural resource commodity chains; and household vulnerability in the face of climate and environmental change. He has previous experience as a Senior Associate in the Institutions and Governance program at the World Resources Institute and is currently leading an initiative on Social Dimensions of Environmental Policy at the School of Earth, Society and Environment which is also supported by the Beckman Institute.

Jens Friis Lund

Jens Friis Lund is associate professor in forest governance in developing countries at the University of Copenhagen. His research has focused on natural resources decentralisation processes and community forestry in developing countries, in particular in Tanzania and Nepal. He has also done research on the political economy of timber governance in Ghana.

Course structure

The 5-day course will follow an interactive workshop style where lectures will be complemented with group discussions centred on the participants' own PhD projects.

During the first four days, mornings will be spent on lectures and discussions in plenum, while afternoons will be spent on a combination of group discussions on participants' papers and discussions on the basis of film displays.

On the fifth day, students will present their reading of select key books within Political Ecology.

Participant requirements

The course is open to all PhD students with a maximum of 25 participants. The course is particularly relevant for PhD projects that focus on the nexus of natural resource management and human society, in relation to issues of sustainability, climate adaptation, or resource access and conflicts in developing countries.

A **course fee** of **€150** will cover the costs of lunch, coffee/tea and water during the five days of the workshop as well as one dinner. Participants will be required to cover their own accommodation and transport to the course location. Upon admission to the course, participants will be provided with information on accommodation options.

To register for the course, one must submit an **abstract** of maximum 500 words to Anja Byg (aby@life.ku.dk) by **March 1st 2012** stating the project title, objectives, theoretical background, research methods, country of field work, stage of PhD project (i.e. recently commenced, pre-fieldwork, post-fieldwork, etc.) and how attending this course will benefit their project.

Letters of acceptance and the final course readings will be emailed to participants no later than March 15, 2012 and participants will then be required to submit a **course paper** of no more than 2,500 words by **May 15, 2012**. Participant papers should address themes from the literature and how these relate to the participants' own research. Further guidance on the paper will be emailed to the participants upon admission. The focus of the paper should be on (i) describing the issue to be investigated, (ii) describing how PE theories can be applied to the project. Participants should frame their papers according to their relevant stage in their research process in order to maximise the relevance of the paper to their individual project outcomes and milestones (i.e. participants in earlier stages of research may find it more relevant to discuss the literature in relation to research design, while those in the final stages may find it more relevant to use the paper to draft an article). Due to the limited word count, less relevant background and introduction to the project should be avoided allowing for a more thorough discussion related to the literature. This will also allow for greater feedback during the course.

Finally, and as mentioned above, participants will be required to work in groups in advance of the course to read and prepare joint written reviews and oral presentations of a classic book within PE. Participants will present in groups that have been formed in advance of the course. Each group is assigned one book well in advance of the course and is tasked with reading and discussing it with the aim of preparing two joint products: (i) a **written review of the book** (of maximum 1,000 words – to be submitted to Anja Byg, aby@life.ku.dk by **June 1, 2012** latest) and (ii) an **oral presentation** of the book during the last day of the course. Suggested book titles (to be revised):

- Arun Agrawal: Environmentalism
- Nancy C. Peluso: Rich Forests, Poor People

- Piers Blaikie: The Political Economy of Soil Erosion in Developing Countries
- James C. Scott: The Moral Economy of the Peasant
- Sara Berry: No Condition Is Permanent - The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Benedict Anderson: Imagined Communities

Venue

The course will take place at:
Forest & Landscape, University of Copenhagen
Rolighedsvej 23, 1958, Frederiksberg C
Denmark

Credit

8 ECTS credits and a course certificate will be awarded on successful completion of the course.

Reading list
To be compiled

Course programme

Day 1 – June 4, 2012

Time		Venue / Lecturers
08.30 – 09.00	<u>Arrival and morning coffee</u>	‘Von Langen’
09.00 – 10.30	<u>Welcome and introduction to the course</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A case of Political Ecology ▪ Introduction to the course 	‘Von Langen’ AB/JFL
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee break	‘Von Langen’
11.00 – 12.30	<u>Lecture 1: An introduction to Political Ecology</u> Robbins, P. (2004) Political Ecology: A critical introduction, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. Chapter 1. Neumann, R. (2005) Making Political Ecology, London: Hodder. Chapter 1. Walker, P. (2005) ‘Political ecology: where is the ecology?’ Progress in Human Geography 29: 1 73–8. Peet, R. and Watts, M. (2004, 2nd ed) Liberation Ecologies, London: Routledge. Chapter 1. Forsyth, T. (2003) Critical Political Ecology: the politics of environmental science, London: Routledge. Chapters 1 and 2. Discussants: to be decided (tbd)	‘Von Langen’ TF
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch	
13.30 – 15.15	<u>Lecture 2: Performance and Politics: Repertoires of Domination in Resource Access</u> Poteete, Amy and J. Ribot. 2011. ‘Repertoires of Domination: Decentralization as Process in Botswana and Senegal’ World Development Vol. 39, no. 3. <u>Film display: Weex Dunx</u> Ribot, J.C. 2009. Access over authority: Recentralizing benefits in Senegal’s forestry decentralization. Development and Change 40: 105–129. Ribot, J.C. Forthcoming. (to be written--on improvisation as politics or politics as improvisation)	‘Von Langen’ JR
15.15 – 15.30	Coffee	
15.30 – 17.30	<u>Participant paper session 1</u> Participants to discuss their papers in five groups of five (two papers in this session).	
18.00 – ???.??	Dinner at restaurant (paid for by organizers)	

Day 2 – June 5, 2012

Time		Venue / Lecturers
08.30 – 09.00	<u>Arrival and morning coffee</u>	‘Von Langen’ JFL
09.00 – 10.30	<u>Lecture 3: Anthro-politics</u> ▪ No readings	‘Von Langen’ CL
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee	‘Von Langen’
11.00 – 12.30	<u>Lecture 4: PE: Struggles over resources and representations</u> Li, T. 2007. Practices of assemblage and community forest management. <i>Economy and Society</i> 36(2): 263-293. Barney, K. 2009. Laos and the making of a relational frontier. <i>The Geographical Journal</i> 175(2): 146-159. Sletto, B. 2009. We drew what we imagined: Participatory mapping, performance and the arts of landscape making. <i>Current Anthropology</i> 50(4): 443-476. Walsh, A. 2005. The obvious aspects of ecological underprivilege in Ankarana, northern Madagascar. <i>American Anthropologist</i> 107(4): 654–665. Discussants: tbd	‘Von Langen’ AN
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch	
13.30 – 14.30	<u>Free exchange of ideas on PE and other matters!</u>	Public park/café
14.30 – 16.00	<u>Lecture 5: PE: How to do it in practice?</u> ▪ No readings	‘Von Langen’ JFL

Day 3 – June 6, 2012

Time		Venue / Lecturers
08.30 – 09.00	<u>Arrival and morning coffee</u>	‘Von Langen’ JFL
09.00 – 10.30	<p><u>Lecture 6: PE and science studies</u> Jasanoff, S. and Wynne, B. (1998) “Science and decisionmaking,” pp. 1-87 in Rayner, S. and Malone, E. (eds) Human Choice and Climate Change, Columbus: Battelle Press. Goldman, M. Nadasdy, P. and Turner, M. (eds) (2010) Knowing Nature, Transforming Ecologies: Science, Power, and Practice in Environmental Science and Management, Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1. Saberwal, V. (1997) “Science and the desiccationist discourse of the 20th Century,” Environment and History 3: 309-343. Leach, M. and Mearns, R. (eds) (1996) The Lie of the Land: Challenging Received Wisdom on the African Environment, Oxford: James Currey. Chapter 1. Davis, D. (2005) Indigenous knowledge and the desertification debate: problematizing expert knowledge in North Africa, Geoforum 36:4 509-24.</p> <p>Discussants: tbd</p>	‘Von Langen’ TF
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee	‘Von Langen’
11.00 – 12.30	<p><u>Lecture 7: Emancipation, enfranchisement, & representation</u> Appadurai, Arjun. 1984. "How Moral is South Asia's Economy? -- A Review Article" Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. XLIII, No. 3. Pp. 481-497. Fraser, Nancy. 2008. "From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a 'Postsocialist' age," Ch. 2, pp. 9-41, in Kevin Olson (ed) Adding Insult to Injury. London: Verso. Agrawal, Bina. 2010. Gender and Green Governance. New York: Oxford. Read chapter 1: "Presence and Representation", pp. 3-30.</p> <p>Discussants: tbd</p>	‘Von Langen’ JR
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch	
13.30 – 14.30	<p><u>Participant paper session 2</u></p> <p>Participants to discuss their papers in five groups of five (one paper in this session).</p>	
15.00 - ??	<u>Optional city tour</u>	

Day 4 – June 7, 2012

Time		Venue / Lecturers
08.30 – 09.00	<u>Arrival and morning coffee</u>	‘Von Langen’ JFL
09.00 – 10.30	<u>Lecture 8: Frontiers of land control</u> Sikor, T. and C. Lund 2009. Access and Property: A Question of Power and Authority. <i>Development and Change</i> 40(1): 1–22. Woods, K. 2011. Ceasefire capitalism: military—private partnerships, resource concessions and military—state building in the Burma—China borderlands. <i>Journal of Peasant Studies</i> 38(4): 747-770. Grajales, J. 2011. The rifle and the title: paramilitary violence, land grab and land control in Colombia. <i>Journal of Peasant Studies</i> 38(4): 771-792. Lund, C. 2011. Fragmented sovereignty: land reform and dispossession in Laos. <i>Journal of Peasant Studies</i> 38(4): 885-905. Discussants: tbd	‘Von Langen’ CL
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee	‘Von Langen’
11.00 – 12.30	<u>Lecture 9: The political ecology of environmental governance</u> Eden, Sally 2011. The politics of certification: Consumer knowledge, power, and global governance in ecolabeling. In <i>Global Political Ecology</i> (eds. R. Peet et al): 169-184. London: Routledge. Johnson, Leigh 2011. Climate change and the risk industry: The multiplication of fear and value. In <i>Global Political Ecology</i> (eds. R. Peet et al): 185-202. London: Routledge. Bumpus, A. G. & Liverman, D. M. 2011. Carbon colonialism? Offsets, greenhouse gas reductions and, sustainable development. <i>In: Global Political Ecology</i> (eds. R. Peet et al): 203-224. London: Routledge. Discussants: tbd	‘Von Langen’ AN
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch	
13.30 – 15.30	<u>Participant paper session 3</u> Participants to discuss their papers in five groups of five (two papers in this session).	
15.30 – 17.00	<u>Film display and discussion</u>	‘Von Langen’ CL/JFL

Day 5 – June 8, 2012

Time		Venue / Lecturers
08.30 – 09.00	<u>Arrival and morning coffee</u>	‘Von Langen’ JFL
09.00 – 10.30	<u>Book 1 and 2</u>	‘Von Langen’ CL/JFL
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee	‘Von Langen’
11.00 – 12.30	<u>Book 3 and 4</u>	‘Von Langen’ CL/JFL
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch	
13.30 – 14.15	<u>Book 5</u>	‘Von Langen’ CL/JFL
14.15 – 15.00	<u>Closing session</u>	JFL

AB: Anja Byg
AN: Anja Nygren
CL: Christian Lund
JFL: Jens Friis Lund
JR: Jesse Ribot
TF: Tim Forsyth