Winter Quarter 2004 Syllabus

ENVS 291-04: Advanced Readings in Political Ecology

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTENTIONS: WORKING THROUGH MEANING & SCALE

Time: Monday’s 10:30am-noon
Place: Interdisciplinary Sciences Building (ISB) room 455
Call Number: 39428 (3 units)
Contact: Dustin Mulvaney: dustin@ucsc.edu
Faculty sponsor: David Goodman (Environmental Studies)
Website: http://envs.ucsc.edu/pewg

This graduate student led seminar is part of an ongoing effort to engage with political ecology in a way that strengthens its usefulness and enriches its possibilities, as well as improves our ongoing research work, collaborations and critical inquiries. This quarter we will interrogate our own work in an effort to strengthen our own analysis of competing “environmental contentions” and the role of contested knowledge and unequal power in producing environmental narratives, policies and outcomes. Our critical analyses come into focus through a political ecological lens as described by Piers Blaikie in his 1999 piece, A Review of Political Ecology: Issues, Epistemology, and Analytical Narratives. (Zeitschrift für Wirtschaftsgeographie 43 (3-4): 131-147). He defines political ecological approaches as taking two main forms: First, political ecology explores “the interaction between changing environments and the socio-economy, in which landscapes and the physiographic processes acting upon them, are seen to have dialectical, historically derived and iterative relations with resource use and the socio-economic and political sets of relations that shape them”, and second, political ecology examines “different states of nature, their change through time, and their contested representations under conditions of unequal power; this usually involves the production and/or critique of scientific interpretations as well as others such as by the mass media, policy makers, formal and informal institutions, and various other actors in civil society” (1999, p.132). Also useful is Tim Forsyth’s (2003) approximation that political ecology “should seek to conduct critical analysis of the political factors that underlie competing definitions and explanations of environmental reality” (p. 278)


This quarter’s presenters: Doug Bevington, Max Boykoff, Roseann Cohen, Michael Goodman, Dustin Mulvaney, and Marisa Mitchell.

Course requirements: Graduate students enrolled in the course will be expected to facilitate discussion, engage with working papers, and prepare questions for discussion of the week’s readings at least once during the quarter. This class is sponsored by the Political Ecology Working Group; for a description of the Working Group and its processes, see the “about” link on the website listed above.

Week 1 ~ Jan 5th Introduction(s) to Political Ecology


Week 2 ~ Jan 12th Discussion

Winter Quarter 2004 Syllabus

Week 3 ~ Jan 19th Discussion, (HOLIDAY: time and place TBA)


Week 4 ~ Jan 26th Discussion


Week 5 ~ Feb 2nd Working Papers


Dustin Mulvaney: “Resistance Against Coexistence: A Political Ecology of Genetic Pollution and Intellectual Property Rights.”

Week 6 ~ Feb 9th Discussion


Week 7 ~ Feb 16th Working Papers (HOLIDAY: time and place TBA)


Week 8 ~ Feb 23rd Working Papers


Week 9 ~ March 1st Discussion


Week 10 ~ March 8th AAG Panel Session


Dustin Mulvaney: “Resistance Against Coexistence: A Political Ecology of Genetic Pollution and Intellectual Property Rights.”