ENVS 291, Political Ecology Working Group, Winter 2012
Time: Wednesdays 2:30 - 4 (even weeks of quarter)
Place: ISB 417
Faculty Sponsor: Jeff Bury (jbury@ucsc.edu) 428 ISB
Contacts: Jeff Jenkins jsjenkin@ucsc.edu ISB 448 or Costanza Rampini crampini@ucsc.edu ISB 425
Website: Forthcoming

Overview and requirements: This reading group and workshop will examine contemporary processes of environmental and resource governance in the diverse research contexts of the seminar’s participants. Facilitators will provide articles and book excerpts for group discussion and critique. Through this process, the group will explore common and emergent themes in distinct cases of resource governance and will work to situate each study in the broader theory and praxis of political ecology. This quarter’s theme will focus on scarcity and resources.

Proposed Readings:

Week 2 of Qtr: Introduction, planning and discussion.

Week 4 of Qtr: The beautiful and the dammed: The political ecology of water rights and dams


Week 6 of Qtr: Deep roots and new frontiers of political ecology (Wednesday 4-5:30)

Discussant: Dr. Jeffrey Bury on “Deep roots of political ecology”


**Week 8 of Qtr: Scarce resources, scarce discourses: Unequal access to scientific knowledge and technology**


**Week 10 of Qtr: The Limits to Scarcity**


*Political Ecology Working Group*

The Political Ecology Working Group of UC Santa Cruz is a graduate student-led forum for the discussion of foundational work and innovative research in the broadening field of political ecology. We define political ecology to be a critical recognition and exploration of the dynamics, properties, and meanings of 'politicized environments'. The format consists of a combination of weekly readings, speakers, and graduate student presentations. The group explores and debates the core issues of the field with the goal of strengthening and sharpening political ecology's conceptual, methodological, and theoretical tools for creating a more sustainable and just society. The broad foci of the group includes an inquiry of human/environment relations through the lenses of gender, race, class, livelihoods, hazards, resistance and resilience, environmental discourses and social movements, agroecology and food, health and embodiment, governance, science and technology, urban/rural issues, climate change, geographies of ethics, and the connections between production and consumption.

While mainly a forum for discussion, we are also concerned with creating real and practical links to resource dependent communities in both the global South and North. We wish to establish ties to progressive NGOs engaged in development, as well as with other research groups at UCSC and other institutions.

Graduate student professional development will be emphasized through presentation of works in progress and conference papers and a pragmatic interest in research proposal writing and critique. Future output will include individual and multi-authored working papers and workshops centered around the group's research foci.

*Working Group Processes*

The Working group is a democratically run collective and seeks to foster a collegial yet critical atmosphere in and around the bi-weekly discussion meetings. Each meeting is facilitated by a member (or members) of the group who provides a short review of the material for the week. The review includes discussion questions, critique, and the ties that the material makes to other literatures and scholarly work. These short reviews should be made available before the meeting through email or the
day of the discussion. Papers, when available, will be in electronic format and disseminated to the group on a future web page or will be available from a master set. Future syllabi will be generated in the previous quarter with input from all members as to focus and substance. Previous syllabi are available for review of the group’s thematic trajectory.