ENVS 291-12: Advanced Readings in Political Ecology

**Critical Analyses of Institutions, Inequality, and the Environment**

**Time:** Wednesday 12:30 – 2 PM  
**Place:** Interdisciplinary Sciences Building (ISB) room 455  
**Call Number:** #63138  
**Contact:** Max Boykoff, 489 ISB, max@duyure.org  
**Faculty sponsor:** Roberto Sanchez-Rodriguez (Environmental Studies)

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 focuses on analyses of inequality and the environment. Our readings begin with examinations of World Bank as well as United Nations reports, indicators, and activities on this subject. These institutions play key roles in providing data that are central to macro-representations of environmental and social inequality. After discussions regarding the efficacy of these representations, readings then move into Amartya Sen’s work on endowments and entitlements to contemplate how to make analyses and associated indicators more meaningful. We explore some critiques of Sen and then read selections from Anthony Bebbington’s extension of Sen’s work. Particular attention will be given to how these readings engage with the ‘ politicized environments’. 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 states that 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" (132).

This quarter will also feature five invited speakers.

- **Ben Crow**, Professor of Sociology, UCSC, will be presenting on the theme of sustainable industrialization in the context of the UCSC-Santa Cruz City Council “Green Enterprise Initiative” as well as a brief overview of the Atlas of Inequality project (week 1);
- **Jonathan Fox**, Professor and Chair of the Latin American and Latino Studies Department, UCSC, will be talking about the strengths and weaknesses of the concept of social capital (week 3);
- **Andrew Light**, Assistant Professor of Environmental Philosophy and Director of the Environmental Conservation Program at New York University will be presenting on the state of environmental ethics (week 5).
- **Manuel Pastor**, Professor of Latin American Latino Studies, UCSC, will be presenting on environmental justice (week 7);
- **Hugh Raffles**, Professor of Anthropology, UCSC, will be presenting on scale-making in Amazonia (week 8)

Graduate students enrolled in the course will be expected to facilitate discussion with written reviews, discussion questions and verbal summaries 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 description below (*).
Spring Quarter 2003 Syllabus

Week 1 ~ April 2

*Introduction to the spring course themes*

**Invited Guest:** Dr. Ben Crow, Associate Professor, Sociology Department, UCSC

**Readings:**

also review the Atlas of Inequality website: [http://ucatlas.ucsc.edu/bibliog.html](http://ucatlas.ucsc.edu/bibliog.html)

Week 2 ~ April 9

UNDP Human Development Reports.

World Bank - World Development Reports and their data CD Rom World Development Indicators

UNEP Environment reports

Week 3 ~ April 16

**Invited Guest:** Dr. Jonathan Fox, Professor, Latin American and Latino Studies Department, UCSC

**Readings:**

*Optional:*


Week 4 ~ April 23


*Optional:*


Spring Quarter 2003 Syllabus

**Week 5 ~ April 29 (Tuesday at 2:00 p.m., place TBA)**

*Invited Guest:* Dr. Andrew Light, Assistant Professor of Environmental Philosophy, New York University.

*Readings:*


**Week 6 ~ May 7**


**Week 7 ~ May 14**


*optional:*

**Week 8 ~ May 21**

*Invited Guest:* Dr. Hugh Raffles, Associate Professor, Anthropology Department, UCSC

*Readings:*


**Week 9 ~ May 28**

*Invited Guest:* Dr. Manuel Pastor, Professor, Latin American Latino Studies Department, and Director, Center for Justice, Tolerance and Community, UCSC

*Readings:*

**Week 10 ~ June 4**

Wrapping up. Discussions on future endeavors (e.g.’s PEWG website, planning for potential inter-campus workshop, and grants)

**LUNCHTIME POTLUCK**
Spring Quarter 2003 Syllabus

*Political Ecology Working Group*

The Political Ecology Working Group of UC Santa Cruz is a graduate student-led forum for the discussion of the 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 morality, and the polyvalent 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 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 thematic trajectory the group.