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. This quarter focuses on some of the foundational debates on nature and scarcity. Protection of wildlands and issues of population have long been a central focus of environmentalism, but political ecologists have offered notable critiques of these foci. The ensuing debates had a significant impact on the discourses around these issues, while at the same time helped to define political ecology as a field. We will be reading some of these foundational critiques as well as exploring the ways that they have transformed the discursive elements of activism. Particular attention will be given to how these debates engage with the ‘ politicized environments’ in which natural resources, scarcity and violence interact and how political ecology can lend itself to the discovery and clearer articulation of the dynamics and meanings that underlie these conflicts.

This quarter will also feature two invited speakers. Ron Herring, Professor of Government and Director of the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, Cornell University, will present his work on GMOs and India (week 7). Ben Crow, Professor of Sociology, UCSC, will be presenting on the theme of sustainable industrialization (week 9).

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 (*).

**Week 1 ~ January 8**

Introduction, syllabus dispersal, general overview.

**Week 2 ~ January 15**


**Week 3 ~ January 22**


*Optional:*


**Week 4 ~ January 29**


*Optional:*


**Week 5 ~ February 5**


*Optional:*


**Week 6 ~ February 12**


*Optional:*


**Week 7 ~ February 19**

*Invited Guest:*

Ron Herring, Professor of Government and Director, The Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, Cornell University

“GMOs in India”

**Week 8 ~ February 26**


*Optional:*


See also: Committee on Women, Population and the Environment <http://www.cwpe.org>.

**Week 9 ~ March 5**

*Invited Guest:*

Ben Crow, Department of Sociology, University of California, Santa Cruz


**Week 10 ~ March 12**


*Optional:*

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.