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 graduate student presentations of current and ongoing research as well as a number of guest presenters. Themes include commoditization and commodity systems, ecological Marxism, critiques of environmentalism and political ecology, and the social construction of environmental problems through the climate change debate. Each presentation is accompanied by a set of preparatory readings.

Graduate students facilitate discussion with written reviews and verbal summaries of the week’s readings. This class is sponsored by the Political Ecology Working Group. For a description of the Working Group and its processes, see the description below (*).

Faculty sponsor: Roberto Sanchez-Rodriguez (professor, Environmental Studies)

Week 1 ~ September 25
Introduction, syllabus dispersal, general overview.

Week 2 ~ October 2


Week 3 ~ October 9
Mike Goodman (doctoral candidate, Environmental Studies) presentation and paper – *Consuming Narratives: The Political Ecology of 'Alternative' Consumption*


Available online

Week 4 ~ October 16
Rose Cohen (doctoral student, Environmental Studies) presentation – [title TBA]

Week 5 ~ October 23


Week 6 ~ October 30

Discussion with James O’Connor (professor, Sociology) SPECIAL LOCATION AND TIME: at his home; time TBA (early evening)

Optional Reading:

*Available online*

**Week 7 ~ November 6**


**Week 8 ~ November 13**


All of the above are available online

**Week 9 ~ November 20**

Max Boykoff (doctoral student, Environmental Studies) presentation and paper; title - *Bias As Balance: Global Warming and the U.S. Prestige Press*

**Week 10 ~ November 27**

Discussion with Jonathan Fox (professor, Latino and Latin American Studies) (Readings TBA)

*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 'politiciized 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.