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. More than just aiming to incorporate race and gender into a political ecology framework, this class seeks to examine the work of category-making, and the way it depends on the (re)production of difference and power. We will directly explore how development projects and neoliberal agendas use difference both to incorporate and distance bodies and landscapes in a way that often results in the questionable success of development projects. By reviewing literature from feminist theory, geography, anthropology and other theoretical perspectives, we will bring attention to the contradictions inherent in category-making and the worlds it constructs. We will contextualize these interrogations by reviewing case studies and methodologies from the political ecology, political economy and development studies literature in order to question the often taken for granted categories upon which political ecology bases its analyses. Graduate students will facilitate discussion with written reviews and verbal summaries of the week’s readings. This class is sponsored by the Political Ecology Working Group (see below). Faculty sponsor: Ravi Rajan.

**Week 1 ~ Mar 27**
Introduction, syllabus dispersal, general overview.

**PART I: The Production of Difference/Questioning Categories**

**Week 2 ~ Apr 3**


Optional:


**Week 3 ~ Apr 10**


Optional:


**Week 4 ~ Apr 17**
Presentation: Ravi Rajan

**PART II: Mythmaking**

**Week 5 ~ Apr 24**


Optional:


**Week 6 ~ May 1**
Guest: Anna Tsing


Optional:

**Week 7 ~ May 8**

PART III: Toward a more inclusive political ecology

Week 8 ~ May 15
Presentation: Mike Goodman

Week 9 ~ May 22


Optional:


Week 10 ~ May 29

Rocheleau, Dianne. Participatory Research and the Race to Save the Planet: Questions, Critique and Lessons from the Field. Agriculture and Human Values.


Optional:

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 consisting 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. Initial links have been established with the Center for Agrofood Studies and Rural Change at UCSC and with the Institute for International Studies at UC Berkeley. 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 webpage 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.

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1 Or we can take more from Blaikie (1999): 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).