

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION (GEOG 314)

Tentative Syllabus

Spring 2014: Tu/Th 9:40 am to 11:10 am, Sage 4412

Instructor: Dr. Elizabeth Barron; Sage 4451; 424-7115; barrone@uwosh.edu

Office Hours: 11:30 am – 1:00 pm Tuesdays and Thursdays or by appointment

Text: (1) *Where the Buffalo Roam* by Anne Matthews (2) All other readings will be posted on D2L.
Please also purchase a packet of 3x5 notecards for attendance purposes.

Course description: Conservation is a significant form of environmental management that has emerged in many ways over the last several decades. In this class we will consider environmental conservation through the lens of the geographical sub-field of political ecology. Broadly speaking, political ecology is about the politics of environmental degradation and the environmental management approaches that emerge to address the resulting environmental “problems.” Whether one is talking about protecting the Amazonian rainforest, endangered species in the United States, or climate change, the environmental changes that underlie these issues and the efforts to address the resulting degradation are often discussed in scientific and managerial terms. Yet our understanding of changing environments and the efforts to control their use are intimately tied to social and cultural processes that are often highly *political*. Moreover, humans have been managing their environments for centuries; yet our current crises in environmental conservation seem to be particular modern problems that are worse in certain parts of the world than in others.

This course is neither a traditional class in environmental studies nor a traditional class in ecology. Rather, political ecology provides a critical *geographic* and *anthropological* perspective on environmental change and the evolving concepts of management and policy intended to deal with this change. Whereas environmental politics is most often interested with the workings of governments, political parties, and interest groups, political ecology is interested in the ways that peoples interact with places, including struggles over access to resources, the meanings that people give to nature/the environment and the ways in which these meanings determine legitimate uses of the environment, and the role *power* plays in shaping these interactions.

Likewise, whereas ecology often pursues environmental change in ways that separates humans from nature, political ecology recognizes humans as an inherent part of nature and as an element about which humans accrue knowledge through different modes of interaction. To explore these areas, we will examine the historical and political-economic contexts within which particular ideas about the environment *and* its management have arisen (part 1 of the course) and the responses to prevailing management regimes by those who live in particular places and who often seek to challenge them (parts 2 and 3 of the course). In the process, we will explore a variety of different social and political institutions at a variety of different geographic scales (e.g., household, local community, nation-state, global) and their relationship to the development and management of a broadly defined environment.

Course Goals: This course is designed to broaden your understanding of environmental conservation by:

1. *Developing* a critical perspective on explanations of environmental change and *management*, including the relationship of macro- and micro-political economic drivers.
2. *Developing* your capacity to understand the *processes* that produce environmental problems and particular management solutions.
3. *Practicing* and *further refining* your oral communication skills through regular class discussions.
- 4. *Further developing* your critical thinking skills through regular course participation and written assignments.**
- 5. *Practicing* and *further refining* your written analytical skills through structured writing assignments. Developing analytical writing skills is a major component of this course.**

Course Outcomes: By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. *Synthesize and apply principles from political ecology* to current events and independent research topics.
2. *Critically discuss* a range of environmental issues in both Minority and Majority World settings, highlighting the political economic and ecological complexity of these issues and the ways these issues are problematized.
3. *Critically evaluate* social drivers of environmental change and conflict, assessing who benefits and who does not from these changes.
4. *Generate clear and thoughtful analytical social science commentary* in the form of dialogue and writing of various lengths.

Course Orientation: Although class sessions will involve some lecturing (especially in the first unit), this *IS NOT* a lecture course. It *IS* a *reading- and discussion-intensive* course. The majority of class time will involve critical discussions of the assigned readings by you and your fellow students. Importantly, I see my role primarily as a facilitator, guiding these discussions with some key questions, and where necessary, providing clarification about the readings. In most cases I will provide some introductory material and a few questions for consideration, but you are expected to arrive to class prepared. ***Being prepared means that you: 1) carefully read the assigned material, 2) come to class with a copy of the reading containing your notes, and 3) bring a set of questions for discussion. If I think that the majority of the class is not properly prepared, I reserve the right to give pop quizzes on the assigned readings.***

Course Requirements and Grades: Below is a general guideline for how I think about grades:

- A: Demonstrated excellence in comprehension and ability to articulate an informed perspective through the use of critical thinking and analysis. Often includes reference to additional material, abstract concepts, or cumulative learning.
- B: Clear understanding of material and time spent engaging with subject matter and task. Or, some confusion, but demonstrated attempt at understanding, abstraction, and engaging with challenging topics.
- C: Sufficient completion of assigned work, but with little or no attention to detail, effort to excel, or investment in outcome.
- D: Insufficient completion of assigned work due to lack of attention to detail, lack of following instructions, lack of effort, lack of comprehension.
- F: Obvious lack of effort or ability to follow directions. Incomplete or absent assignment.

Your grade in this course will be calculated based on the following:

<u>Task</u>	<u>Points</u>
Attendance/Participation	50 points
Critical reading responses (4)	80 points
Exam 1	50 points
Exam 2	50 points
Final Case Study Analysis Paper:	
Paper proposal	25 points
Rough Draft	50 points
Final Draft	100 points
Presentation	25 points
<hr/> TOTAL	<hr/> 430 points

Final Grade Ranges: **A** 430-404; **A-** 403-387; **B+** 386-374; **B** 373-361; **B-** 360-344; **C+** 343-331; **C** 330-318; **C-** 317-300; **D** 299 – 258; **F** 257-0.

Attendance/Participation - In keeping with a strong liberal arts tradition that encourages active learning and complete participation in the education process, I expect you to attend class regularly. Attendance will be taken daily based on in-class writing, and reported four times throughout the semester on D2L in order for you to keep track of your attendance grade. In general, you will receive zero points for non-attendance, 1 point for attendance, and 2 points for attendance and participation. This means that you will **only receive half of the available points if you attend regularly but never actively participate.**

All course deadlines and test dates are listed here and on the course calendar on D2L. **You are responsible** for meeting deadlines and knowing dates for tests and quizzes, whether I remind you in class or not. If we experience changes to the schedule because of snow days or other circumstances, I will revise the calendar on D2L, and try to make announcements in class so that you can revise your own copy of the syllabus and your schedule accordingly. If you are not present in class when this happens, it is **your responsibility** to obtain the updated information. In other words, this is not an acceptable excuse for missing a deadline.

Participation is the most flexible part of your grade. When thinking about your participation, please remember: quantity does not always mean quality. This is true on two levels: (1) If you speak up a lot in class, but this often takes the form of criticizing your classmates or providing uninformed commentary, this is not high quality participation. (2) the quality of your preparation and your participation is not merely a function of the quantity of time you devote to the class. *If you are putting in a lot of time and still struggling, you need to let me know by coming to see me in my office.*

Readings - Except for the book we will read at the end of the semester (available through the bookstore); required readings will be posted to the D2L course website for each class session. Please let me know if any readings are missing or hard to access.

Critical reading responses* – You are required to turn in reading responses for 4 of the 5 readings followed by “Reading Response” in the reading schedule below. **The presentations response is required.** In other words, there is one time during the semester when you can choose not to turn in a

reading response, and you will not be penalized. However, I strongly recommend that you plan on writing all five, and having your lowest grade dropped. It is my experience that the first reading response allows students to better understand the caliber of work expected in this course. Like attendance and participation, the points for these may seem low, but cumulatively they can make a big difference in your final grade.

Exams – There are two exams in this course, both designed to test you on topics and material learned through lectures and discussion, and also on your critical thinking development. The exams are worth 50 points each, and will be a combination of short answer and essay questions. In order to succeed on the exams you should plan on taking notes during class lectures and discussions, and memorizing major ideas, concepts, debates and arguments that you will be exposed to in assigned readings, in-class discussions and video presentations.

Final paper project – This course includes a term paper (11-12 pages not including bibliography, title, name etc.) exploring an environmental issue or problem of interest to you (a list of suggested paper topics will be provided). Your paper should be informed by the class readings and inspired through your own research. To help you with time management, this project will be developed in three phases. Given the demands at the end of the semester, I highly encourage you to work steadily throughout the entire semester for the best grade possible.

Course Expectations: This is a 300-level course and I expect that you will handle yourself accordingly (e.g., come to class on-time; make a serious effort to engage readings, discussions, and assignments; and treat your fellow students with respect and tolerance). This is a demanding class and I have high expectations for your participation. You should plan to spend a minimum of 2 – 3 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. Finally, I expect that you will uphold the institutional norms of the college, including academic honesty and integrity.

Academic Honesty – Plagiarism, cheating, stealing, or lying will not be tolerated in this class. I take these subjects very seriously and will take all available measures to address suspected incidents of any of these. If you do not know what constitutes cheating, plagiarism, stealing, or lying, please see the college’s website (www.uwosh.edu/dean/conduct.htm) or ask me. Committing any of these acts in this class will result in you failing the class and referral to the Dean’s office for further disciplinary action, which is defined in UWS 14.03, Wisconsin Administrative Code. Students on the UW Oshkosh campus have been suspended from the University for academic misconduct.

Late Work – With the exception of reading summaries, assignments may be turned in late only if there is a legitimate reason. Reading summaries may not be turned in late, for any reason. Should something happen to preclude you from turning in an assignment, you should contact me immediately (by phone or in an email). Other than reading responses, all late assignments will be penalized five percentage points off the total grade for every day it is late (i.e. a paper handed in two days late that would have earned a student an 80% will earn that student 70%).

Courtesy and Tolerance – This class is about ideas and their application to the broad topic of environmental change and management. As the course progresses, you are likely to discover that you disagree with—whether the ideas presented by or opinions of—the authors you are reading, me, and/or your fellow students. I strongly believe that disagreements are the potential sources of new insights and new knowledge, but only when the discussions about these disagreements focus on the ideas involved and the evidence that is presented to support them. I expect discussions in this class to speak to these ideas and the strength of evidence, not target specific people. Discussions should be based on information and analysis, not emotion or volume.

Special Circumstances – UWO is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Students with disabilities should contact Disability Services (424-3100 (voice) or 424-1319 (TTY)) or visit their web site at <http://www.uwosh.edu/dean/disabilities.htm> for the University's accommodation request form and documentation requirements as soon as possible to discuss academic accommodations and/or services. If you have any kind of special circumstances that I should know about, including any kind of diagnosed or undiagnosed disability or you are an athlete competing on a college team, please tell me right away. Sharing this information with me will allow me to create a suitable learning environment for you and further facilitate your academic success. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

Tentative Schedule

Date	Topic/Reading assignment due date listed:	Assignment
WEEK 1	Getting Situated: introduction to critical thinking and analysis	
Feb 4	Introduction to the course *Make list of paper topics	
Feb 6	Takacs, 2003. How Does Your Positionality Bias Your Epistemology? <i>The NEA Higher Ed. Journal</i> . 27-38	In class writing exercise
WEEK 2	Troubling Our Ideas about Nature	
Feb 11	REQ: W. Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in Cronon, ed., <i>Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature</i> (New York: Norton, 1996), 69-90. OPT: Cronon, "Introduction" p. 23-56.	
Feb 13	Introduction and chapter 1 in P. Robbins <i>Political Ecology</i> (Malden: Blackwell, 2004) p. 1-24.	Reading Response
WEEK 3	Reinterpreting conservation: Introduction to political ecology	
Feb 18	Chapters 2 & 3 in P. Robbins <i>Political Ecology</i> , pp. 25-72.	
Feb 20	Chapter 9 in P. Robbins, <i>Political Ecology</i> , pp. 176-198.	Reading Response
WEEK 4	Conservation and Control: Methods and stakeholders	
Feb 25	Interview with Melissa Leach in the guardian, 16 July 2007: http://www.theguardian.com/education/2007/jul/17/highereducationprofile.academicexperts . **Start reading article for 2/27** In Class movie and discussion: G. Maughan, <i>Second Nature</i> . With: J. Fairhead, M. Leach, D. Millimouno.	
Feb 27	Fairhead, J. and M. Leach. 1995. Reading Forest History Backwards: The Interaction of Policy and Local Land Use in Guinea's Forest-Savanna Mosaic, 1893-1993. <i>Environment and History</i> (1): 55-91.	
WEEK 5	Environmental Knowledge(s)	
Mar 4	Exam 1	In class exam
Mar 6	How to write a social science paper day: What's special about this? Finding sources, citation formats, annotated bibliography, writing outlines. Read something on writing and peer review? No reading, because you should be reading for your papers...	
WEEK 6	Environmental Knowledge(s): Approaches	
Mar 11	REQ: Castree, N. Socializing Nature: Theory, Practice, and Politics, in: Castree and Braun (eds) <i>Social Nature</i> , pp. 1-21	Paper Proposals Due
Mar 13	Berkes, F. <i>Sacred Ecology</i> Chapters 1 (1-20) AND 8: (161-180)	
WEEK 7	Environmental Knowledge(s): Methods and stakeholders	
Mar 18	Barron, E.S., 2011. The emergence and coalescence of fungal conservation social networks in Europe and the U.S.A. <i>Fungal Ecology</i> 4: 124-133. Pringle, A. et al. 2011. Fungi and the Anthropocene: Biodiversity Discovery in an Epoch of Loss. <i>Fungal Ecology</i> 4: 121-123.	

Mar 20	Emery, M., 2001. Who knows? Local non-timber forest product knowledge and stewardship practices in northern Michigan, in: Emery, M., McLain, R. (Eds.), <i>Non-timber Forest Products</i> . Haworth Press, Inc., Binghamton, NY, pp. 123 - 139. Emery, M. and E.S. Barron, 2010. Using Local Ecological Knowledge to Assess Morel Decline in the U.S. mid-Atlantic Region. <i>Economic Botany</i> 64(3): 205-216.	Reading Response
WEEK 8	Spring Break	
Mar 25	Spring Break	No class
Mar 27	Spring Break	No class
WEEK 9	Common Pool Resources	
Apr 1	Hardin, G. 1968. Tragedy of the Commons. <i>Science</i> 162 (3859): 1243-1248 Ostrom, E. Institutional Arrangements for Resolving the Commons Dilemma, in: McCay and Acheson (1987) <i>Questions of the Commons</i> , pp. 250-265.	
Apr 3	Exam 2 *Extra credit: Go hear Winona LaDuke speak tonight at 7 pm	Exam 2
WEEK 10	The Commons	
Apr 8	In class movie: Facing the Storm: Story of the American Bison	
Apr 10	Free day: work on your term paper!	
WEEK 11	The Commons: Case study with Buffalo Commons	
Apr 15	Peer review Day	Rough Drafts Due
Apr 17	Popper and Popper, 1999. The Buffalo Commons: Metaphor as Method. <i>Geographical Review</i> 89(4): 491-510.	
WEEK 12	Case Study Reading: The Buffalo Commons	
Apr 22	Chapters 1 & 2	
Apr 24	Chapters 3 & 4	
WEEK 13	Academic work - a way forward?	
Apr 29	Popper and Popper. 2010. Smart Decline in Post-Carbon Cities. Popper and Popper. 2006. The onset of the Buffalo Commons. <i>JOW</i> 45(2): 29-34.	Reading Response
May 1	In-class debate on the Commons	
WEEK 14	Student Papers	
May 6	Paper presentations	Final Papers Due
May 8	No class	
WEEK 15	Student Papers	
May 13	Paper presentations	
May 15	Paper presentations	Presentations response*