

**Political Ecology
ESPM 168
Professor Nancy Peluso**

**Course Description and Requirements
Spring, 2017
159 Mulford Hall
4 Credits**

Class time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:30-5

Discussion Sections :

DS 101 W 9-10 am 2038 Valley Life Sciences (Ashton Wesner)
DS 102 W 3-4 pm 115 Kroeber (Abby Martin)
DS 103 W 4-5 pm 110 Barker (Lisa Kelley)
DS 104 W 5-6 pm 2032 Valley Life Sciences (Lisa Kelley)
DS 105 W 2 -3 pm 138 Morgan Hall (Annah Zhu)

Office Hours:

Prof. Nancy Peluso
(139 Giannini) (Sign up sheet on door) Mondays 10-12
GSI Lisa Kelley 5 :10-6 Tuesdays 213 Mulford
GSI Ashton Wesner 10:10 -11 Wednesdays
GSI Annah Zhu 3:10 -4 Wednesdays

Course Description

This class is an introduction to the field of Political Ecology. Political Ecology is a field of study and research that focuses largely on socio-environmental conflicts and their origins. Political ecology analyses are historically grounded, attendant to socio-environmental relations and constructions, and concerned with the ways that constantly changing, multi-scalar political economies and cultural politics affect access to and control of resources. In this class, we will use concepts and framings from agrarian-environmental studies, political economy of environment, and post-structural framings to understand and analyze the origins and trajectories of environmental conflicts and problems and to think about steps toward solutions.

Political Ecology has expanded the empirical study of socio-environmental politics, livelihood struggles, and resource control beyond the work of interdisciplinary fields focused on human-environment interactions such as cultural ecology and environmental history, and has combined work on environmental problems with historically situated agrarian studies. Political ecologists have adapted and challenged ideas and concepts from these earlier fields, often by taking more seriously "the nature of the resource" or the "construction of nature" into account in our analyses. Though the degree to which political ecologists actually combine the methods and theories of ecological or physical

sciences with social science and history varies quite widely, we all seek to make more integrated analyses of the social and socio-ecological relations of environment, resources, and natures. Political ecologists in the 1980s first sought to understand the social relations of resource use, degradation, and conflict as emergent from combined political-economic, cultural, historical, and ecological contexts. Feminist perspectives and approaches, as well as debates over human and various forms of environmental agency in environmental history, emerged at about the same time and have continued to influence political ecology. The core of the field continues to focus on cross-cutting issues of culture, power, nature, and justice, and the ways these articulate with and alter the courses of environmental transformations.

Classes will take multiple forms including lectures, discussions, films, and occasional small group work and exercises in class. The examples I use in lectures come from the readings, my own fieldwork, and current and historical events. Readings will be covered in greater depth in discussion sections.

Class Requirements

1. Weekly Reading Responses [15% of grade] One page, single-spaced, hard copies of weekly reading commentaries are due at the beginning of the Tuesday lecture. You need to turn in 10 of these during the semester. We will average your grades on the 8 best of these but you are still responsible to turn in 10.

Assignments are to be typed, printed, and handed in as both hard copies and put up on the bcourses website under “assignments.” Only the GSIs and the Professor will have access to students’ responses. In their responses to the readings, students should:

- Write no more than 1 page, with 1.15 spacing, 12 point font, and decent tabs.
- Provide a paragraph summarizing the main claims and arguments of all the authors read for that week, each in relation to the others.
- Provide a second or third paragraph that assesses the authors’ positions, their use of evidence to make their points, and their arguments in relation to one another, their empirical material, and/or the current or previous ideas covered in class.

Writing well counts on your reading responses as much as on papers. We expect you to use correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. You also need to write clearly, finishing sentences and paragraphs, and making sure each response has a beginning, middle, and end. Please proofread manually, not only with spell check or grammar check.

For assistance with your writing, you can go to the undergraduate writing resource center. Check this site out: <http://slc.berkeley.edu/writing>

Also, consider downloading and reading all or some of this writing guide, produced in our own sociology department.

http://sociology.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/documents/student_services/writing_guide/Writing%20for%20Sociology%20Guide%20Second%20Edition.pdf

2. Attendance [10 % of grade, divided evenly between attendance in discussions and lectures].

Attending lectures, discussion section, and reading are all critical to your understanding of the material: my power-point presentations provide only the bare minimum of outlines and I will be adding exemplary and explanatory material to them during class. Power-points will be posted on bspace after lecture, however you will need to have your own files of class and discussion notes. Students are responsible for all lecture and section material and should not expect to take this class as an "absentee."

3. Participation in class and section [5 % of grade] means asking and answering reading or lecture-driven questions and making comments that indicate an engagement with the readings, lectures. *Evidence of having read the articles, mostly through your reading responses.*

4. Research Paper 1 [20% of grade] Due March 24, 2017

5. Research Paper 2 [25% of grade] Due April 28, 2017

6. Final Exam. [25 % of grade] The final exam will be short and longer essays, and cover material from lectures, discussion sections, readings, and films. It will be a take home exam, passed out during or before reading week and due on May 8th in hard copy.

Reader: A reader is available at Krishna Copy on University Avenue.

Class etiquette: No cell phones; no texting or tweeting; no web-surfing, no facebooking, twittering, or other social media. PLEASE. It is very distracting for other students.

Plagiarism: Plagiarizers will be reported to the Dean of Students and given an F on the assignment. It violates the *Berkeley Student Code of Conduct*. As the code states: "Plagiarism includes use of intellectual material produced by another person without acknowledging its source" (cited on <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/how-to-find/cite-sources>).

ESPM 168
Political Ecology Syllabus and Reading List
Spring 2017

Introduction: Overview of Political Ecology

Week 1 (January 17 and 19) *Overview of class and the field*

Objectives:

- Introduce the scope and approach of the course
- Students should understand the course's schedule, ground rules, and logistics for the semester
- Research lecture; example from Nancy's work to introduce ideas of "Critical Realism," "ways of seeing," "socio-natures," materialities, and representing nature and the material world as "productions "
- Explain and unpack: What is an environmental problem, puzzle, or conflict, and how does Political Ecology attempt to analyze, explain, and suggest changes in policy and practice?

Reading:

- Robbins, Paul. 2011. *Political Ecology, A Critical Introduction*. Oxford, Blackwell Publishing. 1-24.
- Elmhirst, Rebecca. 2011. Introducing new feminist political ecology. *Geoforum*

Week 2 (January 24 and 26) *Overview of Political Ecology*

Objectives: To discuss in depth and through different kinds of case studies how political ecology works as a mode of analysis and as a means of finding the socioenvironmental origins of so called environmental problems.

Reading:

- Greenough, Paul. 2003. Bio-Ironies of the fractured forest: In, Candace Slater, ed., *In Search of the Rainforest*. Raleigh and Durham: Duke University Press.
- Ybarra M. 2012. Taming the jungle, saving the Maya forest: Sedimented counterinsurgency practices in contemporary Guatemalan conservation. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 39: 479-502.

Recommended:

- Ichinkhorloo, Byambabaatar, and Emily T. Yeh. "Ephemeral 'communities': spatiality and politics in rangeland interventions in Mongolia." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 43.5 (2016): 1010-1034.

Building Block I. Political-economy of the Environment: Commodities, Accumulation, Property, Access

Week 3 (Jan 31 & Feb 2) *Natures and Environments as Commodities and Resources*

Objectives:

- Understand what commodities and “resources” are
- Explain resource materialities and how that matters to governance, claiming, accessing
- Political ecology of California’s resources

Reading:

- Appadurai, A. 1986. “Introduction: commodities and the politics of value.” *In: Appadurai, A., (ed). The Social Life of Things: Commodities in cultural perspective.*
- Walker, Richard. 2001. California's golden road to riches: Natural resources and regional capitalism, 1848-1940. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers.* 91(1): 167-99.
- Bakker, Karen. 2012. The “matter of nature” in Economic Geography. *In The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Economic Geography.* Edited by Trevor Barnes, Jamie Peck, Eric Sheppard.

Recommended:

- Ey, Melina, and Meg Sherval. 2015. Exploring the minescape: engaging with the complexity of the extractive sector. *Area* 48:2:176-182. Doi: 10.1111/area.12245.
- Bakker, Karen and Gavin Bridge. 2006. Material worlds? Resource geographies and the 'matter of nature'. *Progress in Human Geography* 30: 1: 5-27

Thursday, Feb. 2 Writing workshop 1. Please bring, in hard copy, one of your previous reading responses

Week 4. (Feb. 7 and 9) *Nature and Accumulation I. Primitive Accumulation, Enclosure, Labor*

Objectives:

- Understand “primitive accumulation” and its connection to land and labor relations.
- Demonstrate the concept's use in analyzing society-nature relations in terms of land and resource control as well as of the human (gendered) body.

Readings:

- Marx, Karl. "The secret of primitive accumulation and the expropriation of the agricultural population." Chapters 26 and 27 of *Capital*, Vol 1.
- Federici, Silvia 2004. "The accumulation of labor and the degradation of women: Constructing 'difference' in the 'Transition to capitalism'" *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*. New York, Autonomedia, pp. 61-131.

Week 5 (Feb. 14 and 16) *Nature and Accumulation II: Accumulation by Dispossession and Degradation*

Objectives:

- Consider the difference(s) that "nature" makes to the ways capitalism, neoliberalism, and property take form
- Start learning how capitalism works and expands as new commodities are produced and normalized, creating new contexts and mechanisms of enclosure
- Understand accumulation by dispossession in relation to primitive accumulation

In class film: Harvey on crisis and accumulation

Readings:

- David Harvey. 2006. excerpt on accumulation by dispossession.
- DeAngelis, 2004. Separating the doing and the deed: Capitalism and the continuous character of enclosures. *Historical Materialism* 12:2:57-87
- Massey, Doreen. A Global Sense of Place. In *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 9 pp.
<https://www.unc.edu/courses/2006spring/geog/021/001/massey.pdf>
- Kelly, Alice. 2011. Conservation practice as primitive accumulation. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 38: pp.

Week 6 (Feb. 21 and 23): *Access in relation to Property*

Objectives:

- Differentiate between the social relations of property and access and demonstrate some of the ways these concepts are used in political ecology.

Reading:

- Ribot, Jesse, and Nancy Peluso. 2003. "A theory of access" *Rural Sociology* 68 (2): 153-181.
- Elmhirst, Rebecca. 2011. Migrant pathways to resource access in Lampung's political forest : Gender, citizenship and creative conjugality. *Geoforum* 42:2:173-183.
- Alden-Wiley, Liz. The global land grab: the new enclosures. In, *The Wealth of the commons: A world between market and state*. Edited by The Commons Strategy Group.

Recommended:

- White, Ben, Saturnino M. Borrás Jr., Ruth Hall, Ian Scoones, and Wendy Wolford, Wendy. 2012. The new enclosures: critical perspectives on corporate land deals. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 39:3-4: 619-647.
- John F. McCarthy (2010) Processes of inclusion and adverse incorporation: oil palm and agrarian change in Sumatra, Indonesia, *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 37:4, 821-850.
- Osborne, Tracey Muttoo. 2011. Carbon forestry and agrarian change: Access and land control in a Mexican rainforest, *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 38:4, 859-883, DOI:10.1080/03066150.2011.611281
- Asher, Kiran. (2004). Texts in context: Afro-Colombian women's activism in the Pacific Lowlands of Colombia. *Feminist review* 78(1): 38-55.

Week 7 (Feb. 28 and March 2) *Territorialization and questions of sovereignty*

Objective : To differentiate territorialization from property and enclosure and to see some connections between sovereignty and territory.

Reading:

- Vandergeest and Peluso 1995; Territorialization and State Power in Thailand. *Theory and Society* 24: 385-426.
- Corson, Catherine. 2011. "Territorialization, enclosure and neoliberalism: Non-state influence in struggles over Madagascar's forests." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 38: 4: 703-726.
- Lunstrum E. (2013) Articulated sovereignty: extending Mozambican state power through the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park. *Political Geography* 36: 1-11.

Recommended:

- Lund, Christian. 2011. Fragmented sovereignty. *Journal of Peasant Studies* 38:4: 885-905.

Building Block II. History in Political Ecology : trajectories of peace and conflict

Week 8 (March 7 and 9) *Approaches to using history in Political Ecology*

Objectives:

- To show that histories are an inherent component of Political Economy and Political Ecology approaches
- Understand the importance of theoretically driven or underpinned historical research to political ecology.
- Demonstrate some ways of doing historical political ecology

Readings:

- Davis, Diana. 2015. Historical approaches to political ecology. *Routledge International Handbook of Political Ecology*. Oxford and New York: Routledge.

- Peluso, Nancy Lee. 2012. What's nature got to do with it? A situated historical perspective on socio-natural commodities. *Development and Change*, 43 (1): 79-104.
- Arce-Nazario, Javier A. Human landscapes have complex trajectories: reconstructing Peruvian Amazon landscape history from 1948 to 2005. *Landscape Ecology* 22:1: 89-101.

March 9: Writing Workshop II. Bring a hard copy of the first draft of your first paper for this class.

Week 9 (March 14 and 16). Agrarian and environmental change

Objectives:

- To understand agrarian and environmental violence as an outcome of changing political economic relationships
- agrarian and environmental transitions
- legality and illegality
- political economic transformations as cultural transformations.

Readings:

- Bobrow-Strain, Aaron. 2001. Between a ranch and a hard place: Violence, scarcity, and meaning in Chiapas, Mexico. Pp. 155-185 in Peluso, Nancy Lee, and Michael Watts (eds.). *Violent Environments*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- LeBillon, Philippe. 2008. Diamond wars? Conflict diamonds and geographies of resource wars. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 98:2:345-372.
- Richards, P. (2005). "To fight or to farm? Agrarian dimensions of the Mano River conflicts (Liberia and Sierra Leone)." *African Affairs* 104: 417: 571-590.

Recommended:

- Douglas Hay. 'Poaching and the game laws on Cannock Chase'. In Douglas Hay, Peter Linebaugh, John G. Rule, E.P. Thompson and Cal Winslow (eds.), *Albion's fatal tree: crime and society in eighteenth-century England*. 1975.
- Asher, Kiran. (2004). Texts in context: Afro-Colombian women's activism in the Pacific lowlands of Colombia. *Feminist Review* 78:1: 38-55.

Week 10 (March 21 and 23) *Violence and the Law*

Objectives:

To think about contemporary and historical forms of violence that are supported by law, policy, and other kinds of structural and institutional arrangements.

Readings:

- Zalik A. (2009) Zones of exclusion: Offshore extraction, the contestation of space and physical displacement in the Nigerian Delta and the Mexican Gulf. *Antipode* 41: 557-582.
- Nixon, R. (2011). "Slow violence, gender, and the environmentalism of the poor." *Environment at the Margins: Literary and Environmental Studies in Africa*: 257-285. http://www.english.wisc.edu/rdnixon/files/slow_violence.pdf

Recommended:

- Duffy R. (2016) War, by conservation. *Geoforum* 69: 238-248.
- Lunstrum E. (2014) Green militarization: Anti-poaching efforts and the spatial contours of Kruger National Park. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 104: 4: 816-832.

Paper 1 Due on Friday, March 24, 2016. Place paper on Peluso's Door by 3 P.M.

March 28 and 30: Spring Break !!!

Building Block III. Discourse Analysis and Post-Structural Approaches in Political Ecology

Week 11 (April 4 and 6) *Discourses and governance*

Objectives:

To understand formal ideas of discourse as pertains to environmental governance, governmentality, and their manifestations

Readings:

- Foucault, Michel. 2004 (1978) trans. Graham Burchell. Chapters 4 and 5, lectures on 1 and 8 February 1978, concerning governmentality in *Security, Territory, Population*. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78. New York: Picador. Pp. 87-134.
- Li, Tania Murray. 2007. Practices of Assemblage and Community Forestry Management. *Economy and Society* Volume 36 Number 2 May 2007: 263-293

Recommended:

- Rose, Nikolas. 1999. Pp 15-60 in *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Epstein, Charlotte. 2008. Introduction. *The Power of Words in International Relations: Birth of an Anti-Whaling Discourse*.

Week 12 (April 11 and 13) *Power-knowledge Politics, how discourse analysis help us understand conflictual relationships*

Objectives:

- To understand the notion of situated knowledges
- To deepen our political ecological understanding of produced and political natures

Readings:

- Haraway, Donna. 1988. "Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism as a site of discourse on the privilege of partial perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14:3 (1988): 575-599.
- Kosek J. (2010) Ecologies of empire: On the new uses of the honeybee. *Cultural Anthropology* 25: 650–678.
- Holt, Flora Lu. 2005. The catch-22 of conservation: Indigenous peoples, biologists, and cultural change. *Human Ecology*: 33: 2. DOI: 10.1007/s10745-005-2432-X

Recommended:

- Haraway, Donna. 1984-85. Teddy bear patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-1913. *Social Text*: 11: 20-64

Week 13 (April 18 and 20) *Narrative analyses and the discourses producing and produced by them*

Objectives:

Provide more examples of narrative analysis in historical and contemporary cases

Readings:

Readings:

- Raffles, Hugh. 1999. Local theory: Nature and the making of the Amazonian place. *Cultural Anthropology* 14(3):323-360.
- Cronon, William. 1995. The trouble with wilderness; or, getting back to the wrong nature. In William Cronon, ed., *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995, 69-90.
- DiChiro, Giovanna. 2003. Beyond Eco-liberal “common futures.” Pp 204-231, In, *Race, Nature and the Construction of Difference*. Edited by Donald Moore, Jake Kosek, and Anand Pandian. Raleigh, NC: Duke University Press.

Note: April 20th is Writing workshop III, for final paper. Bring a draft of your final paper in hard copy.

IV. Putting it all together: Political Ecology as analytic approach for academics and other analysts

Week 14 (April 25 and 27) *Putting political ecology together again.*

Readings:

- Hecht, Susanna B. 2010. The new rurality: globalization, peasants, and the paradoxes of landscapes. *Land Use Policy* 27:2:161-169.
- Peluso, Nancy Lee, & Peter Vandergeest. 2011. Political ecologies of war and forests: Counterinsurgencies and the making of national natures. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*: 101:3: 587-608. DOI: 10.1080/00045608.2011.560064
- Carney, Judith. 1996. Landscapes of technology transfer: Rice cultivation and African continuities *Technology and Culture* 37: 1:5-35

Evaluations and Review.

Final Paper due: April 28 2015 on Nancy's door, 139 Giannini Hall.

Final Exam: Take Home Exam due May 8, 2017