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**Office: Guggenheim 207**

**Office hours: Tues/Thurs 2-3pm**

**IAFS 4500: Global Political Ecology**



This course explores the relationship between politics (broadly defined) and the environment at the global level. We will consider a range of challenges and environmental issues that have explicit global impact and/or are nonetheless considered “global” because they are endemic in many places around the world. Drawing on the theoretical underpinnings of political ecology and case studies around the world, this course explores themes such as: global water politics; urbanization and city environments; constructions of nature and wildlife preservation; the production and consumption of food; disaster governance; and carbon offsets to address climate change. In the process, we examine and critically evaluate differing theoretical frames employed by political ecologists, including approaches to environmental knowledge and discourse, political economy, and environmental justice among others. Students of the course will take positions on key global environmental debates, as well as evaluate empirical evidence and theoretical perspectives, through in-class discussions, reflection papers, and developing a final policy analysis paper.

**Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

A student completing this course will be able to:

* Discern and understand the core concepts and theorizations of differing political ecology approaches as applied to key global environmental issues and challenges (*readings, lectures, class discussions, mid-term*)
* Distill and become familiar with the multiple methods used by scholars and practitioners to research political ecology questions with global relevance (*mid-term, final paper*)
* Evaluate debates around major global environmental issues as learned through paradigmatic case studies from around the world (*class discussions, mid-term)*
* Understand major environmental challenges in the Global North and South and their policy possibilities (*final paper, class readings, mid-term*)
* Critically analyze empirical data pertaining to international affairs and key global environmental debates (*final paper, reflection papers*)
* Develop a policy analyses using a political ecology lens through a 15-page paper on a chosen key environmental issue with global consequence (*final paper*)

* Develop presentation skills through presenting their policy analysis to the class (*final presentation*).

**Assignments, Examinations & Grading**

**Class Participation & Citizenship (10%)**

Students are expected to come to each section fully prepared, having thoroughly read the assigned readings for that section and prepared questions or comments for the group discussion (see discussion guidelines below, which will be factored into determining your participation grade). At times, I will ask students to informally prepare a position on a debate or paper in advance, which will be presented in class. ***Small quizzes may be given as part of the participation grade if needed, to ensure full participation in the readings.*** We will also frequently break into smaller groups and reconvene to report back during class time. Students are expected to distribute and share leadership of small-group work, so that everyone has a chance to contribute and report back when we share our small-group findings. Absences will result in a decrease in the participation grade.

**Class and Discussion Participation**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| CRITERIA | EXCELLENT | ADEQUATE | NEEDS WORK |
| Frequency of participation in class | Student initiates contributions at least once each class. | Student initiates contribution at least in half of the classes. | Student does not initiate contributions & needs instructor to solicit input. |
| Quality of comments | Comments always insightful & constructive; uses appropriate terminology. Comments balanced between general impressions, opinions & specific, thoughtful criticisms or contributions. | Comments are sometimes constructive, with occasional signs of insight. Grasp of the appropriate terminology. | Comments are uninformative. Lacking in appropriate terminology. Heavy reliance on opinion & personal taste, e.g., “I love it”, “I hate it”, etc. |
| Listening Skills | Student listens attentively and respectfully when others present materials, perspectives, as indicated by comments that build on others’ remarks, i.e., student hears what others say & contributes to the dialogue. | Student is mostly attentive when others present ideas. Occasionally needs  encouragement or  reminders from the instructor to  focus. | Student is often inattentive and needs repeated reminders to focus on the class discussion. Occasionally makes disruptive comments while others are speaking. Detracts from the discussion. Sleeps. |

This rubric assumes students’ attendance in class. An absent student cannot receive any participation grade.

Adapted from https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/examples/courselevel-

bycollege/cfa/tools/participationrubric-cfa.pdf

**Reading Response Paper** **(10%)**

**Due Date: TBA on Canvas by 11:59PM the night before Assigned Class**

To facilitate your critical written engagement with the course content, once per term you will submit a short reflection paper on a specific pre-assigned reading from the course. This should be approximately two double-spaced pages (4-5 paragraphs). In the first two paragraphs, you should accurately summarize the article and the key points, theorizations and arguments put forth by the author(s). The last two paragraphs should be a critical appraisal of the reading (critique or praise of the argument backed by logical reasoning, connections to points made by other authors, and/or comparisons to earlier readings). This can include what you found particularly engaging and informative about the readings and points needing clarification. These reading responses will be used during class discussion so be prepared to summarize the key content of the author’s arguments, as well as your comments, to the class. A schedule for your responses will be provided early in the semester. Students must **submit their response papers on Canvas by 11:59PM on the day before the class of the designated reading**.

**Mid-Term Examination (30%)**

**Due: October 24th**

The midterm exam will be an in-class exam covering the material from the first section of the course. It will include short essay questions.

**Final Policy Analysis Paper Project (50%)**

In consultation with me, you will develop a paper topic, extended abstract, verbal policy briefing, and 15-page final paper that offers a policy-oriented analysis (that is, a report making policy recommendations) based on your research on a current issue relevant to global environmental politics. The goal is for you to gain some fluency in a substantive, real-world issue relevant to global political ecology and the themes of the course and communicate your analysis in both written and verbal form. As part of this project, you will present a policy briefing relevant to your chosen topic as a way of informing the class on the progress of your project as well as key dimensions of your chosen issue. More details of the assignment will be provided in class.

***Policy Paper Extended Abstract and Annotated Bibliography* (10%)**

**Due: November 12th in CLASS (12:30pm) and on Canvas**

Students will submit a 2-page (double spaced) extended abstract that outlines the topic of their policy paper topic, key arguments, and possible implications and recommendations that is brought to class in hard-copy as well as submitted on Canvas. In addition, when you submit your abstract you will also submit a 2-page (double spaced) annotated bibliography. This is a bibliography that provides a brief summary of your most important sources and should include at least 5 relevant peer-reviewed articles/references they intend to utilize.

***Policy Briefing Presentation* (15%)**

**Due: Week 15-16 in Class (TBA)**

In-between the submission of your abstract and final policy paper, you will give a policy briefing to the class that focuses on one or more elements of your paper. You will not be expected to summarize your paper, since it will not yet be completed, but rather offer the class a verbal briefing relevant to the topic of your paper, including slides. Please submit your slides via Canvas *before 12:15pm on the day that you present.*

***Final Policy Analysis Paper* (25%)**

**Due: December 12th 11:59pm on Canvas**

In consultation with me, you will develop a 15-page final paper that offers a policy-oriented analysis (that is, a report making policy recommendations) based on your research on a current issue relevant to global environmental politics. The goal is for you to gain some fluency in a substantive, real-world issue applicable to global political ecology and the themes of the course through conducting a policy analysis based on in-depth research. More details of the assignment will be provided in class.

**Grading**

Student grades will be determined on the basis of the following scale: 98-100=A+, 94-97=A, 90- 93=A-, 87-89=B+, 84-86=B, 80-83=B-, 77-79=C+, 74-76=C, 70-73=C-, 67-69=D+, 64- 66=D, 60-63=D-, 59 and below=F. If you need an extension, **discuss it with me at least in advance**, except in cases of documented medical or family emergency. Late assignments will be penalized one third of a grade for each day they are late; for example, an A paper that is submitted two days late will receive a B+. I grade as follows: 98-100=A+, 94-97=A, 90- 93=A-, 87-89=B+, 84-86=B, 80-83=B-, 77-79=C+, 74-76=C, 70-73=C-, 67-69=D+, 64- 66=D, 60-63=D-, 59 and below=F.

**Readings**

All readings will be posted and/or linked to via the course website on CANVAS.

## Accommodation for Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or [dsinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu) for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students/temporary-medical-conditions) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

# **Classroom Behavior**

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior) and the [Student Code of Conduct](http://www.colorado.edu/osccr/).

# **Honor Code**

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu)); 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](https://www.colorado.edu/osccr/honor-code).

# **Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation**

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct intimate partner abuse (including dating or domestic violence), stalking, protected-class discrimination or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](https://cuboulder.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0PnqVK4kkIJIZnf), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](http://www.colorado.edu/institutionalequity/).

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

# **Religious Holidays**

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, please let me know as soon as possible, and at least two weeks in advance, or any planned absences due to religious holidays or observances to make arrangements.See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/observance-religious-holidays-and-absences-classes-andor-exams) for full details.

**Office Hours and Email**

Coming to my office hours (listed above) for a face-to-face discussion is the best way to get immediate feedback. Email should be reserved for questions I can answer in a few sentences. I aim to reply to emails within 72 hours (excluding weekends).

**Technology Policy**

The use of phones is not permitted in class (except during course evaluations). We will discuss whether or not laptops will be permitted in class. If we decide form a consensus to allow them, all laptops must be used for engaging with course materials, and students using laptops for other purposes may be asked to stop using them as it is distracting for the learning environment.

**COURSE SCHEDULE & READINGS**

**Week 1: Course Overview and Introduction to Global Political Ecology**

Welcome to the course! This week we begin with introductions and an overview of the course syllabus, expectations and guidelines. In our second session, we introduce ourselves to political ecology, global nature and environmental governance.

**Tuesday (8/27**): Course Welcome & Overview

**Thursday (8/29):** Introduction to Global Political Ecology

Robbins, P. (2011). “Chapter 1: The Hatchet and the Seed.” *Political ecology: A critical introduction* (Vol. 16). John Wiley & Sons, pp 3-16.

**Week 2: Social Constructions of Nature**

This week, we examine the ways political ecologists engage with the social construction of nature. By looking at environmental discourse, science, and management, we trace differing dimensions of nature’s social construction, and its connection to shaping environmental politics and practices across the globe.

**Week 2.1 (9/3) The ‘trouble’ with Wilderness**

Cronon, W. (1996). The trouble with wilderness: or, getting back to the wrong nature. *Environmental History*, *1*(1), 7-28.

**Week 2.2 (9/5) Social Constructions of Nature**

Scarce, R. (1998). What do wolves mean? Conflicting social constructions of Canis lupus in “Bordertown”. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, *3*(3), 26-45.

**Week 3. Political Ecology of Global Water**

This week, we examine global water politics and the hydro-social cycle, including the ongoing struggle to supply potable drinking water to the world’s population. We also consider a set of case studies regarding “plumbing hotspots” in the US, which help reveal how water scarcity, inequities and challenges are politically mediated and socially produced.

**Tuesday (9/10): Global Drinking Water and the Hydrosocial cycle**

Birkenholtz, T. 2016. “Drinking Water.” In Jackson, Speiss and Sultana (Eds.). *Eating, Drinking: Surviving*. Springer, pp.23-30.

Linton, J., & Budds, J. (2014). The hydrosocial cycle: Defining and mobilizing a relational-dialectical approach to water. *Geoforum*, *57*, 170-180.

*Watch Flint Documentary*

**Thursday (9/12): US Plumbing Hotspots**

Deitz, S., & Meehan, K. (2019). Plumbing Poverty: Mapping Hot Spots of Racial and Geographic Inequality in US Household Water Insecurity. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, *109*(4), 1092-1109.

Ranganathan, M. (2016). Thinking with Flint: Racial Liberalism and the Roots of an American Water Tragedy. Capitalism Nature Socialism, 27(3), 17-33.

**Week 4. Political Ecology Case Studies**

This week, we hear from social scientists at CU currently conducting political ecology research on a specific set of themes. Use these lectures as inspiration to further think through your policy analysis topic.

**Tuesday (9/17):** Guest Speaker, Professor Emily Yeh

**Thursday (9/19):** Guest Speaker, Professor Joe Bryan

**Week 5. Urban Political Ecology & Urban Water Politics**

This week, we shift our attention to cities, beginning with an introduction to urban political ecology. We then continue our examination of the political ecology of water, examining debates on public vs. private water regulation in cities. We also consider how water politics in cities shape patterns of inequity and urban exclusion.

**Tuesday (9/24): Introduction to Urban Political Ecology & Urban Water Politics**

Cousins, J. J., & Newell, J. (2019). Urban political ecologies of and in the city. In *Handbook of Urban Geography*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

**Thursday (9/26): Urban Water Politics**

Meehan, K. (2013). Disciplining de facto development: Water theft and hydrosocial order in Tijuana. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *31*(2), 319-336.

Truelove, Y. (2019). Gray zones: The everyday practices and governance of water beyond the network. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 1-17.

**Week 6. Waste and Discard Ecologies**

The generation of municipal solid waste presents one of the most severe threats to urban health and sustainability globally. In many cities of the world, recycling work is carried out under dangerous and exploitative conditions by the urban poor. We will consider political ecological accounts of solid waste management and “poo politics”, as well as read and critically consider portions of Katherine Boo’s award-winning account of recycling and trash-work in a Mumbai slum.

**Tuesday (10/1): Waste and Sanitation Politics**

McFarlane, C., & Silver, J. (2017). The poolitical city: “Seeing sanitation” and making the urban political in Cape Town. *Antipode*, *49*(1), 125-148.

Nejuru, J. 2006. “The urban political ecology of plastic bag waste problem in Nairobi and Kenya. Geoforum, 37 (6): 1047-1058.

**Thursday (10/3): Recyclers and Waste-Workers in a Mumbai Slum**

Boo, Katherine. 2012. *Behind the beautiful forevers*. Random House LLC. (Prologue and Chapters 1 & 3)

**Week 7. Disaster Governance and Environmental Justice**

This week, we consider the political ecologies of environmental disasters by employing an environmental justice lens. We look at the historical origins and socio-political dimensions of environmental hazards, as well as non-human agencies, in shaping the production and responses to disasters, as well as their unequal outcomes. We do so through examining the case study of Hurricane Katrina in the US, and also watch portions of Spike Lee’s documentary *When the Levees Broke*.

**Tuesday (10/8): Introduction to Environmental Justice**

Holified, R. 2001. Defining Environmental Justice and Environmental Racism. Urban Geography 22 (1): 78-90.

**Thursday (10/10): Disaster Governance & Hurricane Katrina Case Study**

Bullard, R. and B. Wright. 2009. Introduction and Chapter 1. *In Race, Place and Environmental Justice after Hurricane Katrina: Struggles to Rebuild and Revitalize New Orleans and the Gulf Coast*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 1-48.

Documentary: *When the Levees Broke*

**Week 8. Global Environmental Governance: Carbon Credits Debate**

This week we examine global environmental governance and carbon credits.

**Tuesday (10/15):** **Global Environmental Governance and Carbon**

Bumpus, A. G., & Liverman, D. M. (2008). Accumulation by decarbonization and the governance of carbon offsets. *Economic Geography*, *84*(2), 127-155.

**Thursday (10/17): Carbon Credits Debate** (*Be prepared to take a position in class based on the readings*)

Martinho, F. (2019) An even more inconvenient truth: Why carbon credits for forest preservation may be worse than nothing. *ProPublica*

**Week 9. Midterm Examination**

This week is devoted to the midterm, which will be an in-class exam with both short answer and essay questions.

**Tuesday (10/22): Midterm Prep**

**Thursday (10/24): Midterm**

**Week 10: Feminist Political Ecology and Library Visit**

This week students will learn about feminist political ecology, a framework that complements and deepens other political ecology approaches studied to date. We also receive a visit and tutorial from the library that will be of use in helping your research for your final policy analysis paper.

**Tuesday (10/29): Library Tutorial**

**Thursday (10/31): Feminist Political Ecology**

Elmhirst, R. (2015). Feminist political ecology. In *The Routledge handbook of gender and development* (pp. 82-90). Routledge.

Hovorka, A. J. (2006). The No. 1 Ladies' Poultry Farm: A feminist political ecology of urban agriculture in Botswana. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *13*(3), 207-225.

**Week 11: Research Meetings**

During this week’s sessions, each student will meet in designated time slots with Prof Truelove to discuss their final policy analysis paper topic. You will be informed in previous sessions of your time slot and how to prepare.

**Tuesday (11/5): Individual Research Meetings**

**Thursday (11/7): Individual Research Meetings**

**Week 12: Extended Abstract, Peer Review, and Policy Briefing Workshop**

This week, students will bring their policy analysis abstract to class. Working in teams, they will give a brief verbal overview of their abstract, before exchanging it to be peer-reviewed during class. We will also have a policy briefing workshop to go over tips and tricks to both written and verbal policy analyses.

**Tuesday (11/12): Writing a Policy Analysis/Delivering a Verbal Policy Briefing**

**Thursday (11/14): Extended Abstract & Peer Review** *(Come to class with your printed abstract, and ready to complete a peer review on another’s work)*

**Week 13. The Political Ecology of Food: Fair Trade and Hunger**

Over the next two sessions, we examine a set of frameworks and case studies for examining differing dimensions of the political ecology of food globally. We begin this week by how differing political ecological imaginaries and moral economies serve to shape and regulate global food politics. We also evaluate a case study on fair-trade and organic certifications of coffee in small-scale plantations in Mexico and Central America, and consider how hunger discourses shape food policy in the US.

**Tuesday (11/19): Fair Trade**

Goodman, M. K. (2004). Reading fair trade: political ecological imaginary and the moral economy of fair trade foods. *Political geography*, *23*(7), 891-915.

Méndez, V. E., Bacon, C. M., Olson, M., Petchers, S., Herrador, D., Carranza, C., ... & Mendoza, A. (2010). Effects of Fair Trade and organic certifications on small-scale coffee farmer households in Central America and Mexico. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*, *25*(3), 236-251.

**Thursday (11/21): Hunger in the US**

Jarosz, L. (2015). 22. Contesting hunger discourses. *The International Handbook of Political Ecology*, 305-315.

*Documentary*

**Week 14. FALL BREAK**

**Week 15. Policy Briefings**

This is the first of a set of in-class sessions in which students will present findings from their policy analysis (to date) through a verbal policy briefing on their selected research area. Further details regarding how to prepare and what to include in a verbal policy briefing will be provided in class.

**Week 16. Policy Briefings**

This is the second of a set of in-class sessions in which students will present findings from their policy analysis (to date) through a verbal policy briefing on their selected research area.