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**Office: Guggeheim 204A**  
**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; marine policy and fisheries politics; the production and consumption of food; nature conservation; 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, empirical evidence and theoretical perspectives through in-class discussions, reflection papers, a 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 and briefing skills of a chosen key environmental issue with global consequence (*final paper and presentation*)
- Develop an in-depth paper analyzing a particular environmental issue and policy through a political ecology lens (*final paper*).

## **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**

<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>EXCELLENT</b>	<b>ADEQUATE</b>	<b>NEEDS WORK</b>
<b>Frequency of participation in class</b>	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.
<b>Quality of comments</b>	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.
<b>Listening Skills</b>	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. Distracts 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 Monday 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 25<sup>th</sup>**

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 13<sup>th</sup> 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 14-15 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 13<sup>th</sup> 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 two days 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](#). 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](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

### **Classroom Behavior**

In this class, we will all treat each other with respect and maintain a safe environment for learning and the exchange of ideas. Civil discussion of differing viewpoints is an essential part of the study of international affairs. I expect that we will all arrive on time and remain for the entire class. We will discuss technology use in class, but please respect your colleagues' need to concentrate. In order to avoid distracting them, please do not eat, sleep, surf the web, read the newspaper, text, play games, or have private conversations during class.

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](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

## **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](#).

## **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 (including sexual assault, exploitation, harassment, dating or domestic violence, and stalking), discrimination, and 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](mailto:cureport@colorado.edu). Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#). 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, you will need to notify me no less than one week in advance of an absence for religious observances, and give immediate notice if it conflicts with a scheduled presentation or assignment. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

## **Office Hours and Email**

Coming to my office hours (T/Th from 2-3pm) 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).

**\*The use of laptops, tablets and phones is not permitted in class except during research/library tutorials.**

## **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 (8/28):** Course Welcome & Overview

**Thursday (8/30):** 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: Introduction to Global Environmental Governance & Carbon Offsets**

This week we further examine global nature through employing a global political ecology lens. We begin by further orienting ourselves with political ecology framework through an introduction to global nature and environmental governance, and then turn to a more specific examination of carbon offsets. Come to class prepared to summarize the pros and cons and take a position on the carbon offsets debate.

**Tuesday (9/4):** Global Nature & Emerging Problems in Political Ecology

Peet, R.; Robbins, P. and Watts, M. 2011. "Chapter 1: Global Nature." In Eds. Peet, R.; Robbins, P. and Watts, M. *Global Political Ecologies*. Routledge: Oxon, pp. 1-11.

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

**Thursday (9/6): Carbon Offsets Debate** (*Be prepared to take a position on carbon offsets in class based on the readings*)

Schapiro, M. (2010). Inside the carbon-trading shell game. *Harper's Magazine*, pp. 31-39.

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

This week, we examine global water politics, including the ongoing struggle to supply potable drinking water to the world's population. We also consider how global policy discourse, and the construction of water scarcity in differing contexts, are shaping water challenges and inequities.

**Tuesday (9/11):** Global Drinking Water, Global Water Discourses Overview

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

Goldman, M. 2007. How "Water for All!" policy became hegemonic: The power of the World Bank and its transnational policy networks. *Geoforum*. 38(5): 786–800.

#### **Thursday (9/13): Constructing Water Scarcity**

Mehta, L. 2011. "The social construction of scarcity: the case of water in western India." In Eds. Peet, R.; Robbins, P. and Watts, M. *Global Political Ecologies*. Routledge: Oxon, pp. 371-384.

Akhter, M. (2017). The Political Ecology of the Water Scarcity/Security Nexus in the Indus Basin: Decentering Per Capita Water Supply. In *Imagining Industan*. Springer International Publishing, pp.21-33.

#### **Week 4. Urban Water Politics & Privatization Debates**

Continuing our examination of the political ecology of water, we shift our geographical focus to cities and debates on public vs. private water regulation. We begin by examining how water politics in cities shapes patterns of inequity and urban exclusion, and continue on to debate whether privatization can solve urban water problems.

#### **Tuesday (9/18): 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. (2011). (Re-) Conceptualizing water inequality in Delhi, India through a feminist political ecology framework. *Geoforum*, 42(2), 143-152.

#### **Thursday (9/20): Debating Privatization** (*come to class prepared to debate and take a stance on water privatization*)

Budds, J., & McGranahan, G. (2003). Are the debates on water privatization missing the point? Experiences from Africa, Asia and Latin America. *Environment and Urbanization*, 15(2), 87-114.

Bakker, K. 2007. Trickle down? Private sector participation and the pro-poor water supply debate in Jakarta, Indonesia. *Geoforum*. 38(5): 855–868.



### **Optional Readings:**

Bakker, K. 2010. *Privatizing Water*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Chapter 3, “Watering the Thirsty Poor: The Water Privatization Debate,” pp. 79-107.

### **Week 5. 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 (9/25): Waste and Sanitation Politics**

McFarlane, C., & Silver, J. (2017). The political 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 (9/27): Lived Experiences of Recyclers and Waste-Workers in a Mumbai Slum**

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

### **Week 6. 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 studies of Flint and Hurricane Katrina in the US, and also watch portions of Spike Lee’s documentary *When the Levees Broke*.

### **Tuesday (10/2): Introduction to Environmental Justice & Flint Case Study**

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

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

#### **Thursday (10/4): 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.

#### **Week 7. The Political Ecology of Food: Fair Trade and Global Agri-politics**

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 taking on fair trade and global agri-politics, considering how differing political ecological imaginaries and moral economies serve to shape and regulate global food politics. Be prepared for to take a position on fair trade through an in-class debate. We also evaluate a case study on fair-trade and organic certifications of coffee in small-scale plantations in Mexico and Central America.

#### **Tuesday (10/9): 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 (10/11): US Agripolitics and Hunger Discourses**

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

Guthman, J. (2011). Excess consumption or over-production?: US farm policy, global warming, and the bizarre attribution of obesity. *Global political ecology*, 51-66.

#### **Week 8. Marine Politics and the World's Oceans**

This week we consider marine political ecologies and the world's oceans. We begin by examining the current crises in the world's oceans of illegal fishing and over-fishing. In addition, by applying a political ecology lens to case studies on the politics of transnational organized crime on the world's oceans, we contemplate how the world's marine ecologies can become more socially and environmentally just.

#### **Tuesday (10/16): Marine Politics, Industrial Fisheries and Illegal Fishing**

Mansfield, B. (2011) "Modern' industrial fisheries and the crisis of overfishing" in Peet, R., Robbins, P. and Watts, M. (Eds.), *Global Political Ecology*, Routledge, pp.84-99.

Bondaroff, P., Reitano, T., & van der Werf, W. (2015). The illegal fishing and organized crime nexus: illegal fishing as transnational organized crime. *Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime and The Black Fish. Selected sections: pp11-26; 36-55*

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/07/24/world/the-outlaw-ocean.html>

**Thursday (10/18): Guest Speaker, Readings TBA**

**Week 9: Mid-term Prep & Exam**

This week students will take a mid-term exam covering material from the first seven weeks of class. This will include short-essay responses.

**Tuesday (10/23): Mid-term Prep Session**

**Tuesday (10/25): Mid-term Exam**

**Week 10. The Political Ecology of Agricultural Land Titling & Library Tutorial**

This week use a political ecology lens to examine agricultural land titling and concessions in Southeast Asia. Dr. Mike Dwyer will also join us and share his research findings on land titling programs in Cambodia. We also use part of this time to have a library tutorial on research resources for your policy analysis project.

**Tuesday (10/30): The Politics of Land Titling**

Dwyer, M. B. (2015). The formalization fix? Land titling, land concessions and the politics of spatial transparency in Cambodia. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 42(5), 903-928.

Dwyer, M. B. (2015). The formalization fix? Land titling and land concessions in Cambodia. *CDE Policy Brief 4*.

**Thursday (11/1): Library & Research Tutorial**

**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 (11/6): Individual Research Meetings**

**Thursday (11/8): 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 (11/13): Extended Abstract & Peer Review** (*Come to class with your printed abstract, and ready to compete a peer review on another's work*)

**Thursday (11/15): Writing a Policy Analysis/Delivering a Verbal Policy Briefing**

### **Week 13. FALL BREAK**

### **Week 14. 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 15. 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.

### **Week 16. Policy Briefings & Course Wrap-Up**

In this final week, we wrap-up our policy briefings and complete course evaluations.

**Tuesday (12/11): Policy Briefings and Course Evaluations**

**Tuesday 12/13: Course Wrap-Up**