

People and Resources

GEOG 139/ENVIR ST 139

3 credits

September 6 – December 15, 2011

Classes: 1:00-2:15 pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays
1131 HUMANITIES

Course Instructor:

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11:45-12:45, or by appointment (via e-mail)

Introduction

News headlines from around the world suggest that our forests, fields, agricultural lands, rivers, oceans, and even the earth's atmosphere are in grave danger. Biodiversity is being lost at rates not experienced in human history, and the issue of climate change (global warming) has recently become a serious concern. Livelihoods and quality of life are being threatened globally by a host of issues. While there are many examples of situations where individuals, institutions and governments working at various scales have organized in ways that have resulted in impressive improvements in environmental quality and natural resource management more generally, overall, the world is faced with a multitude of serious ecological and natural resource management challenges. Whether we like it or not, many of these cannot be avoided. Some can potentially be addressed by individuals at local levels; others require national, regional and even global cooperation and collaboration. What is clear is that much more needs to be done to address these issues, and that we can all make a difference. However, the first step to ensuring that well conceptualized actions are taken begins with educating ourselves about the complex issues facing the world. This course is designed to set the foundations for doing exactly that, through providing an introduction to many important issues and key concepts associated with people and resources, or nature and society. In this course we will examine some of the most crucial ecological and natural resource management problems. We will, however, not only consider the biological and ecological factors—as important as they frequently are—but also the social, cultural and political elements associated with them, including issues associated with power. The objective of the course is to inspire people to take the ecological and natural resource management challenges seriously, but also to encourage critical thinking, which is necessary for ensuring good analysis. I do not profess to have the answers to all the problems that need to be addressed in today's complex world, but I encourage students to think about them seriously in balanced, thoughtful and holistic ways. The future is in all of our hands!

Class Text

Robbins, Paul, John Hintz, and Sarah A. Moore (2010) *Environment and Society: A Critical Introduction*. Wiley-Blackwell.

The text is available at the University Book Store or at Rainbow Books. E-Books can also be purchased on-line for a reduced cost.

Evaluation and Assignments

Writing Assignment #1	10%
Writing Assignment #2	15%
Writing Assignment #3	15%
Mid-term Exam	25%
Final Exam	35%

100%

- 1) Writing Assignments: 30%. To pass the course, every student is required to complete three short concise writing assignments (double spaced, Time New Roman 12 point font, standard margins). Chicago style in-text referencing should be used (not footnotes or endnotes). These assignments are due at the beginning of class (papers handed in during class or at the end of class will be considered to be one day late) on Tuesday, October 4th, Tuesday, November 1st, and Thursday, December 1st. Topics will be discussed during class. The first paper will be no more than 500 words long. The second and the third papers will be no more than 1,000 words each. Hard copies must be handed in. E-mail submissions will not be accepted. Printing on two sides of the paper is acceptable, and while not required, is encouraged. There will be a 10% penalty for every day any of the papers are late. There are no exceptions to this apart from cases of documented serious health problems or other documented emergencies that delay the completion of the assignment.
- 2) Mid-term exam: 25%. The mid-term exam will take place on Thursday, October 18th, 2011 during regular class time. The exam will cover the lecture material and required course readings up to the time of the exam. It will not be enough to concentrate either exclusively on the reading material or the lecture material. Students will need to have a good understanding of both to be successful. The exam will largely be multiple-choice, along with some short answer questions.
- 3) Final exam: 35%. The final exam will take place during the exam period, on December 20th, 2011, from 2:45 pm. It will cover all the lecture and readings for the course, with an emphasis on the course content after the mid-term. The exam will largely be multiple-choice. Some short answer questions will also be included. Students who miss the final exam cannot make it up unless their failure to take the exam was caused by a serious health problem or other fully documented and verifiable emergency.

Good writing is important: I appreciate good writing, and will reward those who demonstrate their ability to write well and concisely. If you are not a good writer, consider requesting support from UW-Madison for improving your writing skills.

Grading

90-100	A
82-89	AB
74-81	B
66-73	BC
58-65	C
51-57	D
50 and below	F

Students who plagiarize should beware, as the UW-Madison policy on plagiarizing will be strictly implemented during this course. Students who are not familiar with the policy, or do not understand it clearly, should learn about it as soon as possible. Students are responsible for educating themselves on this. Plagiarizing can lead to serious consequences for students, including resulting in students receiving failing grades or other serious discipline. Cheating of all kind will not be tolerated. Students who are aware that other students are cheating are encouraged to report inappropriate actions. Anonymity can be assured, when appropriate.

Course Schedule

1	Tuesday, September 6, 2011	Course introduction Review syllabus, course objectives and content, the course text, etc.
2	Thursday, September 8	Damming the Sesan River and downstream transnational impacts: The case of the Yali Falls dam in upland Vietnam and downstream impacts in northeastern Cambodia Wyatt, Andrew B. & Ian G. Baird 2007. Transboundary impact assessment in the Sesan River Basin: The case of the Yali Falls Dam. <i>International Journal of Water Resources Development</i> 23(3): 427-442. Chapter 1 of text
3	Tuesday, September 13	Population and scarcity Chapter 2 of text
4	Thursday, September 15	Guest Speaker: Professor Matthew (Matt) Turner
5	Tuesday, September 20	Population and scarcity (cont) Chapter 2 of text
6	Thursday, September 22	Markets and commodities Chapter 3 of text
7	Tuesday, September 27	Markets and commodities (cont) Chapter 3 of text
8	Thursday, September 29	Institutions and “the commons” Chapter 4 of text
9	Tuesday, October 4	Institutions and “the commons” (cont) Chapter 4 of text Baird, I.G. 2010. Private, small groups or communal: <i>Dipterocarpus</i> wood resin tree tenure and management in Teun Commune, Kon Mum District, Ratanakiri Province, northeastern Cambodia. <i>Society and Natural Resources</i> 23: 1-16. Paper #1 due
10	Thursday, October 6	Environmental ethics Chapter 5 of text

11	Tuesday, October 11	Environmental ethics (cont) Chapter 5 of text
12	Thursday, October 13	Risks and hazards Chapter 6 of text
13	Tuesday, October 18	Mid-term
14	Thursday, October 20	Political economy Chapter 7 of text
15	Tuesday, October 25	Political economy (cont) Chapter 7 of text Preparation for mid-term
16	Thursday, October 27	Social construction of nature Guest Speaker: Professor William Cronon (to be confirmed) Chapter 8 of text
17	Tuesday, November 1	Social construction of nature (cont) Chapter 8 of text Paper #2 due
18	Thursday, November 3	Carbon dioxide and climate change Chapter 9 of text
19	Tuesday, November 8	Carbon dioxide and climate change Guest Speaker: Professor Holly Gibbs Chapter 9 of text
20	Thursday, November 10	Trees Chapter 10 of text
21	Tuesday, November 15	Wolves in Wisconsin Guest Speaker: Lisa Naughton Chapter 11 of text
22	Thursday, November 17	Tuna Chapter 12 of text

23	Tuesday, November 22	Dolphin-safe tuna (Thailand and the USA) Chapter 12 of text Baird, Ian.G. and Noah Quastel 2011. Dolphin-safe tuna from California to Thailand: Localisms in environmental certification of global commodity networks. <i>Annals of the Association of American Geographers</i> : 101(2): 337-355.
24	Tuesday, November 29	Coastal fisheries and environmental destruction in Thailand: Considering local knowledge and industrial fishing
25	Thursday, December 1	Non-government organizations (NGOs) and land concessions for rubber in Laos Baird, Ian G. 2010. Land, rubber and people: Rapid agrarian change and responses in southern Laos. <i>Journal of Lao Studies</i> 1(1): 1-47. Paper #3 due
26	Tuesday, December 6	Swidden Agriculture: Destruction or Sustainability? Dove, Michael R. 1983. Theories of swidden and the political economy of ignorance. <i>Agroforestry Systems</i> 1(1): 85-99.
27	Thursday, December 8	Bottled water Chapter 13 of text
28	Tuesday, December 13	French fries Chapter 14 of text
29	Thursday, December 15	Final class Course conclusions, final exam preparation

* Note that during the course it is possible that some of the lectures will have their dates changed, or contents altered. I will try to provide as much advance warning of changes as possible.