Graduate Seminar: Conserving Biodiversity amid Rapid Social Change – Syllabus
Geography 930 – Fall 2015

Professor Lisa Naughton, email: naughton@geography.wisc.edu
Seminar meets Wed, 3-5:30 pm, 280 Science Hall
Office Hours: Wed, 11-1, or by appt. 355 Science Hall

Seminar description: The greatest challenges to sustaining biodiversity center on sociopolitical issues. Conservationists increasingly recognize the importance of ‘human dimensions’ as evidenced by more frequent social scholar-authored papers in conservation journals and the election of a social scientist to lead the Society of Conservation Biology. Yet the role of social research in biodiversity conservation is not straightforward. Some researchers aim to directly assist conservation by studying social processes that undermine biodiversity or testing the effectiveness of various interventions. Others take a more theoretical approach and study conservation itself as a social process whose core ideas deserve critical scrutiny. Controversy regarding the role of social research in conservation is amplified by political inequalities in regulatory authority, poverty and the rapid pace of biodiversity loss. Using examples from the Global South and industrialized countries, we examine how researchers’ conceptual framework, study scale and methods shape their conclusions and engagement with practitioners. Our emphasis will be on land-based conservation efforts and the quest to achieve landscape level conservation by working on public, private and communal holdings. Finally, this seminar offers participants an opportunity to advance a significant writing project related to their research or professional interests.

Requirements:
All participants are expected to:

1) Attend and participate fully in weekly discussions.

2) Lead (or co-lead) one class discussion. On the day you lead discussion, you should come to class having carefully read assigned readings (plus any optional readings), as well as your classmates’ discussion essays. Bring a 1-2 page handout to class that includes some basic information on the authors, major themes of the readings and points highlighted by student discussion essays, as well as several questions for discussion. You will start the class by providing a ten to fifteen minute introduction that highlights these elements to launch the discussion.

3) Write short discussion essays (~500 words each) on three assigned readings during the semester, each from a different week. Your choice but NOT for the week when you serve as discussion leader. Post your essay at our Learn@UW dropbox by 5 pm on the Monday prior to our seminar discussion of that reading.

4) Review a peer’s draft of a research paper or policy brief

5) Write a 10-12 page paper (~3,500 words, not including references, figures, etc) OR prepare a policy brief (~1,500 words, illustrated) on your research or professional activity. Your writing project ought to be broadly related to the seminar (e.g. sociopolitical dimensions of an environmental problem, a critique of a conservation intervention or an analysis of physical environmental change that will help inform policy). Your writing project can form part of your internship plan, MSc or PhD work but you must write something new for the seminar. You will prepare this project in stages:

- By 9/30, email me ~1 page of text describing your planned writing project. Topic? Policy brief or report? Explain your proposed project’s relation to any previous work you’ve done (not graded but -1 pt/day if late).
- By 11/4, post a draft of your paper (~2,000 words) or policy brief (~1,000 words) to a Dropbox at Learn@UW (not graded, but -1 pt/day if late).
- By 11/18, review your peer’s draft paper and email her or him 1 page of comments (cc me)
- Present an oral summary of your work to present on Dec 2 or 9 (10-15 min). (not graded)
- Upload your final paper or briefing to Learn@UW no later than Wed Dec 9, by 5 pm.
Grades will be assessed on a total possible of 100 points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in weekly discussions</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15 for quality + 5 for attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>How much did you enhance the learning experience of others in the seminar? One absence is expected, please see me if you will be absent more often.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion leadership.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td><em>Self graded. Email me ~2 para regarding how you fulfilled leader requirement (see #2 on previous page). Assign yourself points. Due 1 week after session you lead. Only I will read your self-evaluation.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three discussion essays</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Up to 5 pts per essay. See discussion essay tips below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructive feedback on colleague’s draft</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final paper or policy brief.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Late Policy:** 1 pt deducted each day an assignment is late. Contact me in advance if you need an extension. No late discussion essays accepted.

**Tips on Writing Discussion Essays**

Writing discussion essays requires active engagement with the readings, so this task ought to enhance our discussions. I am looking for evidence that you have read the material thoroughly, thought critically about it, and can express the authors' central arguments in your own words (do not include extensive quotes in your essays).

You may choose to write your essay on one or more of the readings for a given week (e.g. you could compare and contrast two readings assigned for a single week). But turn in only one essay in a week. And don’t write essays for the week when you serve as discussion leader.

Essays should be 400-500 words (include word count at bottom). Upload them to our Dropbox at Learn@UW by 5 pm on the Monday preceding the assigned session.

I’m not looking for highly polished writing nor perfect formatting, but your tone should be academic. Feel free to write in the first or third person.

You do NOT need to formally cite the authors in your essay other than to link their names to the central arguments.

Up to 5 pts per essay. No late essays accepted.

**Readings**

There is one textbook (for purchase) plus weekly assigned articles available online.


*A note on readings: I’ve selected these readings according to the following criteria:*

- landmark paper or provocative example from a particularly subfield
- interesting example of interdisciplinary approach
- inspiring example of grad student publication
- worthy or characteristic example of ‘grey’ literature

*As discussion leader, you can propose adding 1 or 2 readings and/or substituting a reading for your session. Pls think about these same criteria (above) when you propose a paper.*

*******************************************************************************

Syllabus version 9/2/15. p. 2
**SEMINAR SCHEDULE AND READINGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEP 2</td>
<td>Seminar goals and overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEP 9</td>
<td>Conservation of what, for whom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Required</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEP 16</td>
<td>Protected areas – conservation biology perspectives on importance &amp; limits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Required</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Recommended:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEP 23</td>
<td>Protected areas and local communities – political ecology perspectives and focus on Africa.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


SEP 30 Community Based Conservation – Enchantment, Disenchantment & re-engagement


Professional Practice reading:

OCT 7 Governance challenges. Case study: land tenure & tropical forests.


Professional practice:
Chronicle of Higher Education tips on preparing manuscript for publication. part 1.

OCT 14 Conservation Easements and Zoning. N. American experiences. GUEST: Adena Rissman

Required


Additional readings: TBA
Professional practice reading:

*Chronicle of Higher Education* Responding to Reviewers. part 2.

**OCT 21** Environmental Perceptions research – Case study: large carnivores & Leopold’s land ethic.

*Required*

Teel, T & Manfredo. 2010. “Understanding the diversity of public interests in wildlife conservation” *Conservation Biology*

Heberlein, T. 2012 *Navigating Env Attitudes*. Chapters TBA

*Recommended*


*****Midpoint of semester – time for feedback *****

**OCT 28** Environmental Perceptions research – Methodological challenges.

*Required*

Heberlein, T. 2012 *Navigating Env Attitudes*. Chapters TBA


**NOV 4** TBA

**NOV 11** TBA

**NOV 18** Does embracing novel ecosystems = surrender? Or enlightenment?

*Required*


**NOV 25** NO MEETING (Thanksgiving Eve)

**DEC 2** Presentation and discussion of student research papers/policy briefs.

**DEC 9** Presentation and discussion of student research papers/policy briefs.