

Nature, Power and Society

GEOGRAPHY 337/ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES 337
3 credits

September 3 – December 15, 2015

Lectures: 1:00-2:15 pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays
Humanities 1101

Course Instructor:

Dr. Ian Baird, Office: Science Hall 455

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

Introduction

News headlines from around the world suggest that our forests, grasslands, 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 climate change (global warming) has become a serious concern. Human livelihoods and quality of life are being threatened globally by various changes. 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 facing 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. 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. I fully encourage students to think about them seriously in balanced, thoughtful, critical and holistic ways. Your comments and questions are encouraged.

By the end of the course, students should have a good general understanding of the key elements that link nature, power and society.

Course Text

Robbins, Paul, John Hintz, and Sarah A. Moore 2014 (2nd edition). *Environment and Society: A Critical Introduction*. Wiley-Blackwell.

The text is available at the University Book Store. An e-book of the text 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:** 40%. 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 Thursday, October 1st, Tuesday, November 3rd, and Thursday, December 3rd. Topics will be discussed during class. The first paper will be no more than 1,000 words long. The second and third papers will be no more than 1,200 words each. Hard copies must be handed in, and all pages should be stapled together. E-mail submissions will not be accepted (except under exceptional circumstances, and with prior permission). Printing on two sides of the paper is acceptable, and while not required, is encouraged. There will be a 10% penalty for every calendar day that 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 an assignment.
- 2) **Mid-term exam:** 25%. The mid-term exam will take place on Tuesday, October 20th 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 Thursday, December 17, 2015, in Humanities 1101 from 7:45 am to 9:45 am. Note that this date, time and locations are determined by the University. The final exam 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.

Graduate Students

Graduate students taking this course are required to complete all the assignments required for other students, but are also required to complete one additional ten page double-spaced essay, on a topic related to the overall theme of the course and approved by the Course Instructor in advance. It is to be handed in on the last day of classes, on December 15, 2015.

Good writing is important: I appreciate good writing, and will reward those who demonstrate their ability to write well and concisely. Please remember that your papers should all include a clear thesis statement. If you are not a good writer, consider requesting support from the UW-Madison Writing Center 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

Conduct in Class

Students are encouraged to ask questions and make comments in Lecture. Being frank is fine, but it is also important that we are respectful of the views of others. Please put up your hand in you want to ask a question or make a comment, and I will try to get to you as soon as possible, without overly interrupting the flow of the lecture.

Students are allowed to use laptop computers in class, but **ONLY** to take notes or engage in other class-related activities. Students should not use laptops in class to chat with friends, surf the web about non-class related topics, write e-mails, play computer cards or chess, etc. This can be very distracting for both the lecturer and other students so please strictly follow these rules. Also, please do not engage in any cell phone text messaging or other electronic means of communication during class time.

Academic Integrity

Students who plagiarize should beware, as the UW-Madison policy on plagiarizing will be strictly implemented during this course. 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.

Life Interruptions

Students are expected to submit work at the times scheduled in the syllabus. Possible exceptions include serious illness, immediate family emergency, or other legitimate conflict. If these apply, you must contact me to request an extension or makeup. Make these arrangements as soon as you know of the conflict—**before** the due date if possible. 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. All make-up exams will be essay exams.

Special Needs

It is University of Wisconsin-Madison policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact me and the McBurney Resource Center located at 702 W. Johnson Street, Suite 2104 <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu> , 608-263-2741 to discuss individual needs for accommodations. Students should also inform the instructor of their status as soon as possible, so appropriate accommodations can be made.

Course Schedule

1	Thursday, September 3, 2015	Course introduction Review syllabus, course objectives and content, the course text, etc.
2	Tuesday, 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. and 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	Thursday, September 10	Population and scarcity Chapter 2 of text
4	Tuesday, September 15	Population and scarcity (cont) Chapter 2 of text
5	Thursday, September 17	Markets and commodities Chapter 3 of text
6	Tuesday, September 22	Markets and commodities (cont) Chapter 3 of text
7	Thursday, September 24	Institutions and “the commons” Chapter 4 of text
8	Tuesday, September 29	Institutions and “the commons” (cont) Chapter 4 of text Baird, Ian 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.
9	Thursday, October 1	Environmental ethics Chapter 5 of text Paper #1 due
10	Tuesday, October 6	Risks and hazards Chapter 6 of text

11	Thursday, October 8	Political economy Chapter 7 in text
12	Tuesday, October 13	Political economy (cont) Baird, Ian G. 2011. Turning land into capital, turning people into labour: Primitive accumulation and the arrival of large-scale economic land concessions in Laos. <i>New Proposals: Journal of Marxism and Interdisciplinary Inquiry</i> 5(1): 10-26.
13	Thursday, October 15	Social construction of nature Chapter 8 of text
14	Tuesday, October 20	Mid-term
15	Thursday, October 22	Coastal fisheries and environmental destruction in Thailand: Considering local knowledge and industrial fishing Stobutzki, Ilona C., Geronimo T. Silverstre and Lens R. Garces 2006. Key issues in coastal fisheries in South and Southeast Asia, outcomes of a regional initiative. <i>Fisheries Research</i> 78: 109-118. Fahn, James 2003. The coast: on the edge. (part of) Pages 175-184 in <i>A Land on Fire. The Environmental Consequences of the Southeast Asian Boom</i> . Westview, Boulder, Colorado.
16	Tuesday, October 27	Carbon Dioxide Chapter 9 of text
17	Thursday, October 29	In-Class video: "There Once was an Island: Te Henua e Nnoho" (approx. 80 minutes long) (available in Geography library)
18	Tuesday, November 3	Trees Chapter 10 of text Paper #2 due
19	Thursday, November 5	Wolves Chapter 11 of text
20	Tuesday, November 10	Uranium Chapter 12 of text
21	Thursday, November 12	Tuna Chapter 13 of text

22	Tuesday, November 17	Dolphin-safe tuna (Thailand and the USA) Chapter 13 of text
23	Thursday, November 19	Guest Speaker – Nathan Green Topic to be determined
24	Tuesday, November 24	Lawns Chapter 14 of text
25	Tuesday, December 1	Bottled Water Chapter 15 of text
26	Thursday, December 3	French Fries Chapter 16 of text Paper #3 due
27	Tuesday, December 8	E-Waste Chapter 17 of text
28	Thursday, December 10	The Global Land Grab Meta-Narrative, Asian Money Laundering and Elite Capture: Reconsidering the Cambodian Context Baird, Ian G. 2014. The global land grab meta-narrative, Asian money laundering and elite capture: Reconsidering the Cambodian context. <i>Geopolitics</i> 19(2): 431-453.
29	Tuesday, 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 content altered. As much advance notice as possible will be provided.