

Political Ecology

Code: 42406
ECTS Credits: 6

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
4313784 Interdisciplinary Studies in Environmental, Economic and Social Sustainability	OT	0	1

Contact

Name: Georgios Kallis
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Use of languages

Principal working language: english (eng)

Teachers

Panagiota Kotsila

Prerequisites

If not native English speaker: valid IELTS (with a minimum score of 6.5) or TOEFL (minimum 550 paper based, 213 computer based, 79 web-based) score report or a Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English or Cambridge Certificate in Advanced English.
The students must hold an undergraduate degree with relevance to environmental or urban studies. Preferably with previous training in a social science (i.e., business, sociology, political science, economics)

Objectives and Contextualisation

In this course we will explore the interdisciplinary field of Political Ecology. Political Ecology is a theoretical and methodological approach for the study of socio-ecological systems that focuses on conflict, power and the uneven distribution of environmental costs and benefits. This course will familiarize you with core concepts used by political ecologists at ICTA and teach you how to apply these concepts to your empirical material. We will introduce you to a profoundly new, critical way of looking at and understanding environmental problems, politics and policies.

By the end of this course you should be able to conduct, if you wish, a political ecology research project on your own. In addition, you will learn how to read and analyze social science, and you will improve your writing and argumentative skills.

Skills

- Apply knowledge of environmental and ecological economics to the analysis and interpretation of environmental problem areas.
- Communicate orally and in writing in English.
- Continue the learning process, to a large extent autonomously.
- Integrate knowledge and use it to make judgements in complex situations, with incomplete information, while keeping in mind social and ethical responsibilities.
- Solve problems in new or little-known situations within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the field of study.
- Work in an international, multidisciplinary context.

Learning outcomes

1. Communicate orally and in writing in English.
2. Continue the learning process, to a large extent autonomously.
3. Develop a holistic vision of the relationship between the economy, politics and biophysical systems.
4. Integrate knowledge and use it to make judgements in complex situations, with incomplete information, while keeping in mind social and ethical responsibilities.
5. Know the different approaches to environmental problems on the part of political ecology.
6. Solve problems in new or little-known situations within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to the field of study.
7. Work in an international, multidisciplinary context.

Content

PROGRAM OUTLINE

Week 1 - What is political ecology? (Giorgos Kallis)

15/10

Robbins, P., 2004. What is Political Ecology? The hatchet and the seed. Chapter 1 in *Political Ecology*, Blackwell.

Week 2 - Ecological distribution conflicts (Giorgos Kallis)

22/10

Martinez-Alier, J., 2009. Social metabolism, ecological distribution conflicts, and languages of valuation. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 20(1): 58-87.

Demaria, F., 2010. Shipbreaking at Alang-Sosiya (India): an ecological distribution conflict. *Ecological Economics*, 70(2): 250-260.

Week 3 - The social construction of nature (Giorgos Kallis)

29/10

Robbins, P., 2004. Construction of nature: environmental knowledges and imaginaries. Chapter 6 in *Political Ecology*, Blackwell

Sletto B, 2008, The Knowledge that Counts: Institutional Identities, Policy Science, and the Conflict Over Fire Management in the Gran Sabana, Venezuela *World Development* 36(10) 1938-1955

Week 4 - Degradation and Marginalization (Panagiota Kotsila)

5/11

Robbins, P. (2004) 'Degradation and Marginalization' (Chapter 7). In *Political Ecology*, Blackwell.

Collins, T.W. (2010) 'Marginalization, facilitation and the production of unequal risk, The 2006 Paso del Norte Floods'. *Antipode*, 42 (258-288)

Week 5 - Conservation and Control (Panagiota Kotsila & Brototi Roy)

12/11

Robbins, P. (2004) 'Conservation and Control' (Chapter 8). In: Political Ecology, Blackwell.

Peluso, N.L. (1995) "Whose woods are these? Countermapping forest territories in Kalimantan, Indonesia." *Antipode* 27 (383-406).

Week 6 - Identity and social movements (Panagiota Kotsila)

19/11

Robbins, P. (2004) 'Environmental identity and movements' (Chapter 10). In: Political Ecology, Blackwell.

Valdivia, G. (2005) 'On indigeneity, change, and representation in the northeastern Ecuadorian Amazon'. *Environ. Plan. A* 37 (285-303).

Week 7 - Accumulation by Dispossession (Panagiota Kotsila)

26/11

Harvey, D. (2003) 'Accumulation by dispossession'. In: The new imperialism, Oxford: OUP

Federici, S. (2012), 'Feminism and the politics of the common in an era of primitive accumulation' (Part III, chapter 2) . In: Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle. PM Press.

Week 8 - Political Ecology at ICTA (organized by Brototi Roy)

3/12

Presentations by ICTA post doc and senior researchers developing research on political ecology with offer of possible master thesis topics.

Week 9 - Power, knowledge and governmentality (Panagiota Kotsila)

10/12

Foucault, M. (1991) 'Politics and the Study of Discourse' & 'Governmentality' (Chapters 2 & 4). In: Burchell, G., Gordon, C., Miller, P. (eds). The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality. University of Chicago Press.

Goldman, M. (2004) 'Eco-governmentality and other transnational practices of a "green" World Bank'. In: Liberation ecologies: environment, development and social movements. Routledge

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Foucault, M. (2003) '17th March 1976' (chapter 11) .In: Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976. Macmillan.

Li, T M (2009) To Make Live or Let Die? Rural Dispossession and the Protection of Surplus Populations. Antipode

Week 11 - Feminist Political Ecology (guest speaker Camila Rolando)

7/1

Elmhirst, R., 2016. Feminist Political Ecology. In Perreault, T., Bridge, G. and J. McCarthy (Eds). *Routledge Handbook of Political Ecology*, Chapter 40.

Carney, J., 1993. Converting the wetlands, engendering the environment: The intersection of gender with agrarian change in the Gambia. *Economic Geography*, 69(4), pp.329-348.

Week 12 - Third World Political Ecology (Brototi Roy)

14/1

Escobar, A. (2001). Culture sits in places: reflections on globalism and subaltern strategies of localization. *Political geography*, 20(2), 139-174.

Joshi, S. (2015). Postcoloniality and the North-South binary revisited: The case of India's climate politics. *International Handbook of Political Ecology*, 117-130.

Week 13 - Exam

21/1

Methodology

Classes will follow a seminar format with a combination of teaching by the instructor and discussion in class of assigned readings. For each class we will read and discuss two articles. Typically one of them will be more theoretical, presenting the main concept to be discussed in this class, and the second will include a case-study, applying the concept in an environmental problem or conflict.

All students are expected to have read these articles in advance and write short commentaries (see assignments). In each class a critical discussion of the key ideas of the articles will take place under the facilitation of the instructor. This might also include discussion in small groups, games, use of audiovisual material (movies, lectures by famous political ecologists, videos, etc).

Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
Type: Directed			
Work in large group (classroom)	30	1.2	1, 5, 3, 2, 7
Work in small groups	6	0.24	1, 5, 3, 7
Type: Autonomous			
At home short assignment(s)	15	0.6	7
Readings	25	1	5, 3
Self-study	61	2.44	4, 6, 2

Evaluation

1. Weekly homework

Each week you will have to write a 250 words essay, answering to a question related to the readings for that week. You should hand in the assignment to Brototi at the beginning of each class. The assignment will be

graded (1-10) and returned in the next class with comments. If you want to discuss your assignments or our evaluation you can ask for an appointment with Brototi during her office hours.

The grade of the assignments will not be taken into account in your final grade, unless it is higher than that of your final exam, in which case it will count for 20% of your overall grade. The weekly assignments will help you recognize weaknesses and improve your writing, given that the final exam will consist of questions with the same style as the weekly assignments. In case you miss a class, you are sick, etc, you have to inform us in advance and then deliver the essay the following week or later as agreed with the instructor (it won't be graded though).

Failure to deliver the essay completely will have an impact on your overall final grade, half a point taken out of your final grade for each essay left undelivered.

Auditors have also to write the weekly assignment but are exempt from the final essay and exam.

2. Participation in class

Participation in class is encouraged, though it won't be evaluated or graded. Different people have different communication styles, some like to talk a lot, others less. We encourage discussion and participation with our teaching style, and we will try to encourage as many of you to speak up and position yourself with respect to the readings and the discussion.

3. Exam

This will take place on the 21st of January 2019 and will count for 70% of your final grade. The material under examination will consist of all the articles read and discussed during the semester. The style of the questions will be similar to those handed in the weekly homework, i.e. short questions which you will have 250 words to answer. The exam will be "take-home", and you will be expected to use whatever resources you wish to answer the questions. It will be sent by email to all of you at 9 a.m the day of the exam and should be handed in by email by 6 p.m. the same day. The exams will be graded anonymously.

3. Essay

This will count for 30% of your final grade. In due time, and before Christmas, you will be assigned a movie to watch or a text to read and write a 1000 words essay on it from a political ecology perspective. We will grade essays first and foremost for originality and creativity. You should deliver the essay after the final exam on the 27th of January.

Evaluation activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
Essay	30%	4	0.16	7
Final exam	50%	3	0.12	1, 5, 3, 4, 6, 2
Weekly assignments	20%	6	0.24	1, 4, 6, 7

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