

Human Dimensions of Environmental Change: Nature/Society Theory
16:378:501 or 16:215:604 or 16:450:605 or 16:070:543 or 16:920:577
Tues 10:55-1:55, Cook Bldg Rm 226

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is the key seminar for the Human Dimensions of Environmental Change graduate certificate program. The seminar is designed to provide students with a survey of theories and concepts in human-environment studies. We will examine how perspectives and arguments of oft-cited theorists (e.g. Foucault, Latour, Haraway) have been taken up in nature-society scholarship in geography, anthropology, development studies, environmental studies, and other disciplines. To do so, we will read selected writings from social theorists as well as contemporary nature-society scholars, making sense of writing and concepts through collective discussion and debate.

Learning Objectives of the Course

- **Analyze** various approaches to nature/society theory, from different disciplinary perspectives, with a critical eye and examine their viewpoints, methodologies, and positions.
- **Synthesize** class readings and discussions into the broader context of the student's own graduate work.
- **Evaluate** the merits of various theoretical approaches to nature/society scholarship and their application in contemporary book-length works through writing of weekly reflections papers.

ASSIGNMENTS

Reading reflections: You are expected to write one short reflections paper every week during the semester (with the exception of our introductory class). Each week by the Monday morning before class (that is, 24 hours in advance of our meeting time), students will submit a brief (no more than 2-3 page) review and reflection on the assigned readings for that day in which they will highlight the key points, and analyze the message of the readings for their relationship to class themes. Please upload papers to the appropriate folder (by week) in Sakai under "Resources" by 11am each Monday. Also bring a hardcopy to class so that you may draw on it in discussion. These will be graded pass/fail. Each student is also expected to read all the other submitted reflections from other students in advance of coming to class to facilitate discussions.

The short response papers allow you to explore an aspect or component of the material under discussion and consider its implications for your own work. You are not being asked to regurgitate what you read; you are being asked to process what you read. The pedagogic aim of the weekly response papers is to encourage the practice of careful, critical reading. This approach enables you to concentrate your time and energy in sustained weekly attention to the texts. In other words, the attention you would otherwise bring to writing a term paper should be expended throughout the semester in reading, writing weekly responses, and discussion preparation.

Class discussion: All participants are expected to contribute to weekly discussion based on the assigned readings. Because this is a small seminar, success depends on the active involvement of all participants. I will expect everyone in class each week and prepared to discuss the assigned readings, unless you have cleared absences with me ahead of time.

Each student will also lead one seminar discussion in the second half of the class (when we read full texts). Leadership dates will be determined at our first meeting. Seminar leadership involves presenting a brief—no more than 15 minute—summary and critique of the book, including identification of main themes, linkages to theory, use of disciplinary perspectives, methodological aspects, etc. In addition, the leader is expected to provide critical discussion questions to the group, and should be prepared to facilitate discussion among participants for that class session.

SAKAI SITE

This course will have a Sakai site that will contain the syllabus, website announcements, and all available online readings. Please use Sakai to upload your weekly assignments (e.g. don't email them to me.) The website is only a supplemental aid, and not a replacement for being in class.

Outline and Schedule of Class Periods

*** Indicates reading will be available online at Sakai site**

Part 1: KEYWORDS

Week 1, Jan 19: "Theory", "Nature", "Culture", "Society"

*Castree, N. (2005). "Strange natures". In *Nature*. Routledge: London.

* White, D., Rudy, A. and Gareau, B. (2015). "Introduction: The socio-ecological imagination." In *Environments, Natures and Social Theory*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Week 2, Jan 26: "Economy", "Marxism", "Accumulation", "Neoliberalism"

* Marx, K. 1867. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol 1*. Chapter 1 (Commodities); Ch 7 (The Labour-Process and the Process of Producing Surplus-Value); and Ch 26-27 (Primitive Accumulation and Expropriation of the Agricultural Population from the Land).

* Harvey, David (2006). "Notes toward a theory of uneven geographical development." In *Spaces of Global Capitalism*. London: Verso.

* Harvey, David. (2006). "An interview with David Harvey." *Monthly Review*, June 2006.

* Smith, Neil (2007) "Nature as accumulation strategy." *Socialist Register* 43.

Week 3, Feb 2: "Political Ecology", "Governmentality", "Biopower", "Agency"

*Bryant, R (2001). "Political ecology: A critical agenda for change?" in *Social Nature: Theory, Practice and Politics*, eds Castree, N and Braun, B. Oxford: Blackwell.

* McLaughlin, P., & Dietz, T. (2008). "Structure, agency and environment: Toward an integrated perspective on vulnerability." *Global Environmental Change*, 18(1), 99–111.

*Foucault, M. (1979). "Governmentality". In *The Foucault Effect*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

*Rabinow, P and N. Rose (2006). "Biopower today." *Biosocieties* 1: 195-217

*Gershon, I. (2011). "Neoliberal agency". *Current Anthropology* 52(4): 537-555. (Read main article only).

Week 4, Feb 9: "STS", "Co-production", "Actor-Network", "Objectivity"

* Franklin, Sarah. (1995). "Science as culture, cultures of science." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24: 163-84.

*Jasanoff, S. (2004) "Ordering knowledge, ordering society". In *States of Knowledge: The Co-Production of Science and Social Order*. New York: Routledge.

*Murdoch, J. (1997). "Inhuman/nonhuman/human: actor-network theory and the prospects for a nondualistic and symmetrical perspective on nature and society." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 15: 731-756.

*Stengers, I. (2008). "Experimenting with refrains: Subjectivity and the challenge of escaping modern dualism." *Subjectivity* 22: 38-59

*Latour, B. (2011). "From multiculturalism to multinaturalism: What rules of method for the new socio-scientific experiments?" *Nature and Culture* 6(1): 1–17

Week 5, Feb 16: "Ontologies", "Indigeneities", "Feminisms", "Anthropocene"

*Vigh, H and Sausdal (2014). "From essence back to existence: Anthropology beyond the ontological turn." *Anthropological Theory* 14(1): 49-73.

*de la Cadena, Marisol. (2010). "Indigenous cosmopolitics in the Andes: Conceptual reflections beyond 'politics'." *Cultural Anthropology*, 25(2), 334–370.

*Haraway, Donna (1991). "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century." In *Simians, Cyborgs and Women*. New York: Routledge.

*Mollet, S and Faria, C. (2013). "Messing with gender in feminist political ecology". *Geoforum* 45:116-125.

* Castree, N. (2015). "Changing the Anthro(s)cene: Geographers, global environmental change and the politics of knowledge." *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 5(3), 301–316.

Week 6, Feb 23: "Posthumanism", "Assemblages", "Materialisms", "Multispecies"

*Braun, B. (2004) "Querying posthumanisms". *Geoforum* 35(3): 269-273.

* Cerulo, K. (2009). "Nonhumans in social interaction." *Annual Review of Sociology* 35: 531-52

* Kirksey, S. E., & Helmreich, S. (2010). "The emergence of multispecies ethnography." *Cultural Anthropology*, 25(4), 545–576.

* Whatmore, S and L Thorne. (1998) "Wild(er)ness: reconfiguring the geographies of wildlife." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 23: 435-454.

*Coole, D. and S. Frost (2010). "Introducing the New Materialisms. "In *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency and Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Part II: TEXTS

Copies of books are available on reserve at Chang Science Library, Cook Campus

Week 7, Mar 1: Bjorkman, Lisa. (2015). *Pipe Politics, Contested Waters: Embedded Infrastructures of Millennial Mumbai*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Week 8, Mar 8: *McElwee, Pamela. (2016). *Forests are Gold: Trees, People and Environmental Rule in Vietnam*. U of Washington Press (online PDF)

Week 9, Mar 22: Helmreich, Stefan. (2009). *Alien Ocean: Anthropological Voyages in Microbial Seas*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Week 10, Mar 29: Lorimer, Jamie (2015) *Wildlife in the Anthropocene: Conservation after Nature*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Week 11, April 5: Shostak, Sara (2013). *Exposed Science: Genes, The Environment, and the Politics of Population Health*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 12, April 12: Kohn, E. (2013). *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology beyond the Human*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 13, April 19: Lave, Rebecca (2012). *Fields and Streams: Stream Restoration, Neoliberalism and the Future of Environmental Science*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Week 14, April 26: Tsing, Anna. (2015). *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.