

**Geography 232 (Environmental Studies 232)**  
**People and the Environment: An Introduction to Nature-Society Geography**  
**First Year Seminar**  
**Fall Semester, 2007**

**Class Time and Location:** 10:10-11:40, T-R, Carnegie 107

**Instructor:** Bill Moseley

**Office:** Rm 104d, Carnegie Hall

**Office Hours:** 2:30-3:30 PM weekdays, or by appointment

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Megan Grinde. Email: [mgrinde@macalester.edu](mailto:mgrinde@macalester.edu). Office hours: 6:30-8pm Mon; 8:30-10am Thurs.

**Course Description**

The investigation of nature-society relationships lies at the heart of geography and has been one of the pillars of the discipline since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This realm of inquiry also has been an important bridge between geography and other fields. This course introduces you to the study of human-environment interactions from a geographic perspective, with a special emphasis on the role of humans in changing the face of the earth and how, in turn, this changed environment may influence humans. We will examine environmental issues in a variety of geographic contexts (developed and developing countries) and the connections between environmental problems in different locations. In our examination of sectoral issues (human population growth, agriculture, consumption, biodiversity, forest resources, water, energy use, climate change, and environmental health) we will be trying on a number of theoretical lenses from geography's broad human-environment tradition (such as physical geography, cultural ecology, commodity chain analysis, political ecology, resource geography, the human dimensions of global change, hazards geography and environmental justice). In other words, I not only want us to explore a range of environmental issues, but also to grapple with theory and how this informs our understanding of the human-environment interface.

**Format**

The class will meet twice a week. The class will be conducted with both lectures and in-class discussions. You are expected to have done all assigned reading before coming to class, and be prepared to discuss it. In addition to normal classroom banter, we will have several designated discussion days during the term (see schedule).

This is your class, and I want to know how it's going. Please let me know if you would like to see changes, from lecture topics to grading. You are welcome to speak with me after class or to visit me in my office. The surest way to contact me is to send me e-mail ([moseley@macalester.edu](mailto:moseley@macalester.edu)), which normally will be responded to promptly during normal business hours.

## **Texts**

Cutter, Susan and Renwick, William. 2004. Exploitation, Conservation, Preservation: A Geographic Perspective on Resource Use. Fourth Edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Pollan, Michael. 2006. The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals. New York: Penguin Press.

Lunsford, A.A. 2002. Easy Writer: A Pocket Guide. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.

A large number of readings are also available on e-reserve.

Handouts will be distributed from time to time in class. The instructor is not responsible for providing handouts for students who are absent from class.

## **Assignments/Exams**

I deliberately use a mix of assessment tools in this class in order to provide a variety of opportunities for you to express your competence (writing, discussion participation, exams, etc.). Many students find that they tend to do better with some formats (e.g., exams) than others (e.g., writing). I believe it is not only fairest to provide you with a variety of assessment exercises, but more reflective of the mix of challenges you will encounter in life.

Reading: Reading assignments for this course are listed on the outline of lecture topics. Information from the textbook supplements lecture and forms the basis of class discussions.

Participation and Discussion days: Class will be oriented towards discussion roughly one third of the time. The purpose of the discussion classes is to facilitate critical analysis and lively dialog on controversial issues related to human-environment interactions. The majority of class participation points will be derived from your comments in discussion. A few participation points will also be derived from the instructor's assessment of your participation in the lecture sessions (based on cogency of comments, questions, and answers to questions). Participation points are relatively easy to obtain if you keep up with the reading and speak up during discussion. Please see me if you have difficulty speaking in class.

In my opinion, the best discussions are those in which: 1) students listen (and learn) from one another and build on what each other is saying; 2) the discussion is focused on understanding the main argument of each reading and breaking down and analyzing this argument to see if it makes sense; 3) making connections between readings (when several are assigned on the same day) by identifying where authors agree and disagree; and 4) relating insight gained from reading and discussion to other texts or real life events. In sum, I want you to approach discussion as an on-going scholarly debate in which we (as a community of scholars and learners) are attempting to advance our collective knowledge. After the first discussion day, student discussion leaders will be assigned to facilitate our scholarly debates.

Writing Assignments: You will be required to undertake four assignments that involve writing and analysis. All for of these assignments will initially be submitted as drafts, and then revised and resubmitted following feedback from the writing assistant.

*Field Assignment (assign #1):* An important aspect of geography is fieldwork and, as such, you will need to complete a field-based assignment outside of class. This assignment is intended to hone your skills as an observer and investigator. You will ride on two different public bus routes in the Twin Cities metro area (from a poor inner city neighborhood to a suburb; and from a wealthy inner city neighborhood to the Minneapolis central business district) and then write a reflection paper on US energy consumption patterns and the public transportation. The draft of this assignment is due on Sept 11, while the final revised version is due on Sept 19.

*Two short argumentation papers (assign #2 and #3).* You will be asked to undertake two short argumentation papers (3-4 double-spaced, typed pages) during the semester that directly relate to two of your discussion sessions. The first assignment will involve writing an op-ed piece related to the human population debate (draft due Oct 2, final paper due Oct 9). The second will entail writing a policy memo on biodiversity/nature conservation issues (draft due Nov 2, final paper due Nov 8). More detailed instructions on each of these assignments will be distributed approximately two weeks before they are due.

*Commodity Chain Analysis Paper (assign #4).* Geographers increasingly seek to understand human-environment interactions within the context of a global economy. The problem is that the global nature of our economy often obscures the social and environmental impacts of our consumption decisions. For this paper, you will select a food or other natural resource related product that is available in two (or more) forms. The two forms will differ from each other on at least one important dimension (e.g., locally produced/globally produced, conventional/organic, produced by a big company/produced by a small company, etc.) You will then trace the two versions of the food/product back through the various social and physical transformations they have undergone on the way to you, the consumer. The point of the paper is to explore the range of ways in which the two versions of the product differ, and to understand the origins, transformations, and the environmental impacts that before the product reaches the consumer. This paper should be 10-15 pages in length. Guidelines will be passed out in class. The draft is due on Nov 29 while the final paper is due Dec 13. Examples of past papers may be found on the library website ([http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/geog\\_consumpt/](http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/geog_consumpt/)).

*Class Presentation:* Your commodity chain analysis findings will be shared with the class in a group presentation. The instructor will suggest presentation groups of 4-5 people based on commodity similarities.

*Midterm and Final:* A midterm exam will be given as well as a quasi-cumulative final at the end of the term. The exam format will include a combination of question types such as essay, short answer and multiple choice. Make-up exams will only be given in the event of illness or other verifiable emergency. In the event of an absence during an exam, it is the student's responsibility to contact me no later than one (1) class period after the test date.

## **Grading and Exams**

### Grade Components

Midterm (10/23):	20%	Peer Review Exercise (12/3-12/7):	1%
Final (12/19):	25%	Group Presentation (12/11, 12/13):	4%
Assign 1 (draft 9/11, final 9/18):	7%	Commodity Chain Paper (12/13):	21%
Assign 2 (draft 10/2, final 10/9):	6%	Participation/discussion:	10%
Assign 3 (draft 11/2, final 11/8):	6%	Total:	100%
Commodity Chain Paper Draft (11/29):	1%		

Note: Another way to think about grading for the course: 45% of your grade is related to exams; 45% is related to writing and presenting; and 10% is related to participation/discussion.

Final grades are based on a weighted average for the term. Grade cutoff points (in terms of percentage) are as follows: A = 93-100%; A- = 90-92%; B+ = 87-89%; B = 83-86%; B- = 80-82%; C+ = 77-79%; C = 73-76%; C- = 70-72%; D+ = 67-69%; D = 63-66%; D- = 60-62%, NC = < 60%.

### **Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability, or any other problem you think may affect your ability to perform well in this class, please see me early in the semester so that arrangements may be made to accommodate you.

### **Academic Misconduct**

Plagiarism and cheating are both academic crimes. Never (1) turn in an assignment that you did not write yourself, (2) turn in an assignment for this class that you previously turned in for another class, or (3) cheat on exam. If you do so, it may result in a failing grade for the class, and possibly even suspension from the college. Please see me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism. Anyone caught cheating on an exam will be reported to the provost in line with recognized university procedures.

### Schedule and Assigned Readings For Lecture (Cutter and Renwick text)

Please note that this is tentative and subject to change. It is your responsibility to keep up with any changes.

### Lecture and Discussion Schedule

<b>PART I: INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN-ENVIRONMENT GEOGRAPHY, PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY, CULTURAL ECOLOGY</b>			
<b>Wk</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings and Assignments</b>
1	Saturday, 1 Sept	Course Business, introductions	
		Introduction to geography	
	Thursday, 6 Sept	Introduction to geography <b>Discussion 1: What is geography</b>	
2	Tues, 11 Sept	Human-Env Tradition	Chap 2, <u>Draft of Assignment #1 due</u>
		Library I session	
	Thurs, 13 Sept	Eric Perramond Guest lecture <b>Discussion 2: Human-Env Tradition</b>	Discussion Readings
3	Tues, 18 Sept	Human-Env Tradition	Chap 3, <u>Revised Assignment #1 due</u>
		Environmental Policy	
	Thurs, 20 Sept	Environmental Policy / Physical Geography <b>Discussion 3: Sustainable Development</b>	Discussion Readings
4	Tues, 25 Sept	Physical Geography	Chap 4
	Thurs, 27 Sept	Cultural Ecology Population	Chap 5
5	Tues, 2 Oct	Population	Discussion Readings, <u>Draft of Assignment #2 due</u>
		<b>Discussion 4: The Over-Population Debate</b>	
	Thurs, 5 Oct	Population/Agriculture	Chap 6

<b>PART II: COMMODITY CHAIN ANALYSIS, POLITICAL ECOLOGY, RESOURCE GEOGRAPHY</b>			
<b>Wk</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings and Assignments</b>
6	Tues, 9 Oct	Agriculture	<u>Revised Assignment #2 due</u>
	Thurs, 11 Oct	Agriculture <b>Discussion 5: Agriculture</b>	Discussion Readings
7	Tues, 16 Oct	Commodity Chains <b>Discussion 6: Omnivore's Dilemma Part I</b>	Discussion Readings
	Thurs, 18 Oct	Commodity Chains <b>Discussion 7: Commodity Chains</b>	Discussion Readings
8	Tues, 23 Oct	Midterm Exam	Evening review session to be scheduled prior to exam
	Thurs, 25 Oct	Midterm Break	
9	Tues, 30 Oct	<b>Discussion 8: Omnivore's Dilemma Part II</b> Library II	
	Thurs, 2 Nov	Political Ecology <b>Discussion 9: Nature</b>	<u>Draft of Assignment #3 due</u>
10	Tues, 6 Nov	Biodiversity <b>Discussion 10: Biodiversity</b>	Chap 7, <u>Final Paper Proposal due</u>
	Thurs, 8 Nov	Biodiversity Forestry	Chap 10, <u>Revised Assignment #3 due</u>

<b>PART III: HUMAN DIMENSIONS OF GLOBAL CHANGE, HAZARDS GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE</b>			
<b>Wk</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings and Assignments</b>
11	Tues, 13 Nov	Water <b>Discussion 11: Water</b>	Water chapter, Discussion Readings
	Thurs, 15 Nov	Water Helen Guest Lecture	<u>Final Paper Progress Report, Outline and Bibliography Due</u>
12	Tues, 20 Nov	Atmosphere and Energy	Chap 12
	Thurs, 22 Nov	Thanksgiving Break	
13	Tues, 27 Nov	Atmosphere and Energy <b>Discussion 12: Atmosphere and Energy</b>	Chap 14, Discussion Readings
	Thurs, 29 Nov	Atmosphere and Energy Hazards	Draft final paper due
14	Tues, 4 Dec	Hazards/Environmental Health <b>Discussion 13: Hazards</b>	Discussion Readings, Peer Review this week
	Thurs, 6 Dec	Environmental Health and Justice <b>Discussion 14: Environmental Justice</b>	Discussion Readings
15	Tues, 11 Dec	Presentations	
	Thurs, 13 Dec	Presentations	<u>Final Paper due @ 5pm</u>
	Wed, 19 Dec	Final exam (10:30-12:30)	

## Discussion Reading Schedule

### 1. Thursday, September 6: What the \$@!! is Geography!

Moseley, W.G., D. Lanegran and K. Pandit. 2007. "Introduction: Situating Geography." In: Moseley, W.G., D. Lanegran and K. Pandit (eds). The Introductory Reader in Human Geography: Contemporary Debates and Classic Writings. Malden, MA: Blackwell Press.

Pattison, W. 1990. "The Four Traditions of Geography." Journal of Geography. September/October.

Murphy, Alexander. 1998. "Rediscovering the Importance of Geography," The Chronicle of Higher Education. P. 54. p. 202-206.

Moseley, W.G. 2002. "Reflections of an American Geographer on the Anniversary of September 11<sup>th</sup>." Association of American Geographer's Newsletter. 37(11):11-12.

### 2. Thursday, September 13: Geography's Nature-Society Tradition

Bryant, R.L. 1997. "Beyond the impasse: the power of political ecology in Third World environmental research." Area. 29(1): 5-19.

Liverman, D. 1999. "Geography and the Global Environment." Annals of the Association of American Geographers. 89(1): 107-120.

Diamond, Gerald. 1999. Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies. New York: W.W. Norton & Company. Prologue.

### 3. Thursday, September 20. Environmental Policy and Sustainable Development.

Brooks, D. 1993. "Beyond Catch Phrases: What Does Sustainable Development Really Mean?" Arid Lands Newsletter. 33: 3-5.

Williams, Colin C. and Andrew C. Millington. 2004. "The Diverse and Contested Meanings of Sustainable Development". The Geographical Journal 170:2, p. 99-204.

Lele, S.M. 1991. "Sustainable Development: A Critical Review." World Development. 19(6): 607-621.

### 4. Tuesday, October 2: The Over-Population Debate (aka Population, Politics and Consumption)

Mitchell, Jennifer. 1998. "Before the Next Doubling," World Watch. January/February. Pp. 20-27.

Hartmann, Betsy. 1994. "Population fictions: The Malthusians are back in town." Dollars and Sense.

Simon, Julian. 1981. "World Population: An Anti-Doomsday View." In: Menard, SW and EW Moen. Perspectives on Population.

Princen, T., M. Maniates and K. Conca . 2002. "Confronting Consumption." In: Princen, T., M. Maniates and K. Conca (eds). 2002. Confronting Consumption. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Pp 1-20.

## **5. Thursday, October 11: Agriculture, the Environment and Society**

Richards, P. 1985. Indigenous Agricultural Revolution: Food and Ecology in West Africa. London: Hutchinson. (Introduction), pp. 9-17.

McAfee, Kathleen. 2003. "Corn Culture and Dangerous DNA: Real and Imagined Consequences of Maize Transgene Flow in Oaxaca". Journal of Latin American Geography 2:1, p. 18-42.

Borlaug, Norman. 1995. "Mobilising science and technology to get agriculture moving in Africa." Development Policy Review. 13(2):115-129.

## **6. Thursday, October 16: Omnivore's Dilemma Part I**

Pollan, Michael. 2006. The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals. New York: Penguin Press. Pp 1-184.

## **7. Thursday, October 18: Commodity Chain Analysis**

Hartwick, E. 1998. "Geographies of consumption: a commodity chain approach." Environment and Planning D: Society and Space. 16: 423-437.

Duval-Diop, DM and JR Grimes. "Tales from Two Deltas: Catfish Fillets, High Value Foods and Globalization." Economic Geography. 81(2): 177-200.

Clay, J. 2004. World Agriculture and the Environment: A Commodity by Commodity Guide to Impacts and Practices. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.

## **8. Tuesday, October 30: Omnivore's Dilemma Part II**

Pollan, Michael. 2006. The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals. New York: Penguin Press. Pp 185-415.

## **9. Thursday, November 6: The Concept of Wilderness**

Bass, Rick. 1997. "On Wilderness and Wallace Stegner." The Amicus Journal. Spring Issue.

Cronon, W. 1996. "The Trouble With Nature or, Getting Back to the Wrong Wilderness." Environmental History. 1(1)7-28.

Hays, S. "Comment: The Trouble with Cronon's Wilderness." Environmental History. 1(1)29-XX..

## **10. Tuesday, November 6: Biodiversity Conservation**

Guha, R. 1997. "The Authoritarian Biologist and the Arrogance of Anti-Humanism: Wildlife Conservation in the Third World." The Ecologist. 27(1): 14-20.

Robbins, P., K. McSweeney, T. Waite and J. Rice. 2006. "Even Conservation Rules are Made to be Broken: Implications for Biodiversity." Environmental Management. 37(2): 162-169.

Logan, B.I. and W.G. Moseley. 2002. "The Political Ecology of Poverty Alleviation in Zimbabwe's Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE)." Geoforum. 33(1): 1-14.

## **11. Tuesday, November 11: Water Resources and the Middle East**

Micklin, Philip P. 1996. "Man and the water cycle: challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> century." GeoJournal. 39(3): 285-298.

Allen, J. Anthony. 2000. "Contending environmental knowledge on water in the Middle East: Global, regional and national contexts." In: Stott, Philip and Sian Sullivan (eds). Political Ecology: Science, Myth and Power. London: Arnold. Pgs. 117-132.

Drake, Christine. 1997. "Water Resource Conflicts in the Middle East." Journal of Geography. 96(1): 4-12.

## **12. Tuesday, November 27: Atmosphere, Energy and the Human Dimensions of Global Climate Change**

Nixon, Rob. 2001. "A Dangerous Appetite for Oil." The New York Times. Section A, P. 11, October 29.

Liverman, D. 2004. "Careful with that Planet, Mr. President." The Guardian Unlimited. February 19 (pg. 4 of science pages).

Kates, Robert. 2000. "Cautionary Tales: Adaptation and the Global Poor." Climate Change. 45(1): 5-17.

Eaken, H. 2000. "Smallholder Maize Production and Climatic Risk: A Case Study from Mexico." Climate Change. 45(1): 19-36.

## **13. Tuesday, December 4: (Un)Natural Hazards**

White, G., R. Kates and I. Burton. 2001. "Knowing Better and Losing Even More: The Use of Knowledge in Hazards Management." Environmental Hazards. 3: 81-92.

Platt, RH. 1999. "Natural Hazards of the San Francisco Bay Mega-City: Trial by Earthquake, Wind and Fire. In: Miitchell J. (ed). Crucibles of Hazard. Tokyo: University of Minnesota Press.

Wisner, B. 2001. "Risk and the neoliberal state: Why post-Mitch lessons didn't reduce El Salvador's earthquake losses." Disasters. 25(3): 251-269.

#### **14. Thursday, December 6: Geographies of Environmental (In)Justice and Racism**

Kurtz, H.E. 2003. "Scale frames and counter-scale frames: constructing the problem of environmental justice." Political Geography. 22: 887-916.

Pulido, Laura. 2000. "Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California." Annals of the Association of American Geographers. 90(1): 12-40.

*Welcome to the course! I look forward to working with you this semester.*