

**Geography 232 (Environmental Studies 232)**  
**People, Agriculture and the Environment: An Introduction to Nature-Society Geography**  
**Fall Semester, 2009**

**Class Time and Location:** 9:40-11:10, T-R, Carnegie 107

**Instructor:** Bill Moseley

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

**Office Hours:** 2:30-3:30 on Mon and Wed, 3-4 on Thurs, or by appointment

**Phone:** 696-6126

**Email:** [moseley@macalester.edu](mailto:moseley@macalester.edu)

**Teaching Assistants:**

Emma Liliedahl-Allen, [liliedahlallen@macalester.edu](mailto:liliedahlallen@macalester.edu), Office hours: Monday, 6:30-8:45pm; and Thurs, 8:45-9:30am in CAR 104.

Brennan Panzarella, [branzare@macalester.edu](mailto:branzare@macalester.edu), Office hours: Tues, 8:55-9:40am, 7-8:30pm; and Thurs, 11:15am-12 noon in CAR 104.

**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 agriculture. We will examine environmental issues in a variety of geographic contexts (developed and developing countries) and the connections between environmental problems in different locations. Beyond agriculture, we will also examine other sectoral issues in relation to agriculture or as stand alone environmental concerns. These themes include: human population growth, 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.

A large number of readings are also available on e-reserve and/or the course Moodle site.

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. 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. Furthermore, some of the participation points will also be derived from: 1) your role as a co-leader for two discussions; 2) brief 500-word reflections on two lectures outside of class (listed on p. 6 of the syllabus); and 3) my assessment of your participation in the lecture sessions (based on cogency of comments, questions, and answers to questions).

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.

Gen Ed Requirements: This course fulfills two general education requirements, *internationalism* and *writing*. The international content in the course should be self evident. The writing requirement requires that we hone your writing skills as follows: 1) learn how to plan, draft, and

revise a college-level paper; 2) learn how to construct an argument; 3) learn how to organize an essay; 4) learn how to use argumentation and evidence to support claims; 5) learn how to adapt the style, vocabulary, and tone of a piece of writing to its anticipated audience and context; 6) learn how to cite evidence using a standard citation style; 7) and learn the importance of clarity, proper grammar, usage, and style in academic writing.

Writing Assignments: You will be required to undertake three assignments that involve writing and analysis. Some of these assignments will initially be submitted as drafts, and then revised and resubmitted following feedback from the teaching assistants or myself.

*Farmer's Market Field Assignment (assign #1):* An important aspect of geography is fieldwork and, as such, you will need to complete this field-based assignment outside of class. Working with two other classmates, you will visit a local farmer's market. You will be asked to make general observations about the market (e.g., location, approximate number of vendors, type of produce on sale, characteristics of the merchants and clientele at the market) and undertake a more detailed assessment of three vendors. Ideally you will interview these vendors in order to collect some basic information. The write-up for this exercise is due Thursday, September 24.

*Short argumentation paper (assign #2).* You will be asked to undertake a short argumentation paper (1000-1200 words) in the form of a long newspaper on biodiversity/nature conservation issues. Op-Eds are editorials that are submitted to newspapers by individuals who, because of their regular job or past experiences, offer new insight and opinion on a particular subject. Good op-ed articles are pieces that make a persuasive, yet reasoned and substantiated argument for a particular perspective on an issue. This assignment will have a draft due on Oct 13. You will receive feedback on this draft and turn in a final, revised version on October 20.

*Commodity Chain Analysis Paper (assign #3).* 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 Dec 1 while the final paper is due Dec 15. 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:* You 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 (10/22):	20%	Peer Review Exercise (12/3-12/8):	1%
Final (12/17):	25%	Group Presentation (12/10, 12/15):	4%
Assign 1 (final 9/24):	9%	Commodity Chain Paper (12/15):	20%
Assign 2 (draft 10/13; final 10/20):	7%	Participation/discussion:	11%
Expanded proposal (11/17):	1%	Total:	100%
Commodity Chain Paper Draft (12/1):	2%		

Note: Another way to think about grading for the course: 45% of your grade is related to exams; 44% is related to writing and presenting; and 11% 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**

I am committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please meet with the Associate Dean of Students, Lisa Landreman, who will serve as the coordinator for services for students with disabilities. It is important to meet with her at the beginning of the semester to ensure that your accommodations are approved and in place to begin the semester successfully. The Associate Dean can be reached in the Office of Student Affairs, 119 Weyerhaeuser, by phone at 651-696-6220, or email [llandrem@macalester.edu](mailto:llandrem@macalester.edu).

## **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.

## Lecture and Discussion Schedule (Cutter and Renwick text)<sup>1</sup>

<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	Thursday, 10 Sept	Course Business, introductions	
2	Tues, 15 Sept	Geography and its Human-Environment Tradition	Chap 1-2
	Thurs, 17 Sept	No Class	
3	Tues, 22 Sept	Human-Environment Tradition	Discussion Readings
		<b>Discussion 1: Human-Environment Tradition</b>	
	Thurs, 24 Sept	Environmental Policy Physical Geography	Chap 3, <u>Assignment #1 due</u>
4	Tues, 29 Sept	Physical Geography	Chap 4, Discussion Readings
		<b>Discussion 2: Sustainable Development</b>	
	Thurs, 1 Oct	Physical Geography Cultural Ecology	Craig Colten lecture 12-1
5	Tues, 6 Oct	Agriculture	Chap 6
		<b>Discussion 3: Agriculture</b>	
	Thurs, 8 Oct	Agriculture	International Roundtable

<b>PART II: POLITICAL ECOLOGY, COMMODITY CHAIN ANALYSIS, RESOURCE GEOGRAPHY</b>			
<b>Wk</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings and Assignments</b>
6	Tues, 13 Oct	Political Ecology	<u>Draft Assignment #2 due</u> , Chap 8, Discussion Readings
		<b>Discussion 4: Nature</b>	
7	Thurs, 15 Oct	Biodiversity	Discussion Readings
		<b>Discussion 5: Biodiversity</b>	
	Tues, 20 Oct	Biodiversity Forestry	<u>Revised Assignment #2 due</u> , Chap 7
	Thurs, 22 Oct	<u>Midterm Exam</u>	Evening review session to be scheduled prior to exam
8	Tues, 27 Oct	Commod Chains / fair trade	<u>Proposal for commodity chain paper due</u> , Discussion Readings
		<b>Discussion 6: Omnivore's Dilemma Part I</b>	
	Thurs, 29 Oct	Midterm Break, no class	
9	Tues, 3 Nov	<b>Discussion 7: Commodity chains</b>	Discussion Readings
		Library session	
	Thurs, 5 Nov	<b>Discussion 8: Omnivore's Dilemma Part II</b> Water	Discussion Readings, Kathy Klink lecture 12-1
10	Tues, 10 Nov	Guest lecture by Helen Hazen on marine environments and fisheries	Chap 9
	Thurs, 12 Nov	Water	Chap 10, Chris Sneddon lecture 12-1
	<b>Discussion 9: Water</b>		

<sup>1</sup> Please note that this is tentative and subject to change. It is your responsibility to keep up with any changes.

<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, 17 Nov	Population and consumption	<u>Chap 5, Commodity Chain Paper Progress Report, Outline and Bibliography Due</u>
	Thurs, 19 Nov	<b>Discussion 10: Over-Population, Over-Consumption or Maladapted Technology</b> Atmosphere and Energy	Discussion Readings, Chap 12
12	Tues, 24 Nov	Atmosphere and Energy <b>Discussion 11: Atmosphere and Energy</b>	Chap 14, Discussion Readings
	Thurs, 26 Nov	No class. Thanksgiving	
13	Tues, 1 Dec	Atmosphere and Energy Hazards	<u>Draft commodity chain paper due</u>
	Thurs, 3 Dec	Hazards/Environmental Health <b>Discussion 12: Hazards</b>	Peer review through Tuesday
14	Tues, 8 Dec	Environmental Health and Justice <b>Discussion 13: Environmental Justice</b>	Discussion Readings
	Thurs, 10 Dec	Presentations	
15	Tues, 15 Dec	Presentations	<u>Final Paper due @ 5pm on Tues, Dec 15</u>
	Thurs, 17 Dec	Final exam	10:30-12:30

### **Lectures outside of class**

A number of important lectures will occur on campus this semester which are relevant to the course. You need to attend at least two of these (and ideally more) and turn in (two) short 500-word reflections. These reflection papers will contribute to your participation grade.

1) Thursday, Oct 1, from 12-1 in JB Davis Lecture Hall. This is an EnviroThurs lecture. Craig Colten, Dept of Geography, Louisiana State University. Lecture on New Orleans and Hurricane Katrina.

2) Thursday-Saturday, Oct 8-10 in JB Davis Lecture Hall. International Roundtable. Lectures by Robert Costanza (Creating a Sustainable and Desirable Future) from 4:40-6:25pm on Thurs and Shawn Mill (Turning the Order of Nature on its Head: The Tropical American Origins of Global Agriculture) from 1:30-4pm on Fri are especially germane.

3) Thursday, Nov 5, from 12-1 in Olin Rice 250. This is an EnviroThurs lecture. Kathy Klink, Dept of Geography, University of Minnesota. Lecture on climatology and wind power.

4) Thursday, Nov 12, from 12-1 in Olin Rice 250. This is an EnviroThurs lecture. Chris Sneddon, Dept of Geography. Lecture on the Mekong River in Thailand.

## Discussion Reading Schedule

### 1. Tuesday, September 22: Geography's Nature-Society Tradition

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

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.

Skole, David. 2004. "Geography as a Great Intellectual Melting Pot and the Preeminent Interdisciplinary Environmental Discipline." Annals of the Association of American Geographers. 94(4): 739-743

### 2. Tuesday, September 29. Environmental Policy and Sustainable Development.

World Bank. 1992. World Development Report 1992. Development and the Environment. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1 ("Development and the environment: a false dichotomy"). Pp. 25-43.

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

Moseley, W.G. 2001. "African Evidence on the Relation of Poverty, Time Preference and the Environment." Ecological Economics. 38(3): 317-326.

Williams, Colin C. and Andrew C. Millington. 2004. "The Diverse and Contested Meanings of Sustainable Development". The Geographical Journal 170:2, p. 99-104.

### 3. Tuesday, Oct 6: 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.

Moseley, W.G. 2008. "In search of a better revolution." Minneapolis StarTribune. May 14. p. A11.

### 4. Tuesday, October 13: 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..

## **5. Thursday, October 15: 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.

## **6. Tuesday, October 27: 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. Tuesday, Nov 3: 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.

Bassett, T. 2008. "Producing poverty: power relations and price formation in the cotton commodity chains of West Africa." In: Hanging by a Thread: Cotton, Poverty and Globalization in Africa. Eds. Moseley, W.G. and Gray, L.C. 35-64. Athens: Ohio University Press.

## **8. Thursday, Nov 5: 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 12: Water Resources**

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

Turton, A.R. 2000. "Precipitation, people, pipelines and power in southern Africa: towards a 'virtual water' – based political ecology discourse." In: Stott, P. and Sullivan S. (eds). Political Ecology: Science, Myth and Power. London: Arnold. (pp 132-153).

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.

### **10. Thursday, November 19: Over-Population, Over-Consumption or Maladapted Technology?**

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.

### **11. Tuesday, November 24: Energy, Climate and Agriculture**

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.

TBA

### **12. Thursday, December 3: (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.

### **13. Tuesday, December 8: 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.*