

Geography 232 (Environmental Studies 232)
People, Agriculture and the Environment: An Introduction to Nature-Society Geography
Fall Semester, 2010

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, 3-3:30 on Tues and Thurs, or by appointment

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Teaching Assistants:

Mina Tehrani, Email: mtehrani@macalester.edu. Office hours: Wednesday 7-9 PM; Thursday 8:40-9:40AM in CAR 104. Adam Van der Sluis, Email: avanders@macalester.edu. Office hours: Monday 7-9 PM; Tuesday 8:40-9:40 PM 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 19th 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, 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), which normally will be responded to promptly during normal business hours.

Texts

Robbins, Paul, John Hintz and Sarah Moore. 2010. Environment and Society: A Critical Introduction. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

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; and 2) 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.

Reaction essays: Reaction essays are brief essays (1-2 page or 500-650 words) in which you respond to one or more assigned readings for a given discussion. Your essays should include a succinct but detailed summary of the argument(s) to which you are responding and develop your reaction, which may be one of skepticism, all out agreement or disagreement, epiphany, or whole-hearted endorsement. Regardless, your essay should exhibit a line of reflective thought in

which you explain the logic and rationale that supports your reaction to the reading(s). Your essays must include at least one question, relevant to the readings, which you would like to ask of your classmates. Thus, the reaction essays should help you prepare for participation in class discussion of the readings. Reaction essays must be submitted via Moodle. The essays are due by 7 pm the day before a discussion. You are required to complete ten essays and have twelve opportunities to write them. Each essay is worth .5% of your grade. Proof read your essays so that they are free of grammatical and spelling errors. The essays are marked in a credit/no credit fashion and are not graded. Reaction essays submitted late will receive no credit.

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 16.

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 7. You will receive feedback on this draft and turn in a final, revised version on October 14.

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 Nov 23 while the final paper is due Dec 14. Examples of past papers may be found on the library website (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 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 (10/19):	20%	Peer Review Exercise (11/29-12/3):	1%
Final (12/9):	22%	Group Presentation (12/2, 12/7):	5%
Assign 1 (final 9/16):	9%	Commodity Chain Paper (12/14):	22%
Assign 2 (draft 10/7; final 10/14):	7%	Reaction essays:	5%
Expanded proposal (11/11):	1%	Participation/discussion:	6%
Commodity Chain Paper Draft (11/23):	2%	Total:	100%

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.

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 (Robbins et al. text)¹

PART I: INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN-ENVIRONMENT GEOGRAPHY, PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY, CULTURAL ECOLOGY			
Wk	Dates	Topic	Readings and Assignments
1	Tuesday, 7 Sept	Course Business, introductions	
	Thursday, 9 Sept	Geography and its Human-Environment Tradition	Chap 1
2	Tues, 14 Sept	Human-Environment Tradition Discussion 1: Human-Environment Tradition	Discussion Readings; Paul Farmer lecture (9/14), 4:30-5:30
	Thurs, 16 Sept	Environmental Policy Physical Geography	Chap 3; <u>Assignment #1 due</u>
3	Tues, 21 Sept	Physical Geography Discussion 2: Sustainable Development	Discussion Readings
	Thurs, 23 Sept	Physical Geography Cultural Ecology	
4	Tues, 28 Sept	Agriculture	Chap 14
	Thurs, 30 Sept	Agriculture Discussion 3: Agriculture	
5	Tues, 5 Oct	Agriculture (possible film)	

PART II: POLITICAL ECOLOGY, COMMODITY CHAIN ANALYSIS, RESOURCE GEOGRAPHY			
Wk	Dates	Topic	Readings and Assignments
5	Thurs, 7 Oct	Political Ecology	Chap 7, <u>Draft Assignment #2 due</u> , Discussion Readings
		Discussion 4: Nature	
6	Tues, 12 Oct	Biodiversity Discussion 5: Biodiversity	Chap 5, Discussion Readings
	Thurs, 14 Oct	Biodiversity Forestry	Chap 10, <u>Revised Assignment #2 due</u>
7	Tues, 19 Oct	<u>Midterm Exam</u>	Evening review session to be scheduled prior to exam
	Thurs, 21 Oct	Commod Chains / fair trade Discussion 6: Omnivore's Dilemma Part I	<u>Proposal for commodity chain paper due</u> , Discussion Readings
8	Tues, 26 Oct	Discussion 7: Commodity chains Library session	Discussion Readings
	Thurs, 28 Oct	Midterm Break, no class	
9	Tues, 2 Nov	Discussion 8: Omnivore's Dilemma Part II Population and Consumption	Chap 2, Discussion Readings
	Thurs, 4 Nov	Population and Consumption	
10	Tues, 9 Nov	Population and Consumption	Discussion readings
		<u>Discussion 9: Over-Population, Over-Consumption or Maladapted Technology</u>	

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

PART III: HUMAN DIMENSIONS OF GLOBAL CHANGE, HAZARDS GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE			
Wk	Dates	Topic	Readings and Assignments
10	Thurs, 11 Nov	Hazards	Chap 6, <u>Commodity Chain Paper Progress Report, Outline and Bibliography Due</u>
		Discussion 10: Hazards	
11	Tues, 16 Nov	Hazards	Discussion Readings
		Atmosphere and Energy	
	Thurs, 18 Nov	Atmosphere and Energy Discussion 11: Atmosphere and Energy	Chap 4, Discussion Readings
12	Tues, 23 Nov	Guest lecture – Carbon Emissions	<u>Draft commodity chain paper due</u>
		Environmental Health	
	Thurs, 25 Nov	No class. Thanksgiving	
13	Tues, 30 Nov	Environmental Health and Justice	Discussion readings, peer review this week
		Discussion 12: Environmental Justice	
	Thurs, 2 Dec	Presentations	
14	Tues, 7 Dec	Presentations	
	Thurs, 9 Dec	Final exam (in class)	
15	Tues, 14 Dec	No class	<u>Final Paper due @ 4:30pm on Tues, Dec 14</u>

Discussion Reading Schedule

1. Tuesday, September 14: Geography’s Nature-Society Tradition

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

National Research Council. 2010. “Introduction.” Understanding the Changing Planet: Strategic Directions for the Geographical Sciences. Washington, DC: US National Academy of Science. Pp. 5-18.

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.

2. Tuesday, September 21: 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. Thursday, September 30: 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. Thursday, October 7: The Concept of Wilderness

Robbins et al. 2010. Environment and Society. Chap 8.

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.

5. Tuesday, October 12: 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.

Robbins et al. 2010. Environment and Society. Chap 11.

6. Thursday, October 21: 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, October 26: Commodity Chain Analysis

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

Robbins et al. 2010. Environment and Society. Chap 12.

Bassett, T. 2008. "Producing poverty: power relations and price formation in the cotton commodity chains of West Africa." In: Hangin' by a Thread: Cotton, Poverty and Globalization in Africa. Eds. Moseley, W.G. and Gray, L.C. 35-64. Athens: Ohio University Press.

8. Tuesday, November 2: 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. Tuesday, November 9: 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.

10. Thursday, November 11: (Un)Natural Hazards

Robbins et al. 2010. Environment and Society. Chap 6.

Platt, RH. 1999. "Natural Hazards of the San Francisco Bay Mega-City: Trial by Earthquake, Wind and Fire. In: Mitchell 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.

11. Thursday, November 18: Energy, Climate and Agriculture

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

Robbins et al. 2010. Environment and Society. Chap 9.

Muldavin, Joshua. 2007. China's not alone in environmental crisis. Boston Globe. December 19.

TBA

12. Tuesday, November 30: 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.