

HGO 4301: The Social Dimensions of ~~Climate-Environmental~~ Change

~~This course focuses on the society-environment nexus with particular attention to how environmental challenges are framed among different communities of scholars. Conceptual approaches are introduced, and linked to concerns over how to know and govern rapid rate environmental change including climate change. The lectures and readings highlight social scientific approaches, with an emphasis on contributions from geographers, particularly how different framings of the problem influence the solutions that are pursued or ignored. We will probe the possibilities and limitations of environmental governance, and key concepts such as the commons, adaptation and uncertainty. Examination is a term paper using themes presented in the course.~~

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Learning outcomes

Knowledge and understanding

- Distinguish between major approaches to the ~~climateenvironment~~-society nexus.
- Identify the assumptions upon which major approaches to ~~climate-environmental~~ change are based.
- Understand how the social sciences can contribute to a broader and deeper understanding of ~~climate-environmental~~ change and adaptation.
- Clarify how the framing of ~~climate-environmental~~ change can influence the solutions that are prioritized or ignored.

Skills and abilities

- Appraise how climate change adaptation programs are developed and implemented across scales.
- Apply theories of ~~climate-environmental~~ change to specific examples and their implications for society ~~and environmental change~~.
- Develop skills for oral and written communication of knowledge and competencies.

Judgement and approach

- Evaluate the implications for the society-~~climate-environment~~ nexus of using certain governance techniques in different contexts and at different scales.
- Operationalise abstract concepts about ~~climate-environmental~~ change to understand current global challenges.

Competences

- Ability to explain linkages between social and environmental problems.
- Capacity to understand the social dimensions of environmental change from multiple perspectives.
- Critical engagement with environmental change research and its implications for policy and practice.

Teaching

The teaching consists of lectures that aim at a dialogue between lecturer and student. At each lecture, a relevant case will be presented and discussed based on the reading materials and/or media items. Students are expected to participate actively in discussions, both in plenum and small groups.

All teaching will be given in English.

Course Outline:

1. The Border War between nature and society

In this introductory session we look at some of the critiques of conceptualising 'society' as separate from 'environment'. This intervention helped to set the agenda for critical environmental social sciences today (we will discuss what is meant by 'critical' during the course). The main argument put forward is that when 'society' is constructed as something separate from 'environment' it closes down certain possibilities both conceptually and politically. The chapter by myself is a review of work done on 'nature-society' that will help to orient you to the entire course. The other readings by Donna Haraway and William Cronon are highlighted because Cronon is accessible and Haraway has been massively influential (but harder to grasp).

2. The Commons, governance and sustainability

In this session we look at the scholarship on governance and sustainability that has come from natural resource management, sociology and institutional economics. Ostrom, Agrawal and subsequent work linking governance structures (institutions) to sustainability have arguably been some of the most influential work from the environmental social sciences in global policy and practice. That debate has also come into conversation with work on resilience and adaptive co-management. As you read this work, attend to how 'society' and 'environment' are conceptualised and the epistemological consequences of that framing. Are the different authors consistent? If we take Cronon and Haraway's critique seriously, what are some of the strongest aspects and some of the problems with these approaches? There are numerous case studies in the literature, I encourage you to read at least one so that you get a sense of how these ideas are operationalized.

3. Political Ecology: Politics, scale and global connections

As Ostrom and others were putting forward an agenda to demonstrate the importance of local knowledge and community institutions for environmental governance, a parallel strand of scholarship emerged that specifically sought to link between local scales and global political economies, led initially by Piers Blaikie, Harold Brookfield and Michael Watts. This field, political ecology, has now come to encompass a wide range of approaches and disciplines, but here we focus in particular on the work that emerged out of development studies and political economy. If you have never been exposed to this work, read Bryant first, (otherwise probably

not necessary). How is 'environment-society' conceptualised in political ecology? How does it differ from the kind of analysis that Ostrom, Agrawal and others have done (note that Agrawal would call himself a political ecologist, why do you think I have not included him here)? What sorts of issues are highlighted that the other perspectives have perhaps glossed over? Again, numerous case studies are available.

4. Environment and Conflict

This week we turn our attention to violence and conflict and their role in the social politics of environment. Many areas of so-called 'fragile' or 'important' ecosystems are located in areas of political instability. Not only does such instability threaten the ability of institutions to conserve the environment, but also control over resources and environments can become a key goal of rebel groups. Here, we focus specifically on areas of the world experiencing violence to examine the political ecology issues that emerge from conflict.

5. Governmentality and environmental subjects

The calls for community governance and decentralisation hinge upon an assumption that 'local' people will manage their resources effectively if given the right to do so. This session we take a look at the kinds of subjectivities, or notions of being 'good environmental stewards', that are promoted by states, development programmes and NGOs in order to instill in local people the 'right' kind of attitude towards the environment.

6. Knowing climate

7. The politics of climate change

8. Conclusion: Anticipatory science and uncertainty

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3.—Examination:

The exam for HGO4301 is a term paper.

- The topic for the term paper is decided by each student and must be within the thematic focus of the course.
- The term paper must draw from three of the nine themes of the course.
- The term paper must use the readings assigned for the course as well as materials from outside the set syllabus.
- The topic and focus of the term paper will be assessed and approved by the course coordinator within a set deadline.
- The length of the paper will be maximum 4000 words plus references due in week 48.

During the course we will have a session on topic development to help you formulate a strong paper research question.

Reading list:

- [@ Agrawal, A. 2001, "Common Property Institutions and Sustainable Governance of Resources", World Development, 29:10 p. 1649-1672.](#)
- [@ Agrawal, A. \(2007\). "Forests, Governance and Sustainability: Common Property Theory and its Contributions." International Journal of the Commons 1\(1\): 111-136.](#)
- [@Arnold J E M, 1998, "Managing Forests as Common Property", \(Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome\)](#)
- [@ Bakker, K. and G. Bridge \(2006\). "Material worlds? Resource geographies and the `matter of nature'." Progress in Human Geography 30\(1\): 5-27.](#)
- [@ Beck, S., & Mahony, M. \(2017\). The IPCC and the politics of anticipation. Nature Climate Change, 7\(5\), 311-313. doi:10.1038/nclimate3264](#)
- [@ Benjaminsen, T.A \(2008\) Does Supply-Induced Scarcity Drive Violent Conflicts in the African Sahel? The Case of the Tuareg Rebellion in Northern Mali, Journal of Peace Research, 45 \(6\), 819-836](#)
- [@ Blythe, J., Silver, J., Evans, L., Armitage, D., Bennett, N. J., Moore, M.-L., . . . Brown, K. \(2018\). The Dark Side of Transformation: Latent Risks in Contemporary Sustainability Discourse. Antipode, 50\(5\), 1206-1223. doi:https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12405](#)
- [@ Bryant R L, \(1998\) "Power, Knowledge and Political Ecology in the Third World: A Review" Progress in Physical Geography 22\(1\), 79-94.](#)
- [* Cronon, William. \(1996a\). Introduction: In Search of Nature. In W. Cronon \(Ed.\), Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature \(pp. 23-56\). New York: W.W. Norton and Company. \(27 pages\)](#)
- [* Cronon, William. \(1996b\). The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature. In W. Cronon \(Ed.\), Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature \(pp. 69-90\). New York: W.W. Norton and Company.](#)
- [@ Eriksen SH, Nightingale AJ and Eakin H. \(2015\) Reframing adaptation: The political nature of](#)
[@ Eriksen SH, Nightingale AJ and Eakin H. \(2015\) Reframing adaptation: The political nature of](#)
- [@ Fletcher, R., & Cortes-Vazquez, J. A. \(2020\). Beyond the green panopticon: New directions in research exploring environmental governmentality. Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space, 3\(2\), 289-299. doi:10.1177/2514848620920743](#)
- [@ Forsyth T. \(2013\) Community-based adaptation: a review of past and future challenges. Wiley](#)
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- @ Goldman, M. J., Turner, M. D., & Daly, M. (2018). A critical political ecology of human dimensions
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- * Haraway, Donna. (1991). *Simians, cyborgs, and women: the reinvention of nature*. New York: Routledge. Chapter 1 and 8 (situated knowledges—also available as a journal article 1988) (50 pages)
- * Haraway, Donna J. (1997). *Gene: Maps and Portraits of Life Itself*. *Modest Witness@Second Millennium. FemaleMan@ Meets OncoMouse™*. New York: Routledge. Ch. 5 (pp. 131-172) (40 pages).
- @ Head, L., & Gibson, C. (2012). Becoming differently modern: Geographic contributions to a
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- @ Hulme, M. (2018). "Gaps" in Climate Change Knowledge: Do They Exist? Can They Be Filled? *Environmental Humanities, 10(1)*, 330-337. <https://doi.org/10.1215/22011919-4385599> (7 pages)
- @ Klenk, N., Fiume, A., Meehan, K., & Gibbes, C. (2017). Local knowledge in climate adaptation research: moving knowledge frameworks from extraction to co-production. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change, 8(5)*, <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.475> (10 pages)
- @ Korf, B., & Fünfgeld, H. (2006). *War and the commons: Assessing the changing politics of violence, access and entitlements in Sri Lanka. Geoforum, 37(3), 391-403*. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/B6V68-4JFHFBN-1/2/03650034a8f112db459defe6d629b9d3>
- @ Loftus, A. (2019). Political ecology III: Who are 'the people'? *Progress in Human Geography, 44(5)*, 981-990. doi:10.1177/0309132519884632
- @ Lövbrand E, Beck S, Chilvers J, et al. (2015) Who speaks for the future of Earth? How critical social science can extend the conversation on the Anthropocene. *Global Environmental Change* 32: 211-218. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2015.03.012> (7 pages)
- @ Nielsen, Jonas Østergaard, and Frank Sejersen. 2012. "Earth System Science, the IPCC and the
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- * Nightingale, A. J. (2014). *Society-Nature In N. C. Roger Lee, Rob Kitchin, Victoria Lawson, Anssi Paasi, Chris Philo, Sarah Radcliffe, Susan M Roberts and Charles W J Withers (Ed.), Sage Handbook of Human Geography* London: Sage. (pp. 120-147). (27 pages)

@ Nightingale AJ. (2016) Adaptive scholarship and situated knowledges? Hybrid methodologies and plural epistemologies in climate change adaptation research. *Area* 48: 41-47. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12195> (6 pages)

@ Nightingale AJ. (2017) Power and politics in climate change adaptation efforts: Struggles over authority and recognition in the context of political instability. *Geoforum* 84: 11-20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.05.011> (9 pages)

@ Nightingale, A. J. (2018). The socioenvironmental state: Political authority, subjects, and transformative socationatural change in an uncertain world. *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, 1(4), 688-711. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/2514848618816467>

@ Norgaard, K. M. 2006. "'We Don't Really Want to Know': Environmental Justice and Socially Organized Denial of Global Warming in Norway." *Organization & Environment* 19 (3): 347-70. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026606292571> (24 pages)

@ O'Brien, Karen. 2012. "Global Environmental Change II: From Adaptation to Deliberate Transformation." *Progress in Human Geography* 36 (5): 667-76. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132511425767> (10 pages)

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* Peet, R. and M. Watts (2004). *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development and Social Movements*. London, Routledge. Introduction. (30 pages)

@ Peluso, N. L., & Vandergeest, P. (2011). Political Ecologies of War and Forests: Counterinsurgencies and the Making of National Natures. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 101(3), 587-608. doi:10.1080/00045608.2011.560064

@ Ribot, J & Peluso, N.L. (2003). "A Theory of Access." *Rural Sociology* 68 (2): 153-181

@ Rose-Redwood, R. S. (2006). "Governmentality, geography, and the geo-coded world." *Progress in Human Geography* 30 (4):469-486.

@ Sultana, F. (2020). Political ecology 1: From margins to center. *Progress in Human Geography*, 45(1), 156-165. doi:10.1177/0309132520936751.

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@ Zegwaard, A., Petersen, A.C. & Wester, P. Climate change and ontological politics in the Dutch Delta, *Climatic Change* (2015) 132: 433-444. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10584-014-1259-0> (12 pages)

Total: 730 pages