POLITICAL ECOLOGY
ANTHROPOLOGY 390A

Dr. Andrew Bauer
Sociology and Anthropology
Asbury Hall 205E
andrewbauer@depauw.edu
ph. 765.658.4529

East College 019
TR 12:40-2:10
Office Hours
Wednesday 9-12, or
by appointment

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This seminar will introduce students to the theoretical paradigms of political and historical ecology. The overall objective of the course is to provide students with a critical awareness of how social relationships and cultural logics mediate human-environment interactions to produce particular environmental histories. The course objectives will be achieved primarily through in-depth explorations of historical case studies that illustrate the interrelationships between social environments and the ecological and material worlds that people both inhabit and produce. For example, in an examination of contemporary coffee production in Southeast Asia we will detail an increasingly common confluence of neo-liberal policies and global market access to smallholder agricultural production in developing countries, considering both their social and ecological consequences (e.g., pronounced deforestation and reforestation in the case of Vietnam’s Central Highlands). Other case studies will highlight different socio-ecological configurations relevant to contemporary policy discussions and environmental politics, but not necessarily situated in the current “neo-liberal climate.” More specifically, several of the case studies will use archaeological and paleoecological data to evaluate contemporary tropes about the distinctions between “modern” and “traditional” forms of land use—the former frequently characterized as profligate control of Nature while the latter is romanticized as sustainable practices “in harmony” with Nature. Through these examinations the course will evaluate Nature as an historical product that is not so neatly separable from the domain of Culture.

At the end of this course students should:

• Have a thorough understanding of the theoretical paradigms of political ecology.
• Be able to apply the theoretical paradigms of political ecology to real world situations.
• Understand “Nature,” what we define as “natural,” is partly a product of culture.
• Be more familiar with reading and discussing academic literature
• Have improved writing skills
• Be motivated to ask critical questions of the environmental phenomena that influence their daily lives.
CLASS STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

This course will be run as a student-centric seminar. Students are expected to attend class having completed the assigned reading for the day so as to be capable of leading class discussion, and should come to class with the reading assignments as well as their notes. Students will also periodically split into small groups to work cooperatively on analyzing and synthesizing course materials. Class materials will also include films and slides to enhance the content of the readings. Some class periods will include short introductory lectures.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

Bibliographic Annotations ($x10 = 30\%$ of grade). Students are required to write a one-page summary of ten class readings throughout the semester, five of which must be completed by March 8th. These annotations should have a clearly stated thesis about the reading, identify the main argument, and relate the reading to previous readings and class discussion. Bibliographic annotations must be turned in the day before we are scheduled to discuss the readings in class, or they will not be counted.

Discussion Leader ($x1 = 10\%$). At least once during the semester students are expected to lead class discussion. Students will be given the option to sign up for a specific class date, or else will have one assigned to them. The day before you lead class discussion students are to meet with the professor to discuss the content of the reading briefly. Students will be evaluated according to how clearly they present and synthesize the reading (do they accurately communicate the main points, do they establish connections to class themes and other readings) in addition to how well they facilitate discussion amongst their peers.

Open Book Essay Response ($x2 = 30\%$ of grade). Two take-home essay prompts will be distributed during the semester asking students to argue a position based on course content and reading assignments (see Course Schedule). Three to five page essays will be due a week after handout, and will be evaluated on the strength of their thesis, argumentation, use of evidentiary support, structure, and style. Late papers will be penalized.

Attendance and Participation (5% pre-midterm, 5% post-midterm). Students are expected to attend all classes and come prepared to participate in discussion. Students may arrange, in advance of missing class, an excused absence for legitimate reasons recognized by the University (e.g., religious holidays, athletes may miss class for away games, etc.). Attendance and participation grades will be penalized for every unexcused absence after two.

Research Paper and Presentation (20\%). Each student will be asked to prepare a short 8-10 page research paper with an accompanying short in class presentation. Papers will be due on the first day of exam week. Late papers will be penalized.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

This course will abide by DePauw University’s policy on academic integrity:

Cheating, plagiarism, submission of the work of others, etc. violates DePauw policy on academic integrity and may result in penalties ranging from a lowered grade to course failure or expulsion. The policy and discussion of each student’s obligations and rights are in the Student Handbook.

http://www.depauw.edu/univ/handbooks/dpuhandbooks.asp?ID=101&parentid=100
### Course Schedule*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/31/12</td>
<td>Introduction to the course</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>In <em>Reimagining Political Ecology</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/7/12</td>
<td>The Cultural Production of Nature: Invasive Species</td>
<td>Film: OPB Silent Invasion</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/6/12</td>
<td>“High Modernity” and Monoculture: Case Study II</td>
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*Subject to modification based on class progress toward course goals and objectives. Readings not from your required books will be available on Moodle or at the library on course reserve.*

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*Anthropology 390: Political Ecology*


CASE STUDY: NEOLIBERALISM, GLOBALIZATION, AND SMALLHOLDER PRODUCTION IN VIETNAM


**Essay One Handout**

CONSTRUCTING AND APPROPRIATING NATURE


CONSTRUCTING AND APPROPRIATING NATURE


CONSTRUCTING AND APPROPRIATING NATURE


CONFLICT AND STRUGGLE


SPRING BREAK

SPRING BREAK

DISCOURSES OF DEGRADATION

Zimmerer (2004). Environmental discourses on soil degradation in Bolivia: Sustainability and the search for socioenvironmental “middle ground.” In Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, and Social Movements

4/5/12 DEBATING THE NATURAL: THE CASE OF INVASIVE SPECIES

4/10/12 DEBATING THE NATURAL: THE CASE OF GLOBAL WARMING
Archer D. and S. Rahmstorrf (2010). The Climate Crisis (Retrospective: what we knew and when we knew it).

4/12/12 THE POLITICS OF PUBLIC FACTS I

4/17/12 THE POLITICS OF PUBLIC FACTS II

4/19/12 INDEPENDENT WORK DAY

4/24/12 CONTRASTING ANCIENT AND MODERN LAND USE I

4/26/12 CONTRASTING ANCIENT AND MODERN LAND USE II

Essay Two Handout

5/1/12 REVIEW
5/3/12 STUDENT PRESENTATION
5/8/12 STUDENT PRESENTATION
5/10/12 COURSE SUMMATION
TEXTS

There is one book that we will read large portions of in this course and should be purchased by students (*Reimagining Political Ecology*, edited by Biersack and Greenberg). You will also be asked to read a variety of recent articles and books chapters that will be posted to the course’s Moodle site or library e-reserve site.

GRADE SCALE

All assignments will be evaluated on a point system. Points will then be weighted by assignment accordingly (see Assignments section) to calculate your final grade. Final letter grades will be assigned on the following scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93%+</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64-66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-63%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt; 60%</td>
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A, A-: Achievement of exceptionally high merit
B+, B, B-: Achievement at a level superior to the basic level
C+, C, C-: Basic achievement
D: Minimum achievement that warrants credit
F: Failure: achievement fails to meet the course requirements

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

DePauw University is committed to providing equal access to academic programs, University activities, and reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities. Any student who feels she or he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability or learning challenge is strongly encouraged to contact Pamela Roberts, Coordinator of Academic Success and Student Disability Services, for further information on how to receive accommodations and support. Academic Success and Student Disability Services is located in Harrison Hall, 302 A, 765-658-6267. It is the responsibility of the student to share the letter of accommodation faculty and staff members. Accommodations are not retroactive, and will not be implemented until the faculty or staff member has received the official letter.