

Geography 630
Spring 2008

Mon & Wed 10:30-12:18 PM
Classroom: 1116 Derby Hall

Conservation of Natural Resources

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Office hours: Monday 2:30-3:30 and by appointment

This course concerns the conservation of nature. More narrowly, we will study nature-society theory, environmental degradation and capitalist development, and conflicts around environmental change and degradation. This means we will study different philosophical approaches to nature, biophysical questions surrounding conservation, and actual conservation programs.

This is a broad and complex set of issues. To bring it into focus and organize our studies, we will consider conservation mainly by way of two approaches: postcolonialism and political economy. With each approach, our aim is to understand the implications of conservation approaches for different social groups and classes. To this end we will draw from a series of diverse real-world case studies – from the USA, Belize, Mexico, Cuba, and elsewhere – to understand how conservation ideas translate into concrete practices. Because the debates around environmental change have come to focus on climate, our last five class periods will focus entirely on climate change – its political and economic dimensions, principally – to consider how climate change is in turn changing environmental politics generally.

I hope to run the course as a lecture-led seminar. This means that I will combine lectures with discussions. For our class discussions to be effective, you must come to class prepared.

Course requirements

Attendance and participation	15 %
Exams (2), 22.5% each	45 %
Research project—mid-term assignment	15 %
Research project—final paper	25 %

Attendance and participation are required and will be graded. Participation is principally measured by the quality of your contributions to classroom discussions. To participate effectively, and to do well on exams, you will need to carefully read all of the assigned readings and attend all classes. (If you cannot attend class because of illness, you must bring a signed note from a doctor excusing you from class.)

You will take two in-class exams (April 23 and May 28) comprised mainly of short answers to essay questions. Finally, 40% of your grade results from your work on a research paper that is due on June 2 (details below).

Accommodation will be made for any student with special needs based on the impact of a disability. Please contact the instructor and also the Office for Disability Services at 292-3307, or go to 150 Pomerene Hall.

The Course Plan at a Glance 1: Our *Thematic Calendar*

630 WTR 2008 at a glance			Topic
Monday	24-Mar	START	Course introduction
Wednesday	26-Mar	class 1	Nature and society: what is nature? How do we save it?
Monday	31-Mar	class 2	Conservation priorities & the concept of 'wilderness'
Wednesday	2-Apr	class 3	Conservation of genetic resources—the case of maize in Mexico
Monday	7-Apr	class 4	Colonial legacies in conservation
Wednesday	9-Apr	class 5	Conservation and indigenous lands
Monday	14-Apr	class 6	Two films concerning indigenous environmental struggles
Wednesday	16-Apr	class 7	<i>An inconvenient truth</i>
Monday	21-Apr	class 8	Population and resource conservation
Wednesday	23-Apr	exam 1	
Monday	28-Apr	class 1	The value of nature: what is the environment worth?
Wednesday	30-Apr	class 2	Trading resources—case study of WTO environmental policies
Monday	5-May	class 3	Environmental transition—the case of Cuban agriculture
Wednesday	7-May	class 4	Climate change (1): political economy of carbon emissions
Monday	12-May	class 5	Climate change (2): political economy of climate disasters
Wednesday	14-May	class 6	Climate change (3): political economy of energy conservation
Monday	19-May	class 7	Climate change (4): political economy of China's emissions
Wednesday	21-May	class 8	Climate change (5): what is to be done?
Monday	26-May		[No classes: Memorial day]
Wednesday	28-May	exam 2	exam 2
Monday	2-Jun	END	research papers due at 3PM

Course materials

Our course has only one assigned book: *Coming to Terms with Nature* (New York: Monthly Review Press). This book is available at the University bookstore and elsewhere. There is also a reading packet, available from Zip's. You may purchase the packet on the first day of class, or at Zip's (1313 Chesapeake Avenue). Zip's is willing to deliver the text if you order it on-line (go to www.zippublishing.com) or by calling (614) 485-0721. Additional reading materials will be made available on Carmen.

The Course Plan at a Glance 2: Our *Reading Plan*

Date	Class topic	Assigned readings (ch. in Panitch & Leys)	Assigned readings (packet)	Optional readings (ch. in P. & Leys)
24-Mar	Course introduction			
26-Mar	Nature and society	2 (Smith)	1 & 2	
31-Mar	Concept of 'wilderness'		3 & 4	
2-Apr	Case study of maize in Mexico		5 & 6	
7-Apr	Colonial legacies in conservation		7 & 8	
9-Apr	Indigenous lands		9 & 10	
14-Apr	<i>Two films</i>	None: work on your abstract & bibliography		
16-Apr	<i>An inconvenient truth</i>	None: work on your abstract & bibliography		
21-Apr	Population	9 (McMichael)	11	
23-Apr				
28-Apr	The value of nature		12 [two ch]	
30-Apr	Case study: the WTO		13 & 14	
5-May	Case study: Cuban agriculture		15 & 16	
7-May	Climate change (1)	3 (Altvater)	17 & 18	1 (Longfellow)
12-May	Climate change (2)	6 (Peck)	19 & 20	4 (Buck)
14-May	Climate change (3)	11 (Brunnengraber)	21 & 22	5 (Harris-White)
19-May	Climate change (4)	7 (Wen & Li)	23 & 24	
21-May	Climate change (5)	17 (Albo)	25	16 (Wolf)
26-May	[No classes: Memorial day]			
28-May	exam 2			

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The Research Paper

You will work independently to write an original research paper. Your papers will focus on the *state of* and *strategies for* conservation of one natural resource, such as:

- The state of soils and agricultural sustainability
- The state of forests and sustainable timber production
- The state of fresh water resources and water conservation
- The state of the atmosphere: carbon, climate change, and conservation
- And so forth

The final result of your research will be a paper of approximately 12-17 pages (~5,000 words, formatted as a formal, double-spaced paper). As a first step, you should begin reading and narrowing down your topic. Initially, read broadly in order to establish a critical overview of the literature. The purpose of such reading is to gather data, in a narrow sense, but more fundamentally to develop a grasp on the literature: the various ways your topic has been conceptualized; the key points of debate in the literature; and the strongest questions to define your research. This is the foundation for a strong research paper.

THE FIRST ASSIGNMENT (due **April 28 by 3 PM**). You will turn in (1) one copy of a 5-600 word abstract that elaborates your central argument, as well as (2) an *annotated bibliography* with 15-20 key sources on your research. The annotated bibliography should include the following for each key source: a full citation; a concise summary of the text; a statement on the utility of the text for your research. You are encouraged to include criticism. The principal sources of information should be academic journals, but you may also cite some texts by states and NGOs.

THE FINAL REPORT (due **June 2 by 3 PM**, in lieu of a final exam) is a research paper that should address the following four elements (which may serve you as a structure for your paper):

1. *The facts*. A statement about the state of your ecological region/resource (oceans, soils, forests, freshwater, or cities). Drawing from academic papers and texts by the UN, states, and NGOs, present a concise statement of the key facts regarding the conditions of your resource.

2. *History and geography*. Your paper should lay bare the history of use and/or degradation of your region. How did the environmental issues you outlined above develop? What factors or dynamics underlie their development? Be sure to address the geographies of resource use and degradation. Who uses these resources or regions, and why? Who pays the costs of their use?

3. *Explanation*. Third, your paper must present an argument about the reason for the decline or degradation of your region/resource. That is, you must present a coherent explanation for the environmental changes you document in the previous sections. You may draw from the frameworks that we will use in this course to explain why and how environmental degradation has occurred and how effective forms of conservation could be imagined. For instance, you may wish to reflect on the political economy of uses of your resource, or the ways that colonial legacies are reiterated in conservation politics.

4. *Conservation and sustainability*. Finally, your paper should conclude by presenting an argument for what could be considered the sustainable use of your region/resource. You should explain not only what may constitute sustainability, but also identify the key barriers to this state. Your paper may end by suggesting paths towards effective conservation for your region/resource.

The rules: turning in work, plagiarism, and the like

Late work loses ten percentage points per day (Saturday and Sunday count). For instance, a paper that is turned in six days late but would have otherwise received a score of 90/100 would be worth 30/100.

Because our exams are essay-based and unique to each course-group, they cannot be taken late or made up. Exceptions are rare – emergencies only – and up to my discretion. Arrangements for a make-up exam should be made *before the exam is distributed*.

Grading options for the course are A,A-,B+,B-,C+,C-,D+,D, E. An 'I', or Incomplete, will only be given under special circumstances and where the instructor has made an arrangement with the student before the end of the quarter. If you wish to request an 'I', be prepared to explain (a) why an Incomplete is an appropriate grade option, and (b) how and when you will complete the incomplete.

Any academic misconduct, such as plagiarizing, will be reported to Ohio State's Office of Academic Affairs, Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM). The COAM has prepared this useful statement called "Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity" (2007). Please read the following carefully.

Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, students are expected to complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. The following suggestions will help you preserve academic integrity by avoiding situations where you might be tempted to cheat or you might be perceived to be cheating.

1. ACKNOWLEDGE THE SOURCES THAT YOU USE WHEN COMPLETING ASSIGNMENTS: If you use another person's thoughts, ideas, or words in your work, you must acknowledge this fact. This applies regardless of whose thoughts, ideas, or words you use as well as the source of the information. If you do not acknowledge the work of others, you are implying that another person's work is your own, and such actions constitute plagiarism. Plagiarism is the theft of another's intellectual property, and plagiarism is a serious form of academic misconduct. If you are ever in doubt about whether or not you should acknowledge a source, err on the side of caution and acknowledge it.

2. AVOID SUSPICIOUS BEHAVIOR: Do not put yourself in a position where an instructor might suspect that you are cheating or that you have cheated. Even if you have not cheated, the mere suspicion of dishonesty might undermine an instructor's confidence in your work. Avoiding some of the most common types of suspicious behavior is simple. Before an examination, check your surroundings carefully and make sure that all of your notes are put away and your books are closed. An errant page of notes on the floor or an open book could be construed as a "cheat sheet." Keep your eyes on your own work. Unconscious habits, such as looking around the room aimlessly or talking with a classmate, could be misinterpreted as cheating.

3. DO NOT FABRICATE INFORMATION: Never make-up data, literature citations, experimental results, or any other type of information that is used in an academic or scholarly assignment.

4. **DO NOT FALSIFY ANY TYPE OF RECORD:** Do not alter, misuse, produce, or reproduce any University form or document or other type of form or document. Do not sign another person's name to any form or record (University or otherwise), and do not sign your name to any form or record that contains inaccurate or fraudulent information. Once an assignment has been graded and returned to you, do not alter it and ask that it be graded again. Many instructors routinely photocopy assignments and/or tests before returning them to students, thus making it easy to identify an altered document.

5. **DO NOT GIVE IN TO PEER PRESSURE:** Friends can be a tremendous help to one another when studying for exams or completing course assignments. However, don't let your friendships with others jeopardize your college career. Before lending or giving any type of information to a friend or acquaintance, consider carefully what you are lending (giving), what your friend might do with it, and what the consequences might be if your friend misuses it. Even something seemingly innocent, such as giving a friend an old term paper or last year's homework assignments, could result in an allegation of academic misconduct if the friend copies your work and turns it in as his/her own.

6. **DO NOT SUBMIT THE SAME WORK FOR CREDIT IN TWO COURSES:** Instructors do not give grades in a course, rather students earn their grades. Thus, instructors expect that students will earn their grades by completing all course requirements (assignments) while they are actually enrolled in the course. If a student uses his/her work from one course to satisfy the requirements of a different course, that student is not only violating the spirit of the assignment, but he/she is also putting other students in the course at a disadvantage. Even though it might be your own work, you are not permitted to turn in the same work to meet the requirements of more than one course. You should note that this applies even if you have to take the same course twice, and you are given the same or similar assignments the second time you take the course; all assignments for the second taking of the course must be started from scratch.

7. **DO YOUR OWN WORK:** When you turn in an assignment with only your name on it, then the work on that assignment should be yours and yours alone. This means that you should not copy any work done by or work together with another student (or other person). [...]

8. **MANAGE YOUR TIME:** Do not put off your assignments until the last minute. If you do, you might put yourself in a position where your only options are to turn in an incomplete (or no) assignment or to cheat. Should you find yourself in this situation and turn in an incomplete (or no) assignment, you might get a failing grade (or even a zero) on the assignment. However, if you cheat, the consequences could be much worse, such as a disciplinary record, failure of the course, and/or dismissal from the University.

9. **PROTECT YOUR WORK AND THE WORK OF OTHERS:** The assignments that you complete as a student are your "intellectual property," and you should protect your intellectual property just as you would any of your other property. Never give another student access to your intellectual property unless you are certain why the student wants it and what he/she will do with it. Similarly, you should protect the work of other students by reporting any suspicious conduct to the course instructor.

10. **READ THE COURSE SYLLABUS AND ASK QUESTIONS:** Many instructors prepare and distribute (or make available on a web site) a course syllabus. Read the course syllabus for every course you take! Students often do not realize that different courses have different requirements and/or guidelines, and that what is permissible in one course might not be permissible in another. "I didn't read the course syllabus" is never an excuse for academic misconduct. If after reading the course syllabus you have questions about what is or is not permissible, ask questions!