

Human Systems and the Environment —Syllabus (Draft)

Spring Semester

Lead Professors: Kaplowitz and Walker

Description: This course addresses human systems and environmental change at multiple scales from local to global. Materials covered explore linkages between natural and human systems, but focus primarily on human drivers of environmental and natural resource change and the social responses that such changes precipitate, including individual action, social movements, policy, legal and institutional responses. The course is designed for graduate students, especially those from the physical and life sciences, seeking to better understand the social forces giving rise to environmental problems as well as social responses taken to mitigate them.

The course seeks to develop students' competency in two social science arenas related to environmental change. Students will learn about commonly used analytical frameworks used for understanding and addressing environmental issues, such as environmental economics, political ecology, and institutional analysis. Students will also learn about various explanations that have been advanced by social scientists and others to explain environmental change, including population models, poverty and social stratification, and problems associated with poorly-defined property rights. In addition, the course will expose students to relevant legal theory and ethical dimensions concerning environmental change and equity.

Course Materials:

The course materials are assigned readings, to be completed prior to each class.

Attendance: Class attendance is mandatory. You should not miss more than two classes for any reason. If your absences exceed that amount, your final grade will be lowered.

Class preparation: You are expected to be prepared for each class session. Preparation includes not only reading the assigned materials, but also reflecting upon the readings and being able to discuss them intelligently. The instructor will solicit class participation both by calling on students and by asking for volunteers.

Office hours: Instructors would like to get to know as many of you as possible, and encourage you to drop by during office hours (posted outside our offices and on our website).

Announcements: Class announcements (if any) will be distributed by e-mail and posted on the course website (See angel.msu.edu). You are responsible for checking your e-mail and the course website on a regular basis.

Grading-Components

A. Attendance and Participation (10%)

Attendance is mandatory. Attendance will be taken each class session and students must be in class for the full session to receive attendance credit. There is an expectation that

each student will be prepared and will participate in class. Students should expect to be called on to answer questions in every class.

B. Summary Papers (60%)

There will be 4 summary papers due during the semester, each counting 15 %. These should be at least five pages in length (1" margins, Times New Roman with 12 point font). In the paper, you are to summarize all the readings since the preceding paper due-date, including the readings for the week when the paper is due.

C. Class Paper (30%)

There will be one (1) research paper required for the course. The elements include an outline (5%), draft (5%), and final paper (20%) due at selected days throughout the semester.

The class paper will address a topic assigned in class. The paper is expected to be at least 15 pages in length (double spaced text; 1" margins, Times New Roman with 12 point font). The page count does not include endnotes, figures, tables, etc., which should be collected **after** the 15 (or more) pages of text.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the appropriation of the words, ideas, or thoughts of another and representation of them as one's own original work. Notice the breadth of that definition. You must cite another author not only for direct quotations, but also for the use of *ideas* and for the *paraphrasing* of another's work. To do a proper job of crediting you sources, it is not uncommon to have one citation for every two or three sentences of your paper.

Class #	Date	Topic	Deadlines
1	1/13/05	Introduction: Change at Multiple Scales	
2	1/20/05	Environmental Policy Cornerstones	
3	1/27/05	Economics and the Environment	
4	2/3/05 ^a	Risk and Uncertainty	Summary paper 1
5	2/10/05	Intertemporal Issues and Discount Rate	
6	2/17/05	Externalities and Market Failures	
7	2/24/05	Property Rights	Summary paper 2
8	3/3/05	Benefits, Costs, and Environmental Valuation	Draft Outline Due
9	3/17/05	Environmental Law	
10	3/24/05	Malthus	Draft Due
11	3/31/05	Population and the Environment	Summary paper 3
12	4/7/05 ^b	Practical Issues: Domestic Context	
13	4/14/05	Critical Approaches 1: Political Ecology	
14	4/21/05	Critical Approaches 2: Social Theory	Summary paper 4
15	4/28/05	Practical Issues: Global & International Context	Final Paper Due

NOTES: ^a MK absent on 2/3; ^b RW absent on 4/7

William J. Baumol. 1968. On the Social Rate of Discount. *American Economic Review* 58(4):788-802. [\[pdf\]](#)

Gene M. Grossman and Alan B. Krueger. 1995. Economic Growth and the Environment. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*. 110(2)353-377. [\[pdf\]](#)

Week 6 Externalities & Market Failures

Ralph Turvey. 1963. On Divergences between Social Cost and Private Cost. *Economica* 30(119):309-313 [\[pdf\]](#)

Allan Randall. 1971. Market Solutions to External Problems [abstract]. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 54:175-83. [\[gif\]](#)

Other-Hardin Again?

Week 7 Property Rights

Harold Demsetz. 1967. Towards a Theory of Property Rights. *American Economic Review* 57(2):347-359. [\[html\]](#)

A. Allan Schmid. 1995. The Environment and Property Rights Issues in *Handbook of Environmental Economics*, Daniel Bromley, ed. Blackwell [\[MS Word\]](#).

E. Ostrom. 1999. Revisiting the Commons. *Science*

Daniel H. Cole and Peter Z. Grossman. 2001. The Meaning of Property “Rights:” Law vs. Economics? Authors’ Working paper. [\[pdf\]](#)

Week 8 Benefits, Costs, and Evaluation

Karen Palmer, Wallace E. Oates, and Paul R. Portney. 1995. Tightening Environmental Standards: The Benefit-Cost or the No-Cost Paradigm? *Journal of Economics Perspectives* 9(4):119-132. [\[pdf\]](#)

Kenneth J. Arrow, Maureen L. Cropper, George C. Eads, Robert W. Hahn, Lester B. Lave, Roger G. No11, Paul R. Portney, Milton Russell, Richard Schmalensee, V. Kerry Smith, and Robert N. Stavins. 1996. Is There a Role for Benefit-Cost Analysis in Environmental, Health, and Safety Regulation? *Science* 272:221-222 [\[pdf\]](#)

- Portney, Paul R. 1994. The Contingent Valuation Debate: Why economists Should Care. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*. 8(4):3 [pdf]
- V. Kerry Smith. 1997. Pricing What is Priceless: A Status Report on Non-Market Valuation of Environmental Resources" . <http://ssrn.com/abstract=31974> a version published in The International Yearbook Of Environmental And Resource Economics: 1997/1998. Henk Folmer and Tom Tietenberg, eds. Cheltenham, U.K.: Elgar, 156-204 [pdf]

Week 9 Environmental Law

- Nancy K. Kubasek.2002. The American Legal System: The Source of Environmental Law. Chapter 1 in *Environmental Law*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall 3-41. [Photocopies]
- James Salzman and Barton H. Thompson, Jr. 2003. The Practice of Environmental Protection. Chapter 3. in *Environmental Law and Policy*. New York: Foundation Press. 40-75. [Photocopies]
- Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County v. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* 531 U.S. 159 (2001) [html].

Week 10 Malthus

- Assigned readings from *First Essay*, pp. 3-143. Malthus, T.R. 1960. *On Population* (G. Himmelfarb, ed.). New York: Random House. [pdf]
- pp. 100-132. Himmelfarb, G. 1984. *The Idea of Poverty*. New York: Alfred Knopf. [pdf]

Week 11 Population and the Environment

- pp. 46-65. Ehrlich, P.R and Ehrlich, A.H. 1990. *The Population Explosion*. New York: Simon and Schuster. [pdf]
- Brown, L. 1988. Analyzing the Demographic Trap, in *State of the World, 1987*. pp 20-37. eds. L. Brown and others. New York: W.W. Norton. [pdf]
- Assigned readings, pp. 11-42. from Boserup, E. 1965. *The conditions of agricultural growth: the economics of agrarian change under population pressure*. London: Allen & Unwin. [pdf]

Week 12 Practical Issues: Domestic Context

Week 13 Critical Approaches to the Environment 1: Political Ecology

- pp. 1-48. Blaikie, P. and Brookfield, H. 1987. *Land Degradation and Society*. London: Methuen. [pdf]

Young, E.H. 2003. Balancing conservation with Development in Marine-Dependent Communities. In *Political Ecology: An Integrative Approach to Geography and Environment-Development Studies*. pp. 29-49. K. Zimmerer and T. J. Bassett (eds.) New York: The Guilford Press. [\[pdf\]](#)

Bassett, T.J. and Zuéli, K.B. 2003. The Ivorian Savanna: Global Narratives and Local Knowledge of Environmental Change. In *Political Ecology: An Integrative Approach to Geography and Environment-Development Studies*. K. Zimmerer and T. J. Bassett (eds.) pp. 115-136. New York: The Guilford Press. [\[pdf\]](#)

Week 14 Critical Approaches to the Environment 2: Social Theory

Braun, B. and Wainwright. 2001. Nature, Poststructuralism, and Politics. In *Social nature: Theory, Practice, and Politics*. N. Castree and B. Braun (eds.) pp. 41-63. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers. [\[pdf\]](#)

Gregory, D. 2001. (Post) Colonialism and the Production of Nature. In *Social nature: Theory, Practice, and Politics*. N. Castree and B. Braun (eds.) pp. 84-111. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers. [\[pdf\]](#)

Blaikie, P. 2001. Social Nature and Environmental Policy in the South: Views from Veranda and Veld. In *Social nature: Theory, Practice, and Politics*. N. Castree and B. Braun (eds.) pp. 133-150. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers. [\[pdf\]](#)

Bryant, R.L. 2001. Political Ecology: A Critical Agenda for Change? In *Social nature: Theory, Practice, and Politics*. N. Castree and B. Braun (eds.) pp. 151-169. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers. [\[pdf\]](#)

Week 15 Practical Issues: Global Context

York, R., Rosa, E.A., and Dietz, T. 2003. Footprints on the Earth: The Environmental Consequences of Modernity. *American Sociological Review* 68(2): 279-300. [\[pdf\]](#)

Lambin, E.F., Geist, H.J., and Lepers, E. 2003. Dynamics of Land-Use and Land-Cover Change in Tropical Regions. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 28: 205-241. [\[pdf\]](#)