GEOGRAPHY 288: GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE
4 credits (or negotiable)
Winter 2007
Class: W 5:00PM-7:00PM; ELLSN 5824

CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructors
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NATURE OF THE COURSE

This course will focus on social science perspectives on global environmental change (GEC). Global environmental change has often been framed as an issue of the biophysical sciences, yet it is now clear that understanding the drivers and impacts of and responses to GEC requires insight into human behaviour, social values and the institutions and politics of the global environment. We will explore these issues through perspectives from geography, political ecology, ecology, institutional economics, and political science. Participants in this seminar will gain an understanding of the core concepts of land cover change, human impacts on environmental sustainability, and human ecological footprint on the one hand and vulnerability, adaptive capacity and ecological resilience on the other. The course will also serve as an introduction to emerging questions concerning scale, uncertainty, equity and environmental governance.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
(IF WE ARE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS COURSE YOU WILL...)

1. Describe the significance and limitations of seminal GEC theories.

2. Select and defend theoretical and methodological approaches for a research project of your choice.

3. Evaluate the appropriateness of the theories and methods selected in class participants’ research projects.

Some steps you will take to achieve the above objectives:

- Understand key arguments developed in some of the seminal theories of GEC.
- Recognize the significance, assumptions, and limitations of these arguments and their applicability over time and across space.
- Select conceptual frameworks that best support your research project of choice.
- Understand how these conceptual models build on the canon of GEC theories.
• Argue persuasively for the comparative advantage of these arguments over others for developing your project.
• Identify limitations to these theories and ways in which your and your classmates’ proposed projects may concord with or challenge these theories.
• Select and defend effective methodologies for proposed research.
• Persuasively argue for the symmetry between your chosen theory with your research question(s) and your selected methods.

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES?

• **Class discussions (20%).** Students will take turns leading class discussions. Discussion leaders will direct our examination of the readings based on the course objectives. The discussions’ purpose will thus be twofold: 1) the class explores the significance of the readings to the broader GEC literature and 2) students receive feedback towards the improved development of their own research projects. To achieve these goals, discussion leaders will begin the class by presenting a three-paragraph manuscript. Paragraph one will present a research question and its significance to practice, theory, and methods. Paragraph two will propose a theoretical approach. Paragraph three will propose appropriate methods. This short paper will be disseminated before class with the weekly readings.

• **Papers/presentations.** We encourage you to seek help at Campus Learning Assistance Services. Writing tutors are available at the CLAS Bldg 300 M-Th 9-5 and Fri 10-3. Phone: 893-3269 Web: www.clas.ucsb.edu

  • 10 page single-space max. paper (60%) and 15 minute presentation (20%). Presentations will occur during the last class meeting. Papers are also due the last day of class.

Guidelines for class discussions

• Be prepared for class.
• Share and explain your opinions.
• Don’t dominate; be fair about the amount of time you take to speak.
• Back up your arguments with evidence.
• Disagree politely.
• Listen carefully to other opinions.
• Change your mind when another argument is more cogent than yours.
• Do not hesitate to ask for clarification.
• Make your points succinctly, avoiding repetition, and providing a choice example of your main point.

Guidelines for the Final Paper

We will evaluate your final paper based on the following criteria:

Fulfill task requirements.
• Basic instructions are followed.

Use concepts appropriately and creatively.
  • GEC is central to your argument, and appropriate literature is cited to reach new insight on the subject.

Synthesize, interpret, and evaluate.
  • You explore unusual interrelations or links that may not be obvious. Description is used only as a necessary base for synthesis, analysis, and evaluation.

Organize with logic and clarity.
  • Your work follows a clear-cut and logical trajectory. The introduction and conclusion are well developed and correspond to the body of the assignment. Topic sentences form the backbone of the work and introduce the body of each corresponding paragraph. Superfluous points and non-sequiturs are avoided.

Display accuracy and conceptual discipline.
  • No conceptual, logical, or organizational errors are apparent. All factual information or opinions not produced independently by you are cited using MLA style.

Present your work flawlessly (or nearly so).
  • Your work is polished, an evident product of several drafts. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar are correct; word choice is judicious.

POLICIES REGARDING LATE ASSIGNMENTS, MAKE-UP EXAMS, AND GRADING

• Late assignments: Grades on assignments turned in late will be reduced by 5 percentage points each day beyond the assigned deadline except under extraordinary circumstances authorized by the instructor.

• Final Grade: We reserve the right to alter exam and assignment grades. We pledge not to do so unless necessary and in consideration of the student’s best interests.
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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>What is Global Environmental Change?</th>
<th>Eakin and Carr</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Cultural/Political Ecology</td>
<td>Carr</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Be familiar with George Perkins Marsh, Vidal de la Blache, Carl Sauer, Barnie Nietschmann, Karl Butzer, Gilbert White)</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Institutions, Political Economy</td>
<td>Eakin</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Human Impacts on the Environment</td>
<td>Carr</td>
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<td>Landscape Change</td>
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<td>(Be familiar with Malhus and Chayanov)</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Human Impacts on the Environment</td>
<td>Carr</td>
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<td>Landscape Change II</td>
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### Week 6 Human Impacts on the Environment

**Carr**

**Ecological Footprint and Carrying Capacity**


Ecological Applications, Vol. 6, No. 1: 13-15

### Week 7 Human Vulnerability and Resilience to the Environment

**Eakin**

**Vulnerability & Resilience**

Kelly and Adger 2000 *The theory and practice of assessing vulnerability to climate change and facilitating adaptation.*


Be familiar with work of Collen Vogel or Karen O'Brien....

### Week 8 Human Vulnerability and Resilience to the Environment

**Eakin**

**Capitals and Capabilities**


*World Development.* 27, 12: 2021-2044

Takasaki, Barham, Coomes 2004. Risk coping strategies in tropical forest floods, illnesses and resource extraction.


Pelling & High 2005. Understanding adaptation: what can social capital offer assessments of adaptive capacity?

*Global Environmental Change* 15, 4: 308-310.


### Week 9 Human Vulnerability and Resilience to the Environment

**Eakin**

**Governance and Knowledge**


Ivey, Smithers and de Lee 2004 Community capacity for adaptation to climate induced water shortages: Linking institutional complexity to local actors. *Environmental Management* 35: 36-47


### Week 10 Student Presentations

**Eakin and Carr**