COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a broad, interdisciplinary overview of theories and frameworks for understanding and addressing environmental and natural resource management dilemmas. The primary goals of this course are to introduce graduate students to: (1) theories that explain why/how human beings impact their environment, and (2) interdisciplinary frameworks for addressing environmental problems.

Part I. On the Origins of our Ecological Dilemmas
This part of the course reviews early narratives, theories and ongoing debates concerning how human beings impact their environment and what can be done to alleviate these impacts. Many of the most contentious debates surround problems for which there is no objectively “right” answer. When one accepts the proposition there is no right way to manage ecosystems, it becomes clear that the primary point of contention is not how we should management ecosystems, but for what purpose should we manage ecosystems; thus, the need to find ways of addressing conflicts.

Part II. Disciplinary Perspectives on Environmental Problems
Part II. This part of the course consists of a series of guest lectures from faculty within the School who bring their expertise to help us understand and/or address various environment/ecological problems. In these discussions, students will be asked to integrate key concepts and ideas discussed in the beginning of the course with knowledge gained from other social and biophysical sciences toward the ultimate goal of better understanding how to sustainably manage common pool resources. We end the course with discussions on ecosystem management and socio-ecological systems, two conceptual approaches for integrating knowledge across divergent disciplines toward understanding and addressing environmental problems.
COURSE GOALS

This course will...

1. Describe early theories and historically-relevant debates concerning how human beings impact the natural environment.
2. Explore how theories and methods from the social sciences can be used to assist us in understanding the causes and consequences of—and potentially the solutions to—environmental problems.
3. Explore the causes of environmental conflict and examine theories and frameworks for mitigating and managing conflicts.
4. Promote critical thinking concerning humankind’s role as both the source and solution to environmental problems.

Students will...

1. Understand how theories and methods employed by social scientists can be used to assist researchers and practitioners in understanding the causes and consequences of environmental problems.
2. Develop familiarity with early theories and historically-relevant debates concerning how human beings impact the natural environment.
3. Develop familiarity with theories and philosophies regarding ecosystem use and management.
4. Understand the common causes of environmental conflict and examine theories and frameworks for mitigating and managing conflicts.
5. Think critically concerning humankind’s role as both the source and solution to environmental problems.

STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Format:
The course will be a discussion/seminar format; students are expected to come to class and actively participate in class discussions.

Readings:
There is no required text book for this course. All readings will be made available online through CARMEN. The daily readings are a critical part of this course. Students are expected to come to class ready to discuss the week’s readings.

Participation:
Participation scores will be based on each student’s participation in classroom discussions. Regular attendance is a necessary, but insufficient, condition for a passing grade in participation. Students will have opportunities to add to class discussions throughout the quarter; these opportunities include:
answering questions, responding to other students’ ideas, asking questions, as well as in-class group work. Note: Reading and thinking about the assigned reading before class are critical for classroom participation.

Absences: All absences must be approved in advance by contacting the instructor prior to the date you plan to miss. Unexcused absences (UAs) will result in the following deductions to participation scores: -5 points for the first UA, and -10 points for each additional UA.

Issue Analysis Paper:
The purpose of the issue analysis paper will be to analyze the human/social dimensions of a specific natural resource management or environmental issue that was not discussed in class. The issue analysis paper provides students with an opportunity to apply concepts learned in class to an issue of their choice. The format for this paper is flexible, but generally the paper should contain the following components:

1. Introduction. A brief introduction that explains the issue, delineates stakeholders/interests and their positions, and explains why the issue is of importance to society. Note: The introduction is where biophysical research is most relevant.

2. Analysis (Body). The purpose of the paper is to help students understand the root cause(s) of pressing environmental problems and apply theory and concepts introduced in the course to understanding these problems. In the body of the paper, students will describe the social and political conditions that have given rise to the issue and/or prevent its meaningful resolution. In this section it is important to cite relevant research from the course and describe the theoretical “lens” (or lenses) through which the issue is being viewed.

3. Solutions. In the final section of the paper, students should offer ideas for how the problem/issue they have chosen might be solved, mitigated, or otherwise managed. If the problem is irreconcilable given prevailing social conditions, then you need to describe why this is the case (i.e., what barriers prevent or hamper resolution?).

A minimum of 8 outside sources are required for this paper; in addition, students must cite relevant course readings where appropriate (note: Wikipedia is not an acceptable source). Initial draft papers should be around 2,000-2,500 words (not including title and citations) and formatted to use 1” margins and 12-point Times New Roman font. Information must be properly attributed and cited; presenting information from other sources without proper attribution is not acceptable. You may use any standard citation style that uses a Name/Year (e.g. Smith & Smithers, 2000) format such as, APA or Chicago styles. Papers must be your original work.

Peer Review. Each student will be asked to review two of his/her peer’s papers, focusing on providing feedback regarding the clarity of writing, logic, and interpretation of content. Students will then revise papers based on this input and additional input from the instructor, and submit a final paper by the end of the quarter. Students will be given 500 words (for a total of 3,000) to deal with the changes suggested by reviewers.
Grading:

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Portion of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation / Attendance</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue analysis paper (draft)</td>
<td>31 OCT</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer reviews (2 x 5 pts)</td>
<td>15 NOV</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final issue analysis paper</td>
<td>05 DEC</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>NA</td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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**Academic Misconduct:**
Faculty Rule 3335-31-02 defines academic misconduct as any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the institution or subvert the educational process. Academic misconduct (e.g. plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of misconduct) will not be tolerated in this course. Please see the Student Resource Guide or the instructor if you have questions about this policy.

**Disabled Students:**
Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss potential accommodations for their specific needs. You might also wish to contact the Office for Disability Services (614-292-3307, in room 150 Pomerene Hall) who provide assistance coordinating reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.
COURSE TOPICS & SCHEDULE

PART 1. ON THE ORIGINS OF OUR ECOLOGICAL DILEMMAS

26 Aug. Linking Environment & Society—Early Debates


02 Sept. Labor Day, no class

09 Sept. Societal Collapse, Human Populations, and some Inconvenient ‘Truths’


16 Sept. On the Tragedy of the Commons


23 Sept.  Environmental Problems as Social Problems (or When there’s no Easy Fix)


30 Sept.  “Fixing” Environmental Problems


07 Oct.  The Promise of Ecosystem Management


PART 2. DISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

14 Oct.  Guest Speaker: TBA (Readings TBA)

21 Oct.  Guest Speaker: Jeremy Brooks (Readings TBA)

28 Oct.  Guest Speaker: TBA (Readings TBA)

04 Nov.  Guest Speaker: TBA (Readings TBA)

11 Nov.  Veteran’s Day – No Classes

18 Nov.  Guest Speaker: TBA (Readings TBA)
PART 2B. SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

25 Nov. Perspectives on Science and Advocacy


03 Dec. Barriers to an Interdisciplinary Understanding of Socio-Ecological Systems


11 DEC. FINAL EXAM @ 12:00PM