Political Economic and Ecological Processes

SYLLABUS

Faculty

Ted Whitesell	Lab I, 3017	867-6768	whiteset@evergreen.edu
Frederica Bowcutt	Lab II, 3272	867-6744	bowcuttf@evergreen.edu

Meeting Times and Locations

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:00 – 10:00 PM
6:00 – 8:00 lecture (Seminar II, E-1105)
8:00 – 10:00 seminars in Seminar II, A-2105 (Frederica) & C-2107 (Ted)

Program Description

Political Economic and Ecological Processes is the first core requirement of the MES program. Its role is to provide students with a broad framework for understanding environmental issues. The focus of the class is twofold. One focus is on systems and processes, to build an understanding of how social and natural systems interact to produce environmental problems and affect solutions. The other focus is on environmental studies methodology, to lay the groundwork for first-year graduate students to make the transition from consumers of information to producers of knowledge about environmental problems and solutions. Our principal goal is to develop a contextual framework for analysis that allows for a deeper and more sophisticated understanding of the challenges of environmental problem solving.

To understand the complexity of environmental issues, we argue it is necessary to understand the following key matters within an interdisciplinary context:

1. what natural systems are, in terms of typical structural and functional characteristics;
2. principal ways in which natural systems are affected by predominant forms of human occupation and use of the environment;
3. the logic, value commitments, and effects of the capitalist economic system, including markets, property rights, and the distribution of power, costs, and benefits;
4. the value commitments and institutional frameworks of U.S. society, with emphasis on government institutions and public policy;
5. the epistemological basis and value commitments of the natural and social sciences relevant to environmental problem solving;
6. methodological options within environmental studies, drawing upon methodologies within natural science, social science, and the humanities;
7. the generation of scientific knowledge by scientists working within professional conventions and within specific organizations;
8. the uses of scientific expertise in environmental decision-making; and
9. the relationships between environmental problem solving and the scientific, social, political economic, ethical, and historical context of a given society.

Program Requirements and Expectations

We highly recommend that all students keep a class journal. This should be brought to class and used to note important information and key terminology you want to remember, along with citations for important articles, names of authors to become more familiar with, and other important sources of information. You are also encouraged to use your intellectual journal to record notes as you are reading course material. The purpose of this journal is to begin the process of building a cumulative body of knowledge throughout your graduate education. Students will write a two-page (double-spaced, double-sided) paper on four required books, critically analyzing a core argument of each text. They should be carefully crafted, with in-text citations. Over the course of the quarter, with the help of peer review, you will develop a synthesis essay linking the main themes in PEEP. This 10-15 page, thesis-driven essay will document the evolution of your thinking over the course of the quarter. Over and above the page limit, an annotated bibliography will demonstrate your ability to use proper bibliographic formatting. All of these papers are intended to develop skill in analytical thinking and writing, as preparation for the candidacy papers required in the winter quarter.

Timely attendance is expected for all program activities. It is each student's responsibility to contact program faculty prior to any anticipated absences. Reading in advance and careful preparation for each seminar discussion are essential. Many of the assigned readings are difficult; they will require considerable work to fully understand. Late papers may be accepted at the discretion of faculty seminar leaders and should always be cleared in advance with faculty. A persistent pattern of poor attendance, inadequate preparedness, and late work is grounds for awarding No Credit for the course. At the end of the fall quarter each student will participate in an evaluation conference with her or his seminar leader. All students must come with written evaluations of the faculty. A self-evaluation is required for credit in the program and must be included in the portfolio. Students will be evaluated by their seminar leader, based upon their performance in all assignments, their preparation for lecture and seminar, their participation in seminar discussions, the substance and style of their writing, and their potential as graduate students in the MES program. Credit is awarded on an all or nothing basis; there is no provision for partial credit. Via our program web site, you will be required by the end of week 1 to agree to these conditions of working together.

Required Readings

Students should complete all assigned readings including all of the following books, plus handouts and digitally posted articles and book chapters. Digitally posted readings (in PDF format) will be accessible only to registered PEEP students, at the class web site. Supplemental, recommended (i.e., optional) materials will also be provided from time to time.

Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas, by Donald Worster. Cambridge University Press; Second edition (1994). ISBN: 0521468345.

Reading and Understanding Research, by Lawrence F. Locke, Stephen J. Silverman, & Waneen Wyrick Spirduso. Sage (2004). ISBN: 978-0761927686.

Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction by Paul Robbins. Blackwell (2004). ISBN: 1405102667.

Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement, by Robert Gottlieb. Island Press; Second edition (2005). ISBN: 155963832X.

Making Social Science Matter by Bent Flyvbjerg. Cambridge University Press (2001). ISBN: 9780521775687.

The Bridge at the Edge of the World: Capitalism, the Environment, and Crossing from Crisis to Sustainability by James Gustave Speth. Yale University Press (2008). ISBN: 9780300136111.

Writing History: A Guide for Students by William Kelleher Storey. Oxford University Press; Second Edition (2004). ISBN: 0195166094.

Optional – *A Dictionary of Ecology, Evolution, and Systematics*, by Roger Lincoln, Geoff Boxshall, and Paul Clark. Cambridge Univ. Press, second edition (1998). ISBN: 0521591392.

Optional – *Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast* by Jim Pojar and Andy MacKinnon. Lone Pine (1994). ISBN: 1551050404.

SCHEDULE

Week 1 Introduction

Tuesday, 9/30

Lecture: Introductory remarks and overview of PEEP
Student introductions

Readings:
"Practicing interdisciplinarity" (Lélé & Norgaard)
"What is environmental studies?" (Soulé & Press)
"The sky is not falling" (Maniates & Whissel)
Reading and Understanding Research, Chap. 6, "Types of research"

Seminar: Getting acquainted, seminar process, discussion of readings and free-writing exercise

Thursday, 10/2

Lecture: Forest Ecology of western Washington (Frederica)
Fieldwork Prep: Qualitative Description of Campus Vegetation
Readings: Kent and Coker, *Vegetation Description and Analysis* (excerpt)
Lohmann, "A floristic study of The Evergreen State College"
Seminar: Worster, parts 1-3

Week 2 Methods & Historical Roots of Ecology

Monday, 10/6

Special Office Hours 4 to 6 pm (Frederica, Lab II rm 3272)

Tuesday, 10/7

Workshop: Student Presentations of Fieldwork Results and Faculty Response (Frederica)
(Bring your profile drawing and field survey forms)
Lecture: Supradisciplinary environmental study (Ted)
Readings: articles on methodology TBA
Seminar: Worster, parts 3-6 & Langenheim, "Early history & progress of women ecologists"

Thursday, 10/9
Lecture: Scientific Methods in Ecology (Kevin Francis)
Workshop/Seminar: Gleason and Clements (see type 1 on page 118 of Locke et al.)
Readings: Gleason, "The individual concept of the plant association"; Clements, "Nature and Structure of the Climax"
Due: First seminar paper, on Worster

Week 3 Library Research, Writing, & Expanded Scientific Horizons
Tuesday, 10/14 **ROOM CHANGE:** Solarium (Library 2617) in Computer Center
Workshop: EndNote Bibliographic Software (John McGee)
Workshop: "Library resources for graduate research" (Liza Rognas, Faculty Librarian)
Readings: Storey, Chaps. 1-4 and Locke et al., Chaps. 1-4

Thursday, 10/16
Lecture: Native Science (Linda Moon-Stumpf)
Seminar: Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter*

Week 4 Case Study & Academic Writing
Tuesday, 10/21
Lecture: Big Power Tanoak: A Forest History Case Study (Frederica)
Reading: Bowcutt, "Big power tanoak: The changing fortunes of a Pacific Coast hardwood tree"
Workshop: Revising Papers (Bring 4 copies of your seminar paper on Flyvbjerg)

Thursday, 10/23
Workshop: Architecture of an argument and conventions of academic writing (Ted) (bring Worster, Flyvbjerg, Bowcutt & Storey)
Workshop: Annotated bibliography (bring 5 copies) + strategies for writing a good synthesis paper (Frederica)
Readings: Storey, Chaps. 5-10
Due: Second seminar paper, on Flyvbjerg + 5 copies of draft annotated bibliography

Week 5 Working with the Scientific Literature

Monday, 10/27
Special Office Hours 4 to 6 pm (Frederica, Lab II rm 3272)

Tuesday, 10/28
Lecture: Ecology and Social Science (Ted)
Workshop: Interpreting Quantitative and Qualitative Data & Critiques (see type 2: the team task format of explanation on page 118 of Locke et al.)
Readings: Locke et al., Chaps. 5-8 + journal articles from the scientific literature (fill out & bring the appropriate 12 steps form copied from chap 5 of Locke et al.; also see Appendix B for examples of filled out 12 step forms)

Thursday, 10/30
Student Presentations on Journal Articles from the Scientific Literature
(see solo format of explanation on page 119 of Locke et al.)
Seminar: Locke et al.

Week 6 Political Ecology

Tuesday, 11/4
Lecture: Political Ecology (Ted)
Seminar: Robbins, Introduction, Parts I & II

Thursday, 11/6
Lecture: Cultural Landscapes/ South Puget Sound Prairies (Frederica & Ted)
Optional Readings: Leopold & Boyd; Norton; Kruckeberg (excerpt); and others TBA
Seminar: Robbins, Parts III and IV
Due: Third seminar paper, on Robbins

Week 7 Political Economics

Tuesday, 11/11
Film & Discussion: "The Corporation"
Seminar: Speth, Chaps. 1-5

Thursday, 11/13
Lecture: Political economy and the environment (Peter Dorman)
Seminar: Speth, Chaps. 6-12 & free write exercise

Week 8 Human Population and Sustainability

Tuesday, 11/18
Writing Workshop: Bring 5 copies of your abstract for your synthesis paper
Readings: Review Storey, Chaps. 6-10
Due: abstract on synthesis paper & updated annotated bibliography (5 copies)
Film & Discussion: "The Legacy of Malthus"

Thursday 11/20
Lecture: Human Population and Sustainability (Ted)
Seminar: Gottlieb, parts I and II

Thanksgiving Break, 11/24 – 28

Week 9 Environmental Advocacy

Tuesday, 12/2
Lecture: Environmental advocacy (Ted)
Seminar: Gottlieb, part III
Due: Fourth seminar paper, on Gottlieb

Thursday, 12/4

Lecture: Panel of MES alumni who are professional environmental advocates
Workshop: Synthesis Paper (bring 4 copies of your draft)
Due: Draft synthesis paper (minimum 5 pages; bring 5 copies)

Week 10 Making Environmental Studies Matter

Tuesday, 12/9

Film & Discussion: Film on Rachel Carson
Reading: Carson, *Silent Spring* (excerpt)

Thursday, 12/11

Lecture: Summary and wrap up (Ted and Frederica)
Potluck and community discussion
Due: Portfolio

Evaluation Week, 12/15 – 19

Please bring your faculty evaluation to your evaluation meeting or give them to the program secretary in Lab I.
(Note: a self-evaluation is a required document for credit in the program and needs to be included in your portfolio.)

Required papers and portfolio materials:

- synthesis paper
- seminar papers with faculty feedback
- summary of scientific journal article
- written material for various writing workshops (include copies with peer comments)
- class journal (highly recommended)
- self-evaluation

Expectations of Evergreen Graduates

- articulate and assume responsibility for your own work
- participate collaboratively and responsibly in our diverse society
- communicate creatively and effectively
- demonstrate integrative, independent and critical thinking
- apply qualitative, quantitative, and creative modes of inquiry appropriately to practical and theoretical problems across disciplines
- as a culmination of your education, demonstrate depth, breadth, and synthesis of learning and the ability to reflect on the personal and social significance of that learning