

Protected Areas and Environmental Justice
Mondays 6:00 – 10:00 PM, Sem II, C-1105/2105

Faculty

Ted Whitesell

Lab I 3017; 867-6768; whiteset@evergreen.edu

Prerequisites

Graduate standing or faculty signature. Undergraduates may enroll only with faculty signature. Regularly enrolled graduate students have preference.

Topic of Study

This 4-credit graduate elective is focussed on a specific contemporary research question that has great practical and theoretical significance. The question is how can nature preservation be achieved with social justice when nature preservation affects peoples with long historical and cultural ties to the land? Protected natural areas will be examined as cultural landscapes and as the physical outcomes of social contestation. We will explore the challenges of maintaining culturally-valued characteristics of natural areas (like wilderness or biological diversity) in the face of a variety of social demands, such as those of local peoples with cultural and economic ties to the land and those of others who defend the use of wild areas for such things as outdoor recreation, ecotourism and scientific research. Readings will be drawn from fields such as geography, history, conservation biology and political ecology. Theoretical debates will be grounded in case studies from many world regions.

We now stand at a critical juncture in the history of international conservation. As the human capacity to transform the landscape, the waters and the atmosphere of the planet reaches unprecedented levels, the isolation of natural areas from human occupation and use is being increasingly challenged as an inappropriate or misguided policy. Resident peoples often see the traditional, exclusionary model of nature protection as inappropriate outside of the historical and cultural contexts of North America and Western Europe. Even within those two regions, where the conventional national park, wilderness area, and wildlife refuge models originated, indigenous peoples and other longstanding residents are increasingly challenging those conventions. From a practical standpoint, regulatory enforcement has become difficult or impossible in traditional nature reserves of the world's poorest countries. Within academia, increasing numbers of scholars are challenging the conceptual basis of wilderness preservation and national parks, while other scholars staunchly defend preservation as the best policy by which to stem the massive tide of global extinctions.

As a result, an impasse has been reached in international protected area policy. The choice of conservation strategies today will have lasting consequences for future ecosystems and peoples. Endangered species and cultural traditions can be lost by a misstep in either direction, i.e., through precipitous policy shifts or through stubborn adherence to misguided policies. In this

course, we will attempt to first understand this impasse and then to look beyond it, toward the most likely short-term, medium-term and long-term strategies for achieving lasting natural area preservation with social justice.

Activities and Assignments

This elective consists of lectures, seminars and student presentations. In general, each class will include both lecture and seminar components.

Seminars

I hold seminars to be the most productive and appropriate form of classroom activity at the graduate level. In part this is because seminars, at any level of college, are the epitome of collaborative learning. Seminars are particularly critical to graduate education because they provide a forum in which students may make the all-important transition from being collectors and processors of existing knowledge to being producers of new knowledge. In seminar discussions, we will be searching together for answers to the central questions of this program. Each seminar should have a personality of its own, unique from all others. This happens when the instructor and all of the students apply their creativity and curiosity to the exploration of the evening's topics. At the same time, there are some common traits that should characterize each seminar if it is to be worthy of graduate level education. Among the common elements of each seminar are the following:

1. Identification of the objective(s) of the reading(s) and evaluation of the degree to which it was (they were) attained.
2. Identification and critique of the premises, information, methods of analysis, logic, and conclusions of the reading(s).
3. Evaluation of the ways in which the night's reading(s) may or may not advance understanding of the program's central topics, comparing and contrasting the night's reading(s) with other readings and lectures in order to do this.
4. Following on #3, above, identification of essential gaps in the reading(s) as a step toward formulation of an agenda of critical research questions to direct our attention in this program and beyond it.

A few students will be responsible each week for kicking off the discussion of specific readings by offering a few prepared observations and suggestions for discussion. The assignment of this responsibility will be worked out ahead of time among the students, with a view to distributing the burden equally. All other students will prepare a one page (double-spaced) written commentary on the week's readings to share with all seminar participants at the beginning of the seminar (please come with the appropriate number of copies). Your paper may address, among other things, aspects of the four points listed above. It may also describe elements of the readings that were difficult to understand or questions worth pursuing in seminar. **The instructor will not return these papers to students with comments as if they were writing assignments. He will merely include in his final evaluation of students a comment about the regularity and utility of these one-page contributions to seminar discussions.**

All students are expected to share their enthusiasm, insights, questions and answers to every seminar discussion. If you don't, you are withholding vital contributions and the quality of the course will suffer for all of us as a result. At the end of the program, your participation in seminar discussions will be evaluated in terms of how well you furthered our collective learning. Up to a point, this is measured by how much you speak up but the most important thing is the quality of your contributions. This does not mean that you are expected to always make profound and brilliant observations. Often, the most useful contributions come in the form of questions that pinpoint the most important problems needing our attention in seminar discussions. Do not be intimidated by anyone who may appear to be more knowledgeable because we all bring unique talents and points of view to the table. It should go without saying that we will all respect the views of others. If you tend to speak up frequently, please do what you can to allow everyone to have an equal opportunity to speak. Finally, the instructor encourages and welcomes suggestions for making seminars more productive and enjoyable. Please come forward with your ideas at any time.

Research Papers and Presentations

The required books are intended to serve as general introductions to issues, ideas, policies, research methods and theoretical approaches. It is essential for graduate students to go beyond this introductory level, to become more familiar with specific case studies and with the defining literature among specialists whose work represents the most important approaches to our course topics. Each student will identify a short research project that will allow this to happen. Research papers and presentations may be done individually or in teams of two. Ideally, the research project should contribute to the production of items of importance to each graduate student (*e.g.*, a research proposal, a literature review that can become a chapter in a thesis, a manuscript for publication, a conference presentation, *etc.*), according to his or her current needs. During the second half of the quarter, each student will make a class presentation of approximately 15 minutes (not including the discussion to follow) describing her or his work in progress to fulfill the research requirement. The purposes of this presentation are (1) to allow you to share your information and ideas with the rest of the class in a way that advances our understanding of central course topics beyond the point achieved through seminars and lectures; and (2) to seek critiques and suggestions for improving the quality of your final written product. Topics and schedules of presentations will be arranged individually at the convenience of each student but no later than week four.

Each paper will be evaluated for its demonstration of writing quality, research skills, understanding of the topic(s) discussed, and effectiveness. Effectiveness is measured according to the intended purpose of the paper. For example, a research proposal should not only demonstrate familiarity with the pertinent literature but should (1) include a practical research design that promises to advance that literature and (2) be persuasively presented. A literature review, article or conference presentation should go beyond summarizing what has been written to present your own analysis and conclusions, no matter how tentative they may have to be, at this stage of your studies. A standard citation format for natural or social science journals should be used. Authoritative, published references are expected, especially peer-reviewed academic articles. Internet sources are discouraged and in no case should they represent a significant

portion of the works cited. **The research papers may be submitted during any regularly scheduled class period, but no later than Monday of week 10.**

Credits

This is a 4-credit elective. To earn full credit, students must successfully complete all aspects of the program. Attendance is required for all program activities. In the event of illness, *please* make every effort to inform the instructor prior to the activity you will miss. Needless to say reading assignments are to be completed prior to the time in which they will be discussed in lectures and seminars.

Evaluations of student accomplishments will be based upon the quality of the assigned work and participation in collective learning.

Required books

The required books are listed below, in the order in which they will be used. In addition to these, articles will be assigned periodically from shorter materials handed out in class and/or put on reserve in the library. Taken as a whole, the readings will present contradictory arguments in an ongoing debate over conservation strategy and objectives. Students will thus be challenged to critically analyze the readings and to grapple with difficult choices between incompatible arguments in a current policy dilemma of great significance to people and wildlands around the world.

Turner, J.M. (2012). *The Promise of Wilderness: American Environmental Politics since 1964*. Seattle: University of Washington Press. ISBN: 9780295991757.

Spence, M.D. (1999). *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks*. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780195142433.

Fraser, C. (2009). *Rewilding the World: Dispatches from the Conservation Revolution*. New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company. ISBN: 9780805078268.

Adams, B. (2004). *Against Extinction: The Story of Conservation*. London and New York: Routledge. ISBN: 9781844070565.

Perfecto, I., Vandermeer, J., & Wright, A. (2009). *Nature's Matrix: Linking Agriculture, Conservation and Food Sovereignty*. London and New York: Routledge. ISBN: 9781844077823.