

History of Ecology and Environmentalism

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In the past century, ecology has denoted both a biological science and a political movement. Sometimes these two meanings converge, as in the ecologist Paul Sears' call for conservation in *The Subversive Science* (1964). Many ecologists navigate the path between "objective" scientist and "political" advocate in their work as researchers, policy advisors, natural resource managers, teachers, and public intellectuals. What lessons does the history of ecology offer for current scientists? This course examines the parallel development of ecological science and environmentalism, with special focus on past and current controversies that compelled ecologists to enter the political arena. We will focus, among other issues, on how ecologists responded to destructive agricultural and forestry practices, environmental pollution, human population growth, species endangerment and extinction, and climate change. Students will engage this material through several brief essays on the seminar readings and a longer research paper on a scientific controversy.