Environment and Development - Political Ecology 15 ECTS

Course Description
To scrutinise the politics of environmental change and development, science draws on diverse range of theoretical perspective and methods. A key characteristic of political ecology research is to contest dominant or largely taken for granted environmental narratives about human-environmental relationships and development. This course highlights some of the important contributions that political ecology makes to the study of the environment. In the initial part of the course, foundational concepts of political ecology are explored, including its historical roots, its key targets of explanation, and critical conceptual viewpoints/tools, including perspectives from ecology, Marxist political economy, common property, peasant studies, environmental history, gender studies and post-colonial theory. A key topic of interests across these different viewpoints has been environmental change (often with a rural focus) and its relationship to marginality in the Global South (although not only). More recent political ecology scholarship also focusses on processes of globalisation, situatedness and the relationality of unjust environmental politics spanning urban and rural environments in the Global South and North. A focal point of many expression of political ecology is to illustrate how environmental change (through forces such as the ongoing commodification of nature) can have dramatically different consequences for various groups or individuals, which are mediated by political, social, and economic structures.

Literature
(a week by week reading guide will be distributed closer to the course start date)

Core:
Robbins,P. 2019 Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction. (3rd Edition) Wiley-Blackwell

Ref. Literature (available online):
Beltrán, M.J., Kotsila,P., García López, G., Velegrakis, G., I. Velicu (eds.) 2016. Political Ecology for Civil Society. ENTITLE - European Network of Political Ecology. http://cdca.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/imp_political-ecology-for-civil-society-160519-WEB-1.pdf

Kothari, A., Salleh, A., Escobar, A., Demaria, F. and A. Acosta 2019. Pluriverse: A Post-Development Dictionary. New Delhi: Tulika Books. (only Editors Introduction, Finding Plurilversal Paths Available through the following link or as an e-book through the library or through https://degrowth.org/2018/04/14/new-book-pluriverse-a-post-development-dictionary/

Couse Structure (teachers and issues on a week by week basis)
Week 1: Introduction: Roots, Dominant PE narratives, Apolitical vrs. Political ecologies, Key themes and conceptual viewpoints
Week 2: Key perspectives of critique (the hatchet) and change (the seed) (epistemologies, science, social constructions, power)
Week 3: Indigenous Community-Based Eco-Tourism and Socio-Environmental Justice in the Global South – Latin American settings
Week 4: Dispossession/Landgrabbing and Feminist Political Ecology in Mozambique

Week 5: The Transformational Agenda

Week 6: Conservation/Tanzania

Week 7: Post-structuralism, Discourse and Power

Week 8: Final project presentation preparation (no classes – short discussion of PE report slot will be available

Week 9: Final project presentations

topics for Reaction Papers (see below for instructions)

All teaching will be in class unless otherwise specified or instructed by the teacher responsible for the week by week issue/topic.

Mandatory and Key Assessment Tasks

Seminar participation: pass/fail (If you miss a seminar, an approved supplement is required for you to be able to pass the course. If you miss more than two seminars, you may need to attend seminars the next round of the course to pass the course).

Reaction papers: pass/fail (part of seminar requirement)

Statement of Interest: pass/fail

Annotated Bibliography: pass/fail

Project Presentation: 20%

Final paper: 80%

Reaction papers: pass/fail (seminar requirement)

This task involves submitting reaction based on the PE readings and topic to seminars on a week by week basis - marked above with a '#' (the first reaction paper is due in Week 3). The work can be done individually or in pairs (perhaps pairing up with your project partner). It involves critically examining your understanding of a lecture topic and assigned readings (articles). More instruction will be provided to students by the nominated seminar leader in a week by week basis (i.e., what specific reading material the reaction papers should focus on and the design of the task). Regardless of the specific instructions, students' views must be reflected in the text. The reaction paper will be max. 2 pages, singled spaced excluding references. The 'reaction paper' should also include at least two questions for seminar discussion and be delivered to the submission in-box on the day prior to the seminar (the submission time may vary - should be specified in the seminar information) – if possible, seminar leaders will incorporate some of the questions raised in the seminar discussion.

Political Ecology Paper

1. Statement of Interest (pass/fail)

Early on in the semester, each student (or pair of students) should identify a topic/region/phenomenon/concept that s/he plans to investigate for their political ecology paper. For this assignment, the student(s) will submit at a min 0.5 page statement of interest that identifies the topic to be investigated. Statement of interests are due at the end of Week 46 – accordingly a submission box will be set-up in Studiewebben

2. Annotated Bibliography (pass/fail) (pass/fail)

The annotated bibliography will contain a minimum of 5 sources from peer reviewed journals (a list of PE related journals will be distributed). These should be readings beyond those listed for the classes and relate to your issue chosen for your PE paper project. For each entry, after giving a full citation for the article (Harvard style format), students should provide a brief summary of the article

(two sentences), and a statement about why the article is relevant to their chosen topic. Students should either work as individuals or pairs (depending on they have decided to do the PE paper project). Collaborative bibliographies (in pairs) should contain at least 10 references. This needs to be completed by the end of Week 48.

3. Project Presentation and Discussion (20% - graded A-F)
Each student is required to make a class presentation on the topic of your final paper Presentations offer students the opportunity to engage other students in their topic prior to writing/finalizing their final paper. Students should provide the class with a short presentation of their thesis work (7 mins). This is followed by a 3-5 mins. presenter discussion with the rest of the class to deepen engagement in each other's work. All students are expected to put questions and participate in this discussion. Performance during presentations and subsequent class discussion will be evaluated based on your ability to effectively convey key aspects of the topic and concepts involved, application of theory, original analysis, and clarity of material and capacity to discuss points raised in a productive way. Students will have a few days to reflect on the presentation and subsequent discussion to make final revisions to their paper before final submission.

4. Final Paper (80% - graded A-F)
 Final papers should be 15ish pages (including references), typed in 1.5, times new roman, 12-point font, and properly referenced (using Harvard referencing style). The paper should reflect a clear, detailed, in-depth analysis of your chosen topic. In terms of structure (1) briefly introduce the topic and related question that drives the paper; (2) then provide a few pages of background information, focusing on the details necessary to understand the topic as it relates to the question, (3) the rest of the paper should be a political ecological analysis of your topic. In other words, papers should focus on applying conceptual viewpoints (i.e., some are referred to above), used in the field of political ecology, to a specific topic. Build your paper around your question, issue focus and PE conceptual viewpoint. Use 'evidence' to support your arguments/analysis. To make a compelling case for a particular interpretation or analysis, you'll need to illustrate through data, history, examples, facts and figures, quotes, etc. Please cite your sources in text (last name of the author and the year is fine, include page number if using a direct quotation) and in the bibliography. Papers will be evaluated based on the quality of writing, depth of understanding of political ecology, clarity of argument, original analysis and insightfulness, and overall ability to apply the political ecology framework to the topic.