

Environment and Development in the Global South
Geography 333
California State University, Los Angeles
Winter 2012

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Meeting time: Tuesdays 6:10-10:00pm

Course Information

Description and Objectives

The emergence of the so-called third world (now called the global south) in the 1950s and 60s is contemporaneous with the emergence of 20th-century environmentalism in the global north. Since this mid-century period, as global capitalism and notions of state-centered development have continued to intensify, we have witnessed instances of severe socio-environmental problems in the global south, including *1) famines, 2) natural disasters, 3) disease epidemics, and 4) toxic pollution*. As geographers we are interested in solving this paradox, and therefore in this course we answer the question:

“With the rise of research, consciousness, and policy concerning people-environment interactions in the global north, why have efforts to import that environmental philosophy to the global south apparently failed so miserably?”

To answer this we carefully examine the four socio-environmental problems listed above using examples from around the world. In doing so, we learn how each of these problems can be understood in terms of *a) science, b) politics, and c) culture*.

We end with two major geographical conclusions to this paradox. One, as already alluded to, all of these problems are simultaneously social and natural – hybrids, if you will. That is, the problems of the global south cannot be understood without understanding how the material reality of the world relates with the social interpretations of it. Two, many of the problems that have traditionally been confined to the “third world” are appearing more and more in the global north – where we live. Through the decisions and actions we take in our daily lives, we have a direct impact on the outcome of these problems, both here and there. Each of these conclusions are lessons that have not yet been seriously applied in solving the four socio-natural problems listed above. The fact that people and the environment make and re-make each other is too often ignored in policy-making around the world. Likewise, the interconnectedness of our decisions with the problems of the global south has so far been easy to ignore. Now, however, the problems of the global south are becoming all of our problems, and our collective action is required.

Textbook & Readings

- You do not have to buy a textbook or reader for this course. You must, however, spend money to print out the readings that I provide for you electronically each week. It is required that you *make your own reader*, as described in the instructions available on Moodle. I will check your reader twice during the quarter for points.
- Readings are available on the Moodle web page: < <https://moodle.calstatela.edu/>>

- Why do we have to print out the readings?
 - Because a large part of what you learn in this class is how to read slowly, carefully, and critically. This is a different type of reading than what we are used to doing on computer and phone screens. While I value the power of dissemination and flexibility of electronic readings through Moodle, I do not believe you can read for retention unless you underline and physically write down questions and key points on the page; this is an invaluable skill to learn. Additionally, by printing and binding the course materials, you are left with a physical artifact of what we did – and what you learned – during the quarter.

Assignments

1000 points total for the course

Syllabus quiz	25 points
Moodle profile	25 points
Reading quizzes	400 points (9 quizzes / 50 pts. each / lowest discarded)
Reader checks	100 points (2 checks / 50 points each)
Surf Map presentation	150 points
Final Research Paper	300 points

In class

Each class begins with a quiz (50 pts each) on the readings that are assigned for that day. Normally the quiz leads into a class discussion, and we go from there. I come prepared with a mix of lecture points, slides, images, and small-group activities. Additionally, during class there are two journaling periods during which students hand-write what they are learning in real time. These are used to foster large- and small-group discussions during class, as well as to help you remember what you’ve learned.

Lectures & Readings Schedule

Week 1: Tuesday, January 10

Topic: Introductions // Emergence of the Third World

Due today: N/A

Readings: N/A

Week 2: Tuesday, January 17

Topic: Environmentalism and the Third World in the 20th century

In class: Syllabus Quiz

Due today: Moodle profile

Readings: Hays, Samuel P. 1987. *Beauty, health, and permanence: Environmental politics in the United States, 1955-1985*. New York: Cambridge University Press; “From Conservation to Environment.”

And

Prashad, Vijay. 2007. *The Darker Nations: A people's history of the Third World*. New York: The New Press; “Introduction” and “Bandung.”

Week 3: Tuesday, January 24

Topic: 2005 Niger famine, part I

Readings: Blaikie, Piers M. 1985. *The Political Economy of Soil Erosion in Developing Countries*. New York: Longman.

Week 4: Tuesday, January 31

Topic: 2005 Niger famine, part II

Readings: Humanitarian Practice Network. 2006. Various articles about the 2005 Niger famine. *Humanitarian Exchange* 33:17-27.

And

Sen, Amartya. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf; “Famines and Other Crises.”

And

Rosset, Peter M. 2005. Cuba: A successful case study of sustainable agriculture. In *Environmental Sociology: From analysis to action*, edited by L. King and D. McCarthy. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Week 5: Tuesday, February 7

Topic: Disease Epidemics in East Africa

Due today: Reader check #1

In class: Gust lecture: Brenda Rengstorf, Nurse Practitioner from Doctors Without Borders (*Medecins Sans Frontieres*).

Readings: Robbins, Paul. 2004. The Hatchet and the Seed. In *Political Ecology: A critical introduction*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.

And

Mendis, Kamini, Barbara J. Sina, Paola Marchesini, and Richard Carter. 2001. The Neglected Burden of *Plasmodium Vivax* Malaria. *American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* 64 (1):97-106.

Week 6: Tuesday, February 14 // *Library visit from 8:00-10:00pm*

Topic: Natural Disasters I: The 2010 Haiti Earthquake

Readings: *Note: These are all short articles / videos*

(Internet video) *Haiti Devastated by Largest Earthquake in 200 Years, Thousands Feared Dead.* January 13, 2010. Newscast from Democracy Now!; 10:05 – 35:27.

And

Rodgers, Lucy. 2010. Why did so many people die in Haiti's quake? *BBC Online News*, February 14.

And

Bilham, Roger. 2010. Lessons From the Haiti Earthquake. *Nature* 463:878-879.

And

Pape, Jean William, Jr. Warren D. Johnson, and Daniel W. Fitzgerald. 2010. The Earthquake in Haiti - Dispatch From Port-au-Prince. *The New England Journal of Medicine* 362 (7):575-577.

Week 7: Tuesday, February 21

Topic: Natural Disasters II: 2010 Haiti Earthquake

In class: Exercise with New York Times' 2010 Haiti Earthquake Multimedia

Readings: Blaikie, Piers, Terry Cannon, I. Davis, and B. Wisner. 2003. The Challenge of Disasters and Our Approach. In *Environmentalism: Critical concepts*, edited by D. Pepper, F. Webster and G. Revil. New York: Routledge; pp. 233-255.

And

Zook, Matthew, Mark Graham, Taylor Shelton, and Sean Gorman. 2010. Volunteered Geographic Information and Crowdsourcing Disaster Relief: A case study of the Haitian earthquake. *World Medical & Health Policy* 2 (2):7-33.

Week 8: Tuesday, February 28

Topic: Fishing industry in Tanzania

In class: Viewing of documentary film: "Darwin's Nightmare," 2004. Directed by Hubert Sauper. 107 min., made in Austria.

Reading: Swantz, Marja-Liisa, and Aili Mari Tripp. 1996. Development for 'Big Fish' or 'Small Fish'? A study of contrasts in Tanzania's fishing sector. In *Decolonizing Knowledge: From development to dialogue*, edited by F. Apffel-Marglin and S. A. Marglin. New York: Clarendon Press.

Week 9: Tuesday, March 6

Topic: Toxic Pollution: E-waste

Due today: Day 1 of Surf Map presentations

In class: Watch PBS video “Ghana: Digital Dumping Ground”

Readings: Greenpeace report: “How Dirty is Your Data?”

Week 10: Tuesday, March 13

Topic: Linking the local and the global

Due today: Reader check #2
Day 2 of Surf Map presentations

Reading: Eden, Sally. 2011. The Politics of Certification: Consumer knowledge, power, and global governance in ecolabeling. In *Global Political Ecology*, edited by R. Peet, P. Robbins and M. Watts. New York: Routledge.

Final Research Paper Due

Tuesday, March 20 @ 10:00pm. This is submitted electronically through the Moodle site. There is no final exam in class. Do not show up to the classroom during the scheduled final time.