

## Political Ecology/Environmental Justice

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Wednesday 4:15-6:15  
Graduate Center, 6493  
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Political ecology and environmental justice are areas of intense contemporary debate, the former commonly associated with the global south and the latter with the north. Yet scholars and practitioners working in these fields share similar concerns with the uneven effects of production, social reproduction, distribution, privatization, social justice, and inequalities in harms and benefits. This seminar will critically examine the theories and practices of political ecology, environmental justice, and the production of nature across the disparate geographies of north and south, urban and rural, and at a number of scales focusing on issues such as environmental conservation, nature preservation, biodiversity, eco-tourism, industrial agriculture, and green capitalism. Using the events and aftermath of Hurricane Katrina as case study, we will engage current debates over 'sustainable development,' environmental racism, the limits of environmental management, and what is 'natural' about natural disasters.

Selections from the following texts will be used in this course. The books that are most central are marked with an asterisk. I strongly recommend purchasing these. All journal articles and chapter selections will be available on e-reserve in Mina Rees Library and in a file drawer outside of room 6203.22 in the Environmental Psychology Program. Articles are not to be removed from the program area for more than two hours. They may be removed from the floor only to be copied and then should be returned promptly. All readings removed from the drawer--for any length of time--must be signed out. I will make sure that all readings are there once, after that, you are on your own. While I have requested that the library purchase all of the books we are using, they are not there yet, and it will be necessary for you to purchase those books that are assigned in full or to borrow them through interlibrary loan. Finally, some of the articles are available on line--when I know this to be the case I have noted this in the syllabus and NOT put it on reserve because you can download it and print as you wish.

Agyeman, J. et al. (eds) Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

\*Allen, B.L. 2003. Uneasy Alchemy: Citizens and Experts in Louisiana's Chemical Corridor Disputes, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

\*Barry, J.M. 1997. Rising Tide: the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How it Changed America. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Braun, B. and Castree, N. (eds) Remaking Reality: Nature at the End of the Millenium. New York and London: Routledge.

\*Bullard, R. 1994. Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality. Boulder:

Westview Press.

- \*Castree, N. and Braun, B. (eds) 2001. Social Nature: Theory, Practice, and Politics. Oxford: Blackwell.
- \*Colton, C. 2005. An Unnatural Metropolis: Wrestling New Orleans from Nature, Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press.
- Cronon, W. (ed) 1996. Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature. New York: Norton.
- \*Ethridge, R. 2003. Creek Country: The Creek Indians and their World, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Greenhough, P. and Tsing, A.L. (Eds) 2003. Nature in the Global South: Environmental Projects in South and Southeast Asia. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Luke, T. 1997. Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy and Culture. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Luke, T. 1999. Capitalism, Democracy, and Ecology: Departing from Marx. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Peet, R. and Watts, M. (eds). 1996 & 2004 (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Editions) Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, and Social Movements. London and New York: Routledge.
- Peluso, N. L. and Watts, M. (eds). 2001. Violent Environments. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Roberts, J.T. and Toffolon-Weiss, M.M. 2001. Chronicles from the Environmental Justice Frontline. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Robertson, G. et al. (eds) Future Natural. New York and London: Routledge.
- Smith, N. 1984. Uneven Development. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sturgeon, N. 1997. Ecofeminist Natures: Race, Gender, Feminist Theory and Political Action, New York and London: Routledge.
- Zerner, C. (ed) 2000. People, Plants & Justice: The Politics of Nature Conservation. New York: Columbia University Press.

## READINGS AND COURSE SCHEDULE

**1 February** Introduction

### Theoretical Frameworks

**8 February** The Production of Nature

Smith, N. 1984. Uneven Development, Preface, Introduction and Chapter 2, "The Production of Nature" Oxford: Blackwell, pp. vii-xv, 32-65.

Haraway, D. 1992. The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others, in L. Grossberg, C. Nelson and P. Treichler (eds) Cultural Studies. New York: Routledge, pp. 295-337.

Castree, N. 2001. Marxism, Capitalism and the Production of Nature, in N. Castree and B. Braun (eds) Social Nature: Theory, Practice and Politics. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 189-207.

**15 February** Constructions of Nature

Demeritt, D. 2002. What is the 'Social Construction of Nature'? A Typology and Sympathetic Critique, Progress in Human Geography 26(6): 767-790.\*

Soper, K. 1996. Nature/'nature,' in G. Robertson et al (eds) Future Natural. New York and London: Routledge, pp. 22-34.

Plumwood, V. 2001. Nature as Agency and the Prospects for a Progressive Naturalism, Capitalism Nature Socialism 12(4):3-32.

Escobar, A. 1996. Constructing Nature: Elements for a Poststructural Political Ecology, in R. Peet and M. Watts (eds) Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, and Social Movements. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 46-68.

**22 February** Questions of Justice and Political Ecologies

Faber, D. and McCarthy, D. 2003. Neo-liberalism, Globalization, and the Struggle for Ecological Democracy: Linking Sustainability and Environmental Justice, in J. Agyeman et al. (eds) Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Watts, M. and Peet, R. 2004. Liberating Political Ecology, in R. Peet and M. Watts (eds) Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, and Social Movements (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). London and New York: Routledge, pp. 3-47.

Bryant, R.L. 2001. Political Ecology: A Critical Agenda for Change? In N.

Castree and B. Braun (eds) Social Nature: Theory, Practice, and Politics. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 151-69.

DiChiro, G. 1996. Nature as Community: The Convergence of Environment and Social Justice, in W. Cronon (ed) Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature. New York: Norton, pp.298-320.

Roberts, J.T. and Toffolon-Weiss, M.M. 2001. Chronicles from the Environmental Justice Frontline, Chapter 2 “Roots of Environmental Injustice in Louisiana.” Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 29-62.

### **The Gathering of a Perfect Storm...**

**1 March** Historical Ecologies of Encounter

Ethridge, R. 2003. Creek Country: The Creek Indians and their World, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

**8 March** NO CLASS, Association of American Geographers Meetings.  
(To be rescheduled.)

**15 March** Against Environmental Injustice

Allen, B.L. 2003. Uneasy Alchemy: Citizens and Experts in Louisiana’s Chemical Corridor Disputes, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

#### Further Reading:

Lerner, S. 2005. Diamond: A Struggle for Environmental Justice in Louisiana’s Chemical Corridor, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

**22 March** Zones of Sacrifice

Bullard, R.1994. Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality. Boulder: Westview Press. (selections tba)

Kuletz, V. 2001. Invisible Spaces, Violent Places: Cold War Nuclear and Militarized Landscapes, in N. L. Peluso and M. Watts (eds) Violent Environments. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Glassman, J. 2005. Tsunamis and Other Forces of Destruction, Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 23(2): 164-70.

**29 March** Against All Odds

Colton, C. 2005. An Unnatural Metropolis: Wrestling New Orleans from Nature, Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press.

**5 April** And Then it Happened

Peluso, N.L. and Watts, M. 2003. Violent Environments, in N. L. Peluso and M. Watts (eds) Violent Environments. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Bakker, K. 2005. Katrina: The Public Transcript of 'Disaster,' Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 23(6): 795-802.

Braun, B. and McCarthy, J. 2005. Hurricane Katrina and Abandoned Being, Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 23(6): 802-9.

Selections from <http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/> and

<http://www.Tomsdispatch.com> and others (tba)

**12 and 19 April** NO CLASS (Spring Break)

**26 April** The Political Possibilities of Disaster

Barry, J.M. 1997. Rising Tide: the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How it Changed America. New York: Simon and Schuster.

**The Politics of Environmental Politics**

**3 May** Environmentality & Green Developmentalism: Preserving Sustainable Capitalism?

Luke, T. 1999. Capitalism, Democracy, and Ecology: Departing from Marx, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press. Chapter 4, On Environmentality: Geopower and Ecolknowledge in Contemporary Environmental Discourse, pp. 118-42.

Peluso, N. 2003. Territorializing Local Struggles for Resource Control: A Look at Environmental Discourses and Politics in Indonesia, in P. Greenough and A.L Tsing (eds) Nature in the Global South: Environmental Projects in South and Southeast Asia, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, pp. 231-52.

McAfee, K. 1999. Selling Nature to Save It? Biodiversity and Green Developmentalism, Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 17(2):133-54.

Brush, S. 1999. Bioprospecting the Public Domain, Cultural Anthropology 14(4):535-55.

Agarwal, A. 2005. Environmentality: Technologies of Government and the Making of Human Subjects, Durham, NC: Duke University Press. (Selection tba.)

**10 May** Corporate Environmentalism

Readings:

McCarthy, J. 1998. Environmentalism, Wise Use and the Nature of Accumulation

in the Rural West, in B. Braun and N. Castree (eds) Remaking Reality: Nature at the End of the Millennium. New York and London: Routledge, pp. 126-49.

Blum, Elissa. 1993. Making Biodiversity Profitable: A Case Study of the Merck/INBio Agreement, Environment 35(4): 16-20ff.

Martinez-Alier, J. 1996. The Merchandising of Biodiversity, Capitalism Nature Socialism 7(1):37-54.

Luke, T. 1997. Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy and Culture. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Chapter 6, "Green Consumerism: Ecology and the Ruse of Recycling," pp. 115-136.

Parry, B. 2000. The Fate of the Collections: Social Justice and the Annexation of Plant Genetic Resources, in C. Zerner (ed) People, Plants & Justice: The Politics of Nature Conservation, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 374-402.

Katz, C. 1998. Whose Nature, Whose Culture? Private Productions of Space and the Preservation of Nature, in B. Braun and N. Castree (eds) Remaking Reality: Nature at the End of the Millennium. New York and London: Routledge, pp. 46-63.

McCarthy, J. and Prudham, S. 2004. Neoliberal Nature and the Nature of Neoliberalism, Geoforum 35(3): 275-83.

**17 May**

DOUBLE CLASS--Environmental Activisms and Student Presentations

Agyeman, J. Bullard, R.D. and Evans, B. 2003. Introduction: Joined-Up Thinking: Bringing Together Sustainability, Environmental Justice and Equity, in J. Agyeman et al. (eds) Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Pulido, L. 1996. Development of 'People of Color' Identity in the Environmental Justice Movement, Socialist Review 26(3-4): 145-80.

Li, T.M. 2004. Environment, Indigeneity and Transnationalism, in R. Peet and M. Watts (eds) Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, and Social Movements (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). London and New York: Routledge, pp. 339-70.

Baviskar, A. 2003. Tribal Politics and Discourse of Indian Environmentalism, in P. Greenough and A.L Tsing (eds) Nature in the Global South: Environmental Projects in South and Southeast Asia, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, pp. 289-318.

Sturgeon, N. 1997. Ecofeminist Natures: Race, Gender, Feminist Theory and Political Action, New York and London: Routledge. Chapter 1, "Movements of Ecofeminism," pp. 23-58.

Boal, I.A. 2001. Damaging Crops, Sabotage, Social Memory and the New Genetic Enclosures, Violent Environments, pp. 146-54.