

syllabus

POLITICS AND NATURE IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Political Science 367

Spring Quarter, 2009

Paul Friesema

pfree@northwestern.edu

304 Scott Hall

Office Hours: Tuesday, 12-2, and following class.

Telephone: 1-2645(O) and

847-328-5372 (H)

BOOKS:

REQUIRED

1) Aldo Leopold, SAND COUNTY ALMANAC;

2) William Cronon, NATURE'S METROPOLIS: CHICAGO AND THE GREAT WEST;

3) Bruce Barcott, THE LAST FLIGHT OF THE SCARLET MACAW: ONE WOMAN'S FIGHT TO SAVE THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL BIRD

4) William W. Bevis, BORNEO LOG: THE STRUGGLE FOR SARAWAK'S FORESTS;

5) Joe Kane, SAVAGES: AMAZON WARRIORS DEFEND THEIR TERRITORY AGAINST HELL-BENT OIL COMPANIES, DOGGED MISSIONARIES, AND STARRY EYED ENVIRONMENTALISTS;

6) One of the following:

a) David Western, IN THE DUST OF KILIMANJARO;

b) Alan Rabinowitz, BEYOND THE LAST VILLAGE: A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY IN ASIA'S FORBIDDEN WILDERNESS;

c) George B. Schaller, THE LAST PANDA;

d) Peter Matthiessen, BIRDS OF HEAVEN: TRAVELS WITH CRANES;

e) Carel Van Schaik, AMONG ORANGUTANS: RED APES AND THE RISE OF HUMAN CULTURE;

f) Bill Weber and Amy Vetter, IN THE KINGDOM OF GORILLAS: FRAGILE SPECIES IN A DANGEROUS LAND;

g) Paul Alan Cox, NAFANUA: SAVING THE SAMOAN RAINFOREST

You are required to read and write a report upon one of these books. We will hope that there are at least one or two people in each discussion section reading each book.

In addition, students will be expected to occasionally monitor and use a group of network connections. Those will include:

Econet (<http://www.igc.org/igc/gateway/enindex.html>);
The Rainforest Action Network (<http://www.ran.org/>);
Cultural Survival (<http://www.cs.org/>);
Wildlife Conservation Society (<http://www.wcs.org/>);
World Wildlife Fund International (<http://www.panda.org/>).
Chicago Wilderness (<http://www.chicagowilderness.org/>)

The Rainforest Action Network, Cultural Survival, Chicago Wilderness, and Wildlife Conservation Society web pages are “assigned” and, with notice, could even provide the basis for questions on an exam. So you should definitely make a bookmark for those web sites.

Overview.

The class will consider the impact of political processes and structures upon natural systems. It will examine the extent to which people can fashion political instruments (laws, policies, programs) to protect biodiversity, and arrest and reverse the degradation of the environment. While we will initially consider the politics of nature in the United States, the primary focus of the course will be global. The U.S. will be one of the countries in this comparative course. We will begin by considering the ethical underpinnings of environmental concerns, with a particular emphasis on Aldo Leopold’s “land ethic” (SAND COUNTY ALMANAC), in hopes students can refine their own land ethic. We will also explore some complicated concepts occurring in both the natural science and political debates about managing nature. Some of these concepts will be “the tragedy of the commons”, concerning the management of common properties, the meanings of “wilderness”, and concepts of “sustainable development” (an oxymoron?). We will consider “ecology” itself, both as a discipline and a symbol. We will focus particular attention upon the meanings and roles of parks and other formally protected areas in maintaining biodiversity and global health.

A particular emphasis of the course will be the examination of the impacts of urbanization and globalization on the prospects for maintaining viable natural systems. We will consider the meaning(s) of “globalization”, and will think about a broader concept than one focusing on just the economic aspects of globalization. Within the framework of urbanization/globalization, we will consider the possibilities for transnational regimes to deal with fundamental global environmental issues-the ocean fisheries, global climate change, the loss of rainforests-but most generally, the struggles over protecting biodiversity. We will evaluate the possibilities for an effective global environmental movement. We will

explore the implications of the increasing global interconnectedness among environmental, indigenous, and human rights groups in struggles to maintain a viable world. We will consider how the merging of concerns about the natural environment, human rights, and indigenous claims affects the world. Specifically we will consider how cultural survival and biological diversity are related.

The course is not dealing with subjects for which there is a lot of agreement, or a settled body of knowledge. Things are happening as we meet. We will be considering the impact of the current global economy on all of these issues. So the quarter's efforts will require active participation, both in the class meetings and discussion sections. There will be a midterm and final exam. A significant part of the course will be the book report, which will be due on the last day of class. However, the books will be considered in discussion sections so you will need to complete the reading and evaluation earlier.. The midterm exam is presently unscheduled. the final exam is scheduled for Tuesday June 9th, 9-11AM. The midterm will be worth 25% of the course grade. The final exam be worth 40% of the course grade. Participation in discussion section will be worth 10%. The book assignment will be worth 25%.

The book report will amount to an examination of the impacts of globalization on some environmental struggle in a particular third world country. It is expected that much supplemental information for the book report will be from internet sources. More detailed discussion of the paper requirements will be provided, from time to time, during the quarter.

COURSE OUTLINE

1) Aldo Leopold and the Emergence of a Land Ethic.

- a) governmental resource protection, science and the re-emergence of tribal knowledge;
- b) land and nature as commodities and as sacred responsibilities;
- c) the importance of wilderness and the protection of endangered species;
- d) hunting, habitat protection, and the political role of "sportsmen"
- e) the broader social basis for protecting nature;
- f) biodiversity as a political imperative;
- g) National Parks and protected areas.

Aldo Leopold, SAND COUNTY ALMANAC

2) Urbanization and the Transformation of Nature.

- a) The folk-urban continuum and other formulations;
- b) Cities and their hinterlands. Political control of food and fibers;
- c) Urbanization and the transformation of nature. Is sustainability possible in an urban world?
- d) Urbanization and the spread of urban/industrial processes and power;
- e) Urban elites and the protection of nature;
- f) Political limits to urban control of nature.

William Cronan, NATURE'S METROPOLIS

CHICAGO WILDERNESS, spring 2009(The Calumet issue)

3) From Urbanization to Globalization

- a) The technological and institutional basis of globalization;
- b) Globalization and the protection of common property resources;
- c) Multinational corporate actors and environmental protection;
- d) The dubious value of world-wide adoption of “sustainable development”
- e) The creation of a worldwide network of parks and protected areas:
- f) Human use of resources in protected areas

Jimmy Buffett, “Everyone’s Got a Cousin in Miami”

Robert P. Weller, DISCOVERING NATURE: GLOBALIZATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL CULTURE IN CHINA AND TAIWAN, Chapter 1(handout)
William W. Bevis, BORNEO LOG: THE STRUGGLE FOR SARAWAK’S FORESTS

4) Globalization and the Emergence of a Global (interconnected) Environmental Movement.

- a) The emergence of international regimes for the protection of nature (CITES- the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species), the Antarctic Treaty, the Polar Bear Convention, the network of international biosphere reserves, etc.);
- b) International NGOs, domestic NGOs, and their interconnectedness;
- c) The environmental movement, human rights, and indigenous claims.
- d) US and international leverage for influencing national environmental policy within third world independent polities

Bruce Barcott, THE LAST FLIGHT OF THE SCARLET MACAW: ONE WOMAN’S FIGHT TO SAVE THE WORLD’S MOST BEAUTIFUL BIRD

Joe Kane, SAVAGES

5) The World System on the Brink: Globalization as Threat and Opportunity.

David Western, IN THE DUST OF KILIMANJARO;
Alan Rabinowitz, BEYOND THE LAST VILLAGE;
George B. Schaller, THE LAST PANDA;
Peter Matthiessen, BIRDS OF HEAVEN: TRAVELS WITH CRANES;
Carel Van Schaik, AMONG ORANGUTANS: RED APES AND THE RISE OF HUMAN CULTURE;
Bill Weber and Amy Vetter, IN THE KINGDOM OF GORILLAS: FRAGILE SPECIES IN A DANGEROUS LAND;
Paul Alan Cox, NAFANUA: SAVING THE SAMOAN RAINFOREST.

THERE MAY ALSO BE SOME SUGGESTED READINGS WHICH WILL BE POSTED ON BLACKBOARD