

Political, Economic and Ecological Processes**SYLLABUS****Faculty**

Peter Dorman, Program Coordinator	Lab I, 3015	867-6899	dormanp@gmail.com
Amy Cook	Lab I, 3065E	867-6027	cooka@evergreen.edu
Ted Whitesell	Lab I, 3017	867-6768	whiteset@evergreen.edu

Meeting Times and Locations

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:00 – 10:00 PM, Seminar II, Building C, as follows:

6:00 – 8:00 lecture period, Room C-1105

8:00 – 10:00 Peter Dorman's seminar, Room C-2109

8:00 – 10:00 Amy Cook's seminar, Room C-3107

8:00 – 10:00 Ted Whitesell's seminar, Room C-3109

Program Description

Political Economic and Ecological Processes is the first core requirement of the MES program. Its role is to provide students with a broad framework for understanding environmental issues. The focus of the class is twofold. One focus is on systems and processes, to build an understanding of how social and natural systems interact to produce environmental problems and affect solutions. The other focus is on environmental studies methodology, to lay the groundwork for first-year graduate students to make the transition from consumers of information to producers of knowledge about environmental problems and solutions. Our principal goal is to develop a contextual framework for analysis that allows for a deeper and more sophisticated understanding of the challenges of environmental problem solving.

To understand the complexity of environmental issues, we argue it is necessary to understand the following key matters within an interdisciplinary context:

1. What natural systems are, in terms of typical structural and functional characteristics.
2. Principal ways in which natural systems are affected by predominant forms of human occupation and use of the environment.
3. The logic, value commitments, and effects of the capitalist economic system, including markets, property rights, and the distribution of power, costs, and benefits.
4. The value commitments and institutional frameworks of U.S. society, with emphasis on government institutions and public policy.
5. The epistemological basis and value commitments of the natural and social sciences relevant to environmental problem solving.
6. Methodological options within environmental studies, drawing upon methodologies within natural science, social science, and the humanities.
7. The generation of scientific knowledge by scientists working within professional conventions and within specific organizations.
8. The uses of scientific expertise in environmental decision making.

9. The relationships between environmental problem solving and the scientific, social, political economic, ethical, and historical context of a given society.

Program Requirements

Attendance is expected for all program activities; it is your responsibility to contact faculty prior to any anticipated absences. Reading in advance and careful preparation for each seminar discussion is essential. Many of the assigned readings are difficult; they will require considerable work to fully understand. Students will write a two-page (double-spaced) paper on each required book critically analyzing one of its core arguments. These papers are intended to develop your abilities to think analytically and express yourself in writing, as preparation for the candidacy papers required in the winter quarter; therefore, they should be carefully crafted, including in-text citations and proper bibliographic formatting. There will also be two larger writing assignments, an annotated bibliography for practicing research skills and a synthetic essay to knit together the main themes in PEEP. In addition, you will participate in two panel discussions incorporating research and presentation work. At the end of the fall quarter you will participate in an evaluation conference with your seminar leader. All students must come with written evaluations of the faculty and written self-evaluations. You will be evaluated by your seminar leader based upon your preparation for lecture and seminar, your participation in seminar discussions, the substance and style of your writing, and your potential as a graduate student in the MES program. Credit is awarded on an all or nothing basis; there is no provision for partial credit.

Required Books

Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas by Donald Worster. Cambridge University Press; 2 edition (1994). ISBN: 0521468345.

Elton's Ecology by Peter Crowcroft. University Of Chicago Press (1991). ISBN: 0226121488.

The Great Transformation by Karl Polanyi. Beacon Press; 2nd edition (2001). ISBN: 080705643X.

Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction by Paul Robbins. Blackwell Publishers (2004). ISBN: 1405102667.

Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement by Robert Gottlieb. Island Press; 2 edition (2005). ISBN: 155963832X.

Nature by Design: People, Natural Process and Ecological Restoration by Eric Higgs. MIT Press (2003). ISBN: 0262582260.

Additional readings, in the form of articles and book chapters, will be made available later, either as handouts or as reserve items in the library.

SCHEDULEWeek 1

Tuesday, 9/27

Lecture: “What is Environmental Studies?” (Peter, Amy, Ted)

Seminar: Worster, parts 1 & 2

Thursday, 9/29

Lecture: “History of Ecology and the Process of Science” (Amy)

Seminar: Environmental Studies articles (Soulé & Press; Maniates & Whissel)

Due: first seminar paperWeek 2

Tuesday, 10/4

Workshop: “Library Resources for Graduate Research” (Liza Rognas, Faculty Librarian)

Seminar: Worster, parts 3 – 6

Due: second seminar paper

Thursday, 10/6

Lecture: “Embedded Science” (Peter)

Seminar: *Knowledge and Social Imagery* (Bloor), pp. 3-45, 55-62Week 3

Tuesday, 10/11

Lecture: “Environmental Research Methods, part 1” (Ted)

Seminar: TBA

Due: annotated bibliography

Thursday, 10/13

Lecture: Panel discussion, lab vs field work in ecology

Seminar: TBA

Week 4

Tuesday, 10/18

Lecture: “Population Biology” (Amy)

Seminar: Crowcroft (entire book)

Due: third seminar paper

Thursday, 10/20

Lecture: “Species Diversity” (Amy)

Seminar: *The Idea of Biodiversity*, chapters 1 – 3, by David Takacs (supplemental reading)Week 5

Tuesday, 10/25

Lecture: “Evolution of Capitalism” (Peter) Read selected chapters by Dorman

Seminar: Polanyi, through chapter 10

Thursday, 10/27

Lecture: "Economics" (Peter)

Seminar: Polanyi, remainder

Due: fourth seminar paper

Week 6

Tuesday, 11/1

Lecture: "Political Ecology, part 1" (Ted)

Seminar: Robbins, introduction and parts I and II

Thursday, 11/3

Lecture: "Political Ecology, part 2" (Ted)

Seminar: Robbins, remainder plus *Geographical Review* article by Whitesell

Due: fifth seminar paper

Week 7

Tuesday, 11/8

Lecture: "Landscape Ecology" (Amy)

Workshop: Maps and landscapes

Thursday, 11/10

Lecture: "Cultural Landscapes" (Ted)

Seminar: Readings in cultural geography

Week 8

Tuesday, 11/15

Lecture: "Evolution of the corporate life form" (Peter)

Seminar: TBA

Thursday, 11/17

Lecture: "Corporations today and tomorrow" (Peter)

Seminar: TBA

Thanksgiving Break, 11/21 – 25

Week 9

Tuesday, 11/29

Lecture: Guest lecturers

Seminar: Gottlieb, through Part II

Due: synthetic essay

Thursday, 12/1

Lecture: "Community Stability and Resilience" (Amy)

Seminar: Gottlieb, remainder

Due: sixth seminar paper

Week 10

Tuesday, 12/6

Lecture: "Restoration Ecology" (Amy)

Seminar: Higgs (entire book)

Due: seventh seminar paper

Thursday, 12/8

Lecture: River restoration panel presentations

Seminar: Potluck, community discussion

Evaluation Week, 12/12 – 13