

Politics, Society & Nature in the Global South (Module 1)

Environment, Urbanisation & Climate Change (Module 2)

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Module 1: Michaelmas Term, Small Lecture Theatre, Department of Geography, starts 14 October

Module 2: Lent Term, Small Lecture Theatre, Department of Geography, starts 21 January

This option course comprises two modules, '**Politics, Society and Nature**' and '**Environment & Urbanisation in the Global South**'; it also serves as a core course for the MPhil in Environment, Society and Development. The first module, 'Politics, Society and Nature', introduces students to critical social science perspectives on the relationships between society and nature. It provides an overview of the ways in which these relationships have been conceptualised and formulated, and underlines the political and social contexts within which questions of sustainability need to be framed. Throughout the course, there is a strong but not exclusive focus on the global south, from intellectual debates to issues and examples. Weekly topics include: (1) The rise of environmentalism and the idea of sustainability;

(2) Disputing nature: the idea of political ecology; (3) Narratives of population pressure, environmental degradation and the commons; (4) Agro-forestry and sustainable land use; (5 & 6) Markets and environmental management; (7) Urban environmental politics; (8) Religion, gender, culture and the environment.

The second module, 'Environment & Urbanisation in the Global South' (taught in Lent term) offers a series of lectures by Dr Tatiana Thieme, a specialist in studies of waste, sanitation and 'slum economies' in African cities. These four sessions will explore ideas of political ecology in the urban context, drawing especially from discard and sanitation case studies in Africa but also comparing India, Brazil, and Mexico. We will examine the nexus between urban built environments, the material and political implications of waste in the context of unplanned urbanisation, the diverse approaches to governing and managing detritus and human waste in the informal 'slum' city, and the everyday coping strategies that residents adopt in the absence of basic municipal services in their neighbourhoods. Specific topics are: (1) Urban political ecology: nature and power in the city; (2) Garbage and waste: metabolism, livelihoods, politics; (3) Urban sanitation: rights, public health, and entrepreneurship; (4) New geographies of waste and basic urban environmental provision.

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Towards a Political Ecology

1. Human concern for nature: the rise of environmentalism
2. Managing the Anthropocene: the idea of sustainability
3. Disputing nature: the idea of political ecology
4. Discursive political ecology and social nature

Institutions and Resources

1. Narratives of population pressure and environmental degradation: from Thomas Malthus to Ester Boserup
2. Managing the commons: Garret Hardin versus Elinor Ostrom
3. Is 'landesque capital' the best form of sustainable land use, or is it an index of degradation and coercive social relations? Deconstructing landesque capital through the lens of political ecology
4. Agroforestry as sustainable land use: deconstructing the win:win scenarios of 1990s

The political economy of environment and development

1. Poverty, economic growth and the environment: exploring the relationships
2. Ecosystem services and human well-being: towards win-win?
3. Understanding the 'Green Economy': regulated markets or neoliberal commodification?
4. Negotiating ecosystem services: political economy considerations

Contesting space: culture and power in environmental politics

1. Contested spaces: Indigenous resource use and postcolonial dilemmas
2. Aesthetics and exclusion in 'world class cities': bourgeois environmentalism and changing urban governmentalities
3. Tenure and gender: security, inclusion and exclusion
4. Land grabs: a critical reading of contemporary processes and debates

Note: MPhil in African Studies students will have the opportunity to focus their academic interests on the African continent, but note that the benefit of this option course is its comparative approach, enabling Africa to be critically examined within the context of the global south more broadly.

Reading:

- Adams, WA (2008) *Green Development: Environment and Sustainability in a Developing World* Routledge. Third edition
- Boserup, E (1965) *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth: The Economics of Agrarian Change under Population Pressure*. Allen and Unwin
- Chaplin, S (2011) 'Indian Cities, Sanitation and the State: The Politics of the Failure to Provide' *Environment and Urbanization* 23(1): 57-70

- Fairhead, J et al (2012) 'Green Grabbing: A New Appropriation of Nature?' *Journal of Peasant Studies* 39(2): 237-261
- Leach, M and Mearns, R. (1996) (eds) *The Lie of the Land: Challenging Received Wisdom on the African Environment*. Heinemann
- Moore, S (2009) 'The Excess of Modernity: Garbage Politics in Oaxaca, Mexico' *The Professional Geographer* 61(4): 426-437
- Myers, G. (2005) 'Towards a Political Ecology of African Cities' in *Disposable Cities: Garbage, Governance, and Sustainable Development in Urban Africa* Ashgate: 1-15
- Robbins, P. (2011) *Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction*. Wiley-Blackwell. Second edition
- Peet, R, Robbins, P and Watts, M. (eds) (2010) *Global Political Ecology*. Routledge
- Peet, R, and Watts, M (eds.) (2004) *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, Social Movements*. Routledge. Second edition

Note: Students will be expected to read a selection of the political, historical and ethnographic literature on a range of countries.