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University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Spring 2007

## **POLISCI 374- Issues in Political Theory: Political Ecology and Democracy**

Environmental issues offer a unique challenge to democratic procedures, occurring across political borders and in some instances requiring large-scale cooperation to reach an effective solution. This course addresses the relationship between environmental issues and democratic decision-making, focusing specifically on the role of experts in making decisions about complex problems. What assumptions do experts make when trying to understand an environmental problem? Are problems best solved by leaving matters to experts? With these questions in mind we will begin by looking at how environmental problems are framed and inquire into the political consequences of these frames. As the semester progresses we will expand the scope of our topic to discuss issues of justice around environmental problems. Who is at the greatest risk when aquifers are polluted? Who is most likely to benefit from carbon dioxide emissions? A portion of the course will be devoted to looking at specific democratic arrangements and evaluating their capacity for dealing with environmental problems on both local and global scales. Finally, we will ask about how emphasizing changing individual patterns of consumption may help or hinder our ability to achieve democratic solutions.

**Class Times:** Monday, Wednesday, & Friday 12:20-1:10

**Room:** Dickinson 110

**Office Hours:** WebCT Chat, Tuesday 10:00am-12:00pm, and by appointment.

In order to accommodate as many students as possible and make sharing information simpler and more consistent, I have opted to hold office hours online. If you prefer to meet in person, please contact me to schedule an appointment.

\*\*\*Please bookmark WebCT 4.0 <<https://spark.oit.umass.edu/webct/entryPageIns.dowebct>>

### **Course Requirements:**

1. Discussion Write-ups: Students will write brief summaries (and analyses) of group discussions. These are to be written individually. (10% each = 30%)
2. Papers: Students will write two 6-8 page papers. All university rules governing academic honesty apply. (20% each = 40%)
3. Preparation and Participation: Students are expected to contribute to class discussions regularly. This requires that you come to class prepared to talk in detail about the assigned readings, making note of any confusing passages, as well as bringing your book to class. Attendance is mandatory. (30%)

**Required Texts:** Available at Food for Thought Books (106 N. Pleasant St., Amherst, 413-253-5432)

1. Dewey, John. *The Public and Its Problems*. (Chicago: The Swallow Press, 1954). \$13.95
2. Latour, Bruno, *The Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*. Translated by Catherine Porter. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004). \$25.50
3. All other readings are available either as a Handout, through WebCT, or Library Reserve (3<sup>rd</sup> floor).

## Schedule

### Week 1: What is Political Ecology?

**Jan. 29:** Introduction

**Jan. 31:** “Editorial: Science Ignored, Again.” *New York Times*, Oct. 14, 2006. **Handout & WebCT**

**Feb. 2:** Dryzek, John S. “Making Sense of the Earth’s Politics: A Discourse Approach,” in *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 3-25.

#### **Handout**

- Hardin, Garrett. “The Tragedy of the Commons,” *Science*, Vol. 162, No. 3859 (Dec. 13, 1968): 1243-1248. **WebCT**

- Arrow, Kenneth, et al. “Economic Growth, Carrying Capacity, and the Environment,” *Ecological Applications*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (February 1996): 13-15. **WebCT**

### Week 2: Critique of the Enlightenment

**Feb. 5:** Hayward, Tim. “Ecology and Enlightenment,” in *Ecological Thought: An Introduction*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Polity Press, 1994): 39-52. **Reserve**

**Feb. 7:** Marcuse, Herbert. “Nature and Revolution,” in *Counter-Revolution and Revolt*. (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1972): 59-78. **Reserve**

**Feb. 9:** Marcuse, “Nature and Revolution.” **Reserve**

### Week 3: Conceptual Challenges and Challenging Concepts

**Feb. 12:** Jacobs, Michael. “Sustainable Development as a Contested Concept,” in *Fairness and Futurity: Essays on Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice*. Edited by Andrew Dobson. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 21-45. **Reserve**

**Feb. 14:** Agrawal, Arun and Clark Gibson. “Enchantment and Disenchantment: The Role of Community in Natural Resource Conservation.” *World Development*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (1999): 629-641. **WebCT**

**Feb. 16:** Robbins, Paul. “Destruction of Nature: Human Impact and Environmental Degradation” and “Construction of Nature: Environmental Knowledges and Imaginaries,” in *Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction*. (New York: Blackwell Publishing, 2004): 87-106 and 107-126. **Reserve**

### Week 4: Environmental Science and Political Ecology

**Feb. 19:** NO CLASS (Presidents’ Day)

**Feb. 21:** Forsyth, Tim. “Social Framings of Environmental Science” and “Enforcing and Contesting Boundaries,” in *Critical Political Ecology: The Politics of Environmental Science*. (New York: Routledge, 2003): 77-102 and 134-167. **Reserve**

**Feb. 23:** Luke, Timothy. “Eco-Managerialism: Environmental Studies as a Power/Knowledge Formation,” in *Living with Nature: Environmental Politics as Cultural Discourse*. Edited by Frank Fischer and Maarten Hajer. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 103-120. **Reserve**

**Week 5: Expertise and Democracy**

**Feb. 26:** O'Neill, John. "Authority, Democracy and the Environment," in *Ecology, Policy and Politics: Human Well-Being and the Natural World*. (New York: Routledge, 1993): 123-144. **Reserve**  
 - Fischer, Frank. "Science and Politics in Environmental Regulation: The Politicization of Expertise," in *Citizens, Experts and the Environments: The Politics of Local Knowledge*. (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2000): 89-108. **Reserve**

**Feb. 28:** Dewey, John. *The Public and Its Problems*. Ch. 1

**Mar. 2:** Dewey, John. *The Public and Its Problems*. Ch. 2 (FIRST PAPER ASSIGNED)

**Week 6: Expertise and Democracy (Continued)**

**Mar. 5:** Dewey, John. *The Public and Its Problems*. Ch. 3

**Mar. 7:** Dewey, John. *The Public and Its Problems*. Ch. 4

**Mar. 9:** Dewey, John. *The Public and Its Problems*. Ch. 5

**Week 7: Expertise and Democracy (Continued)**

**Mar. 12:** Dewey, John. *The Public and Its Problems*. Ch. 6  
 - Sunstein, Cass. "The Daily We," *Boston Review*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Summer 2001).  
 Available at: <[bostonreview.net/BR26.3/sunstein.html](http://bostonreview.net/BR26.3/sunstein.html)> **WebCT**

**Mar. 14: FIRST DRAFT DUE FOR IN-CLASS REVISIONS**

**Mar. 16: FIRST PAPER DUE\*\*\* NO CLASS**

**Week 8: March 17-25, Spring Break****Week 9: The Question of Justice**

Tuesday, March, 27- Last day to withdraw with 'W'

**Mar. 26:** Dobson, Andrew. "Thick Cosmopolitanism." *Political Studies*, Vol. 54 (2006): 165-184.  
**WebCT**

**Mar. 28:** Young, Iris Marion. "Responsibility and Global Justice: A Social Connection Model," *Social Philosophy and Policy*, Vol. 23, No.1 (January 2006): 102-130. **WebCT**

**Mar. 30:** Harvey, David. "The Environment of Justice," in *Living with Nature: Environmental Politics as Cultural Discourse*. Edited by Frank Fischer and Maarten Hajer. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 153-185. **Reserve**

**Week 10: Pluralism and Constitutional Rights**

**Apr. 2:** *The Federalist Papers*, No. 10 and 51. **WebCT**

**Apr. 4:** Hayward, Tim. "Political Theory for a Sustainable Polity," in *Political Theory and Ecological Values*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998): 151-166. **Reserve**

- Hayward, Tim. "Constitutional Environmental Rights and Liberal Democracy," in *Sustaining Liberal Democracy: Ecological Challenges and Opportunities*. Edited by John Barry and Marcel Wissenburg. (New York: Palgrave, 2001): 117-134. **Reserve**

**Apr. 6: GROUP WORK #1**

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights **WebCT**  
 - United States Constitution and Amendments **WebCT**

**Week 11: Participatory Democracy**

**Apr. 9:** Barber, Benjamin. "Strong Democracy: Politics as a Way of Living," in *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*. (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1984): 117-138. **Reserve**

**Apr. 11: WRITE-UP #1 DUE**

Habermas, Jürgen. "Three Normative Models of Democracy," in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, edited by Seyla Benhabib. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996): 21-30. **Reserve**

- Cohen, Joshua. "Procedure and Substance in Deliberative Democracy," in *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, edited by Seyla Benhabib. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996): 95-119. **Reserve**

**Apr. 13: GROUP WORK #2**

**Week 12: Market-Based Cooperation and Individual Rights**

April 16 – NO CLASS (Patriots' Day); April 17- UMass Monday

**Apr. 17:** Locke, John. "Of Property," in *The Second Treatise of Government*. (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing, 1980). 18-30. **Reserve**

- Friedman, Milton. "The Relation between Economic Freedom and Political Freedom," in *Capitalism and Freedom*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982): 7-21. **Reserve**

**Apr. 18: WRITE-UP #2 DUE**

Hayek, Friedrich. "Planning and Democracy," in *The Road to Serfdom*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994): 63-79. **Reserve**

**Apr. 20: GROUP WORK #3**

**Week 13: Rethinking Democracy and Political Ecology**

**Apr. 23:** Latour, Bruno, *The Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*. Translated by Catherine Porter. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004).  
 Introduction (p. 1-8) and Section 1 (p. 9-52)

**Apr. 25: WRITE-UP #3 DUE**

Latour, *The Politics of Nature*. Section 2 (p. 53-90)

**Apr. 27:** Latour, *The Politics of Nature*. Section 3 (p. 91-127)

**Week 14: Rethinking Democracy and Political Ecology (Continued)**

**Apr. 30:** Latour, *The Politics of Nature*. Section 4 (p. 128-183)

**May 2:** Latour, *The Politics of Nature*. Section 5 (p. 184-220) and Conclusion (p. 221-230)

**May 4:** Latour, *The Politics of Nature*. (FINAL PAPER ASSIGNED)

**Week 15: Reflecting on Global Challenges**

**May 7:** Dahl, Robert. "A Democratic Dilemma: System Effectiveness versus Citizen Participation," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 109, No. 1 (Spring 1994): 23-34. **WebCT**

**May 9:** Luke, Timothy. "International or Interenvironmental Relations: Reassessing Nations and Niches in Global Ecosystems," *Alternatives*, Vol. 28 (2003): 393-422. **WebCT**

**May 11:** Evaluation and concluding discussion.

**Week 15:**

**May 14:** Meetings to discuss final paper. NO CLASS

**May 21: FINAL PAPER DUE\*\*\***

## Assignment Specifications

All assignments should be double-spaced, formatted with 1” margins on all sides, and use Times New Roman size 11 or 12 font. I have found this formatting most useful for providing comments and for ease of reading. Please note that I have provided complete citations in the syllabus, which can be downloaded from WebCT. This is so that you can copy and paste the citation into your bibliography without having to worry about format. If you are unclear about what is being asked of you in a given assignment, please speak with me about this. **Remember that you will want time to revise your two essays before they are due.** Be respectful of the reader by correcting errors before allowing your work to be read. While I do not penalize you for simple spelling errors, I do reduce the grade when grammatical errors interfere with the clarity of your ideas. **I have to rely upon what is written when grading, so express yourself clearly.**

### Discussion Write-ups (2-3 pages each)

The aim of these assignments is to get you reflecting upon your experience during group work and how it relates to the theoretical arguments for or against that approach to decision making. You are not making a sustained argument. Unless otherwise specified, you should devote about half of the assignment to explaining one or two constructive lessons from the approach used in class and the remaining half to explaining one or two criticisms of the approach that limit its applicability. Remember that the criticisms should be based on issues that arise from using the approach. So, for instance, a valid criticism of a deliberative approach may be that the group is unable to agree upon basic definitions and so cannot productively address the problem at hand. An invalid criticism, in this instance, is that deliberative democratic procedures are unrealistic. If you find yourself wanting to make a larger claim about the viability of one of the approaches then you should consider it fodder for your second essay. Finally, it will strengthen your analysis if you relate your comments to the relevant course readings. However, using more than one or two brief citations from the readings will distract you from relating your experience in class to the broader theoretical arguments made by the authors.

### Essays (6-8 pages each)

The purpose of the essays is to focus and extend your thinking about the course material. Fulfilling this purpose requires developing a sustained argument supported by valid evidence, which for the purposes of this class will usually take the form of a quotation from the course readings. You want to demonstrate that you understand the course material through a clear interpretation of the readings *and* that you have a well-formulated argument about the assigned topic.

The argument should consist of a thesis or overarching statement that responds to the assigned topic and which is then developed through a series of claims that progress logically through the necessary steps of your argument. What you will have, then, is a series of claims that build upon one another and which are linked by transitional sentences. Each claim or step in the argument should be accompanied by supporting evidence drawn from the course readings. A good interpretation of the text will quote the relevant passage and explain to the reader the reasons for understanding the passage as an illustration of the claim you are making. The danger is that you will rely too heavily on the text to make your point for you. It's your argument. The text is there to support your argument, not make it for you. A good rule of thumb is that you should not quote passages longer than one or two sentences. The final step in making your argument, and one that is often neglected, is showing the logic that connects your claims and shows how they build on each other. You may find it helpful to draw up an outline of your argument to ensure that it progresses logically and so that it is clear how the evidence fits with the point you are making at that stage in your argument.