

## Environment and Politics in Southeast Asia

Geography 44/Environmental Studies 44, Winter 2015

**Instructor:** Chris Sneddon ([cssneddon@dartmouth.edu](mailto:cssneddon@dartmouth.edu)), 123 Fairchild  
**Meeting Time:** 11 (MWF 11:15-12:20; X Hour: Tues, 12-12.50 pm)  
**Room:** 101 Fairchild  
**Office Hours:** Wed, 1-2.15 pm; Th, 12.30-1.45 pm; or arranged

Over the past several decades, the people and ecosystems of Southeast Asia have confronted a host of political, economic and cultural processes commonly grouped together under the heading "development". As witnessed by ongoing deforestation in Indonesia and dam controversies in Thailand and Laos, these development processes have resulted in drastic transformations in the landscapes, forests, and river systems of the region. These processes have likewise produced dramatic alterations in the livelihoods of the people who depend on and interact with the region's ecological systems. These socio-ecological transformations have been driven by (and are generating) a host of political and economic changes in Southeast Asia at local, national and global scales.

### Learning Outcomes

Using an approach grounded in political ecology, this course will explore a diversity of human-environment relationships in Southeast Asia. We will use case studies representing a variety of geographical scales (e.g., local, urban, national, transnational), ecological settings (e.g., mountain, coastal, agro-ecosystem) and societal contexts (Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Burma, Malaysia and Indonesia) to address several cross-cutting themes (e.g., deforestation; the politics of large dams; ecotourism; and questions of identity and resource conflicts).

By the end of the course, students will be able to

1. Understand the conceptual and methodological components of political ecology as a framework for understanding human-environment relations;
2. Understand the ecological underpinnings of livelihoods in Southeast Asia;
3. Identify and assess the institutional and political contexts (e.g., state, community, NGO) for resource development and management in Southeast Asia; and
4. Identify and comprehend the underlying political and economic processes that produce conflicts over resources (e.g., water, forests, fish).

### Course Requirements:

This course revolves around readings and discussion of materials. Lectures and small-group discussions during course meetings will supplement the scheduled readings. Remaining up-to-date with readings is absolutely crucial to the integrity and value of the course as a whole. We will use the following text:

#### Required text:

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt, 2005. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connections*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Most of our readings will come from books and recent articles concerning the political ecology of Southeast Asia. The book by Tsing provides more in-depth coverage of the dynamics of "development" within Indonesian Borneo. *Friction* is also a book that will challenge students theoretically, methodologically and ethically by bringing into question the conventional ways in which social science research is carried out. All readings/articles will be maintained on our course Canvas site.

### Key Dates: Exams and Assignments

<b>4 February</b>	In-class examination	20 %
<b>13 February</b>	Ind. Research Project description DUE	n/a
<b>23-27 February</b>	VOSEA project <u>presentations</u> (summary report DUE 27 February, 10 pm)	20 %
<b>10 March</b>	Research paper DUE (10 p.m.)	20 %
<b>13 March</b>	Final exam @ 8:00 am	20 %
<b>Daily</b>	Class participation including role playing cases + group projects	20 %

There will be two examinations during the course. The “midterm” exam will consist of short answer questions, definitions and short essays. The final exam—using a similar format—will focus on the material covered in the course after the midterm (it is NOT cumulative). See dates indicated above for exams, and please plan your studying appropriately. There will be one major individual writing assignment:

A research paper (~8 pages, double-spaced,  $\geq$  12-point font, 1" margins; due: **10 March 2015**) based on a theme of interest in Southeast Asia.

NOTE: A brief (one paragraph) description of your research topic and a short list of references (at least five) must be turned in by **13 February 2015 (10 pm)**. More details will be forthcoming in an assignment hand-out early in the term.

### **“Voices of Southeast Asia” (VOSEA) Projects**

One of the most important aspects of your college experience is learning how to function within a group setting. As part of the collaborative learning process, each student will participate as a member of a team charged with examining the activities of a non-governmental organization (NGO) operating within a specific Southeast Asian society and environment. NGOs are key actors in the environmental politics of Southeast Asia, but differ vastly in their focus, effectiveness, and strategies across the countries of the region. First, each team is required to select a Southeast Asia-based NGO—operating at a local, national or regional level—on which to focus collaborative research. Second, each team (consisting of 2-3 members depending on the size of the class) will meet regularly during in-class breakout sessions for focused discussion of the NGO you have identified for further discussion. The end product will be a brief report (< 5 pages) on the Southeast Asian NGO your group has selected and their work, which will be presented to the class during the week of 23-27 February. Teams will meet with the professor during January and February to confer about the project. We will discuss this project in more detail during the first and second weeks of class. We will also discuss the ways in which individual papers can be combined with the group projects. Assessment of the projects will be based in part on peer-reviews of individual performance as part of the project.

### **Role Playing Cases**

On two separate occasions during the course, we will engage in role playing exercises that help bring in to view the different perspectives of environmental actors (e.g., state officials, intergovernmental organizations, radical NGOs, local people’s organizations) engaged in ecological conflicts in Southeast Asia. The first concerns controversies surrounding the construction of large dams on the Mekong River; the second looks at the benefits and costs of ecotourism in Southeast Asia. Each VOSEA “team” (see previous paragraph) will represent one of the actors involved in these contentious debates.

**Discussions**

Distributed throughout the course are a series of “discussion days”, although each and every day will have at least some discussion elements. We will use these days to engage in more in-depth, seminar-style discussions regarding previous days’ readings. On occasion, discussion questions will be distributed to the class prior to the day of discussion, and we will use these questions as a starting point.

**Course Website on Canvas**

A course website will be maintained through Canvas. We will use the resources offered by the Internet frequently, both in class and as part of class assignments. Some familiarity with navigating the World Wide Web is assumed. ALL COURSE READINGS WILL BE AVAILABLE ON CANVAS (excluding the Tsing book) UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED. In addition, please submit all assignments to the Canvas site in the appropriate folder.

**Disabilities and special circumstances**

In general, please feel free to discuss with me questions relating to disabilities (including the so-called hidden ones such as chronic illness and learning disabilities) at the earliest possible moment. I will make every effort to ensure an adequate learning environment. In addition, I realize that some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. Please come speak with me before the end of the second week of the term to discuss appropriate accommodations. Also, students requiring disability-related accommodations must register with the Student Accessibility Service office. Once SAS has authorized accommodations, students must show the originally signed SAS Accommodations/Consent Form and/or a letter on SAS letterhead to their professor. As a first step, contact the SAS office if you have questions or concerns. All inquiries and discussions about accommodations will remain confidential.

**Honor Principle**

As do all courses at Dartmouth, this course requires that you familiarize yourself with the guidelines of the Academic Honor Principle concerning independent work, proper citation of other’s work and general codes of learning. Please consult the Green Pages of the Dartmouth Student Handbook for additional details about the Honor Principle. The full text is available on-line at [www.dartmouth.edu/~upperde/acad-reg.html](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~upperde/acad-reg.html).

## COURSE SCHEDULE<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction to course + Southeast Asia as a region

MON (5 Jan):

Bryant, R. and M. Parnwell. 1996. Introduction: Politics, sustainable development and environmental change in Southeast Asia. In Parnwell, M. and R. Bryant (eds) *Environmental Change in Southeast Asia: People, Politics and Sustainable Development*, pp. 1-20. New York: Routledge. **(Read by 5 January if possible)**

WED (7 Jan):

Rigg, Jonathan. 2003. Chasing after the wind: Of miracles and mirages. Chapter 1 in *Southeast Asia: The Human Landscape of Modernization and Development* [2<sup>nd</sup> edition]. London: Routledge.

Sodhi, N. S., Koh, L. P., Brook, B. W., & Ng, P. K. (2004). Southeast Asian biodiversity: an impending disaster. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*, 19(12), 654-660. (SKIM)

Miettinen, J., Shi, C., & Liew, S. C. (2011). Deforestation rates in insular Southeast Asia between 2000 and 2010. *Global Change Biology*, 17(7), 2261-2270. (SKIM)

FRI (9 Jan):

Rigg, Jonathan. 2003. Thinking alternatively about development in Southeast Asia. Chapter 2 in *Southeast Asia: The Human Landscape of Modernization and Development* [2<sup>nd</sup> edition]. London: Routledge.

**DISCUSSION** + Formation of “Voices of Southeast Asia” (VOSEA) Teams

### Political ecology

MON (12 Jan):

Robbins, Paul. 2004. “The hatchet and the seed. Chapter One in *Political Ecology: a Critical Introduction*.” Malden, MA: Blackwell, pp. 1-16.

**DISCUSSION** + “Voices of Southeast Asia” (VOSEA)

### Southeast Asian Forests, Parts I and II

WED (14 Jan): Forests I—History

Peluso, Nancy Lee and Peter Vandergeest. 2001. Genealogies of the political forest and customary rights in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. *The Journal of Asian Studies* 60(3):761-812.

FRI (16 Jan): Forests II—Swidden

Fox, J., Fujita, Y., Ngidang, D., Peluso, N., Potter, L., Sakuntaladewi, N., ... & Thomas, D. (2009). Policies, political-economy, and swidden in Southeast Asia. *Human Ecology*, 37(3), 305-322.

Rerkasem, Kanuk, et al. 2009. Consequences of swidden transitions for crop and fallow biodiversity in Southeast Asia. *Human Ecology* 37:347-360.

Dressler, W. (2014). Green governmentality and swidden decline on Palawan Island. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 39(2), 250-264.

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<sup>1</sup> Specific readings for specific dates will be announced, in general, at the beginning of class periods PRIOR to the days those readings will be discussed. I like to build in a certain amount of flexibility into the course schedule.

## Southeast Asian Forests, Part III—Current Conflicts: REDD and PES

MON (19 Jan):

Barr, C. M., & Sayer, J. A. (2012). The political economy of reforestation and forest restoration in Asia–Pacific: Critical issues for REDD+. *Biological Conservation*, 154, 9-19.

Fox, J., Castella, J. C., & Ziegler, A. D. (2013). Swidden, rubber and carbon: can REDD+ work for people and the environment in Montane Mainland Southeast Asia?. *Global Environmental Change*.

WED (21 Jan):

Milne, S., & Adams, B. (2012). Market Masquerades: uncovering the politics of community-level payments for environmental services in Cambodia. *Development and Change*, 43(1), 133-158. 26 pp

Thorburn, C. C., & Kull, C. A. (2014). Peatlands and plantations in Sumatra, Indonesia: Complex realities for resource governance, rural development and climate change mitigation. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*.

### **DISCUSSION** of VOSEA

## The Politics of large dams—Rivers, fish & people

FRI (23 Jan):

World Commission on Dams. 2000. *Dams and Development: A new Framework for Decision Making. A Report of the World Commission on Dams* (Executive Summary, 11 pp.). Available at: <http://www.dams.org//docs/report/wcdexec.pdf>

Sneddon, C. and C. Fox (2012). Inland capture fisheries and large river systems: A political economy of Mekong fisheries. *Journal of Agrarian Change* 12(2/3):279-299.

MON (26 Jan):

ICEM. 2010. *MRC Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of hydropower on the Mekong mainstream: summary of the final report*. Hanoi: Vietnam.

Readings on Don Sahong and Xayaburi dams

### PREPARATION FOR ROLE PLAY

WED (28 Jan): **ROLE PLAY 1: Dam the Mekong?**

## Conservation Politics I

FRI (30 Jan):

Dressler, W., & Roth, R. (2011). The good, the bad, and the contradictory: neoliberal conservation governance in rural Southeast Asia. *World Development*, 39(5), 851-862.

Clifton, J., & Majors, C. (2012). Culture, conservation, and conflict: Perspectives on marine protection among the Bajau of Southeast Asia. *Society & Natural Resources*, 25(7), 716-725.

MON (2 Feb):

VIDEO: *Blowpipes and bulldozers: The story of the Penan tribe and Bruno Manser* (Gaia Films, 2009)

TUES (3 Feb): Review for Midterm (Optional) [X HOUR]

**WED (4 Feb): In class exam on first third of course (Introduction through Mekong/Dams).**

FRI (6 Feb): NO CLASS

### Conservation Politics II

MON (9 Feb):

Brosius, J. P. (1999). Green dots, pink hearts: displacing politics from the Malaysian rain forest. *American Anthropologist*, 101(1), 36-57. + DISCUSSION of *Blowpipes and Bulldozers*

Li, Tania Murray. 2000. Articulating indigenous identity in Indonesia: Resource politics and the tribal slot. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42(1):149-179.

TUES (10 Feb): **X HOUR**

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt, 2005. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connections*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapters to be assigned.

WED (11 Feb):

Tsing, TBA

FRI (13 Feb):

Tsing, TBA

**13 FEB:** Research paper description (one paragraph + 5 references) DUE

### Ecotourism and tourism development

MON (16 Feb):

Parnwell, M. 2009. A political ecology of sustainable tourism in Southeast Asia. In M. Hitchcock (ed) *Tourism in Southeast Asia: Challenges and New Directions*, pp. 236-253. University of Hawaii Press.

Youdelis, M. (2013). The competitive (dis)advantages of ecotourism in Northern Thailand. *Geoforum*, 50, 161-171.

Coria, J., & Calfucura, E. (2012). Ecotourism and the development of indigenous communities: The good, the bad, and the ugly. *Ecological Economics*, 73, 47-55. OPTIONAL

WED (18 Feb):

Jalani, J. O. (2012). Local People's Perception on the Impacts and Importance of Ecotourism in Sabang, Palawan, Philippines. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 57, 247-254.

Preparation for Role Play

FRI (20 Feb):

**ROLE PLAY 2: Ecotourism on Koh Suay**

### “Voices of Southeast Asia” Presentations

MON (23 Feb): Three Teams

TUES (24 Feb): If Needed

WED (25 Feb): Three Teams

FRI (27 Feb): Three Teams

Environmental Politics and the Future of Southeast Asia

MON (2 Mar)

VIDEO: *The Goddess and the Computer*

Cole, S. (2012). A political ecology of water equity and tourism: A case study from Bali. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(2), 1221-1241.

WED (4 Mar):

Cheng, D. (2013). (In) visible urban water networks: the politics of non-payment in Manila's low-income communities. *Environment and Urbanization*, 0956247812469926.

Smokey Mountain reading

Brand, R. (2013). Facilitating sustainable behavior through urban infrastructures: learning from Singapore?. *International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development*, 5(2), 225-240.

FRI (6 Mar):

Elliott, L. (2012). ASEAN and environmental governance: strategies of regionalism in Southeast Asia. *Global Environmental Politics*, 12(3), 38-57

MON (9 Mar):

Open Discussion + Review for Final Exam

**TUES, 10 MARCH: DUE: Individual Research Papers by 10 pm**

**Thursday, 13 March @ 8.00 am: Final Exam Room TBD.**

## Assessment of Class Participation<sup>2</sup>

Class participation accounts for 20% of the course grade. Every participant in the class is expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned material. The success of the course demands that each participant be ready to articulate and defend her/his ideas, as well as to listen to and work with the ideas of the other participants. As alluded to earlier, your participation in discussion, carrying out of the political ecology projects and engagement in the role playing exercises will go a long way to making the course engaging and successful. Class participation will be graded according to the following specifications:

- (1) A student who receives an "A" for participation in discussion typically comes to every class with questions and/or comments about the readings already in mind. S/he raises these issues for other members to discuss and listens to contrary opinions. S/he engages other students in discussion of their ideas as well as her/his own. S/he is under no obligation to change her opinions to fit the consensus of the class, but s/he respects the ideas of others and discusses the issues before the class with a mind to discovering areas of agreement and disagreement. In short, an "A" student participates in an exchange of ideas.
- (2) A student who receives a "B" for participation in discussion typically has completed all the reading assignments on time, but does not always come to class with questions in mind. Rather, s/he waits passively for others to raise interesting issues. Other "B" discussants are courteous and articulate but they do not always engage other students in discussion of their ideas. In short, a "B" student may occasionally participate in an exchange of ideas but sometimes frustrates that exchange either through silence or an unwillingness to direct comments to the other participants.
- (3) A student who receives a "C" for discussion typically either attends class sessions sporadically, or attends every meeting of the seminar, but refuses to be drawn into discussion.

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<sup>2</sup> There is an important caveat to this system. I recognize that individuals have different styles of learning and participating. If you are better able to contribute to class discussions via written/electronic comments, please do not hesitate to bring this to my attention.