

Environment and politics in Southeast Asia

Geography 44/Environmental Studies 44, Fall 2012, TTh 2:00-3:50 (2A),
Room: 217 Dartmouth Hall (x-hour* is Wednesday, 4:15-5:05 pm)

Professor **Chris Sneddon**

Office: 123 Fairchild (first floor)

Office Hours: Mon, 10-12; Wed, 11-12; or by appointment (Skype accessible)

E-mail: CSSneddon@Dartmouth.Edu

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; hydropolitics and 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 will revolve 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. As a general guide to the region's diversity of historical, political and ecological contexts, we will use the following texts:

Required text:

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

* NOTE: We will be using our X-Hour nearly every week for the first 5 weeks to offset days when we do not meet in November.

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. Most readings/articles will be maintained on our course Blackboard site.

Key Dates: Exams and Assignments

2 October	In-class examination	15 %
16 October	Ind. Research Project description DUE	n/a
18 October	Take home examination emailed out	n/a
25 October	Take home examination DUE in class	10 %
6, 8` November	Group project <u>presentations</u> (report DUE 11/17)	15 %
13 November	Research paper DUE (5 p.m.)	20 %
18 November	Final exam @ 3:00 pm	20 %
Every day	Class participation including role playing cases + group projects	20 %

There will be three examinations during the course. The first "midterm" exam will consist of short answer questions (and/or fill-in-the-blanks), definitions and short essays. The second "midterm" exam will be a take home and consist mainly of short answer/short essay questions. 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: **13 November 2012**) 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 **30 October 2012**.

Political Ecology 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 political ecology of different Southeast Asian societies and environments. First, each team (consisting of 4-7 members depending on the size of the class) will meet regularly during in-class breakout sessions for focused discussion of the assigned readings. Second, each team is required to select a topic for collaborative research, design a research process, and carry out the proposed research. The end product will be a brief report (< 5 pages) on the political ecology of a specific region, ecosystem or phenomenon in Southeast Asia, which will be presented to the class on 6-8 November. Teams will meet with the professor during September or October. We will discuss this project in more detail during the first week of class. We will also discuss the way in which individual papers can be combined with the group projects. Assessment of the projects will be based on peer-reviews of individual performance as part of the project.

Role Playing Cases

On at least 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 political ecology "team" (see previous paragraph) will represent one of the actors involved in these contentious issues.

Discussions

Scattered throughout the course are a series of "discussion days". 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 Blackboard

A course website will be maintained through Blackboard. To reach the Blackboard site, go to (<https://blackboard.dartmouth.edu/>). 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 BLACKBOARD UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED. In addition, please submit all assignments (including the take-home exam) to the Blackboard 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-regs.shtml.

COURSE SCHEDULE¹

11, 13 Sept: Introduction to course + Southeast Asia as a region

The “making” of Southeast Asia: social construction and general characteristics

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 11 Sept if possible)**

Kratoska, Paul et al. 2005. Locating Southeast Asia. In Kratoska, P. et al. (eds) *Locating Southeast Asia: Geographies of Knowledge and Politics of Space*, pp. 1-19. Singapore University Press.

Rigg, J. 2003. Chasing after the wind: Of miracles and mirages. Chapter 1 in *Southeast Asia: The Human Landscape of Modernization and Development* (2nd edition), Routledge.

DISCUSSION

18 September: Political ecology

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

Neumann, Roderick. 2005. “Roots and branches.” Chapter Two in *Making Political Ecology*. London: Hodder Arnold, pp. 15-43.

DISCUSSION + Formation of POLITICAL ECOLOGY TEAMS

20, 25 Sept: Southeast Asian ecosystems and agroecology

Mertz, Ole et al. 2009. Swidden change in Southeast Asia: understanding causes and consequences. *Human Ecology* 37:259-264.

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

Pfeiffer, J. M. et al. 2006. Biocultural diversity in traditional rice-based agroecosystems: indigenous research and conservation of *mavo* (*Oryza sativa* L.) upland rice landraces of eastern Indonesia. *Environment, Development and Sustainability* 8:609-625.

Arthur, R. I. and R. M. Friend. 2011. Inland capture fisheries in the Mekong and their place and potential within food-led regional development. *Global Environmental Change* 21:219-226.

DISCUSSION of research team projects: 25 Sept

27 Sept: The political ecology of deforestation in Southeast Asia

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.

Le Billon, Philippe. 2002. Logging in muddy waters: the politics of forest exploitation in Cambodia. *Critical Asian Studies* 34(4):563-586. (course reserves)

Poffenberger, Mark. 2006. People in the forest: community forestry experiences from Southeast Asia. *International Journal of Environment and Sustainable Development* 5(1):57-69.

¹ 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.

2, 4 Oct: The politics of large dams—rivers, fish & people

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>

Molle, F., T. Foran, and P. Floch. 2009. 'Introduction: Changing Waterscapes in the Mekong Region – Historical Background and Context'. In *Contested Waterscapes in the Mekong Region: Hydropower, Livelihoods and Governance*, eds. Molle, F., T. Foran, and M. Kakonen, 1-13, London: Earthscan.

Molle, F., L. Lebel and T. Foran, 2009. 'Contested Mekong Waterscapes: Where to Next?' In *Contested Waterscapes in the Mekong Region: Hydropower, Livelihoods and Governance*, eds. F. Molle, T. Foran and M. Käkönen, 383-413. London: Earthscan.

2 OCTOBER: In class examination on first third of course (Introduction through deforestation; takes place 2:45-3:50)

9 October: ROLE PLAY 1: Dam the Mekong?

11, 16 October: Alternative development or development alternatives?

Adams, William. 2001. The dilemma of sustainability. Chapter One in *Green Development: Environment and Sustainability in the South* [2nd edition]. London: Routledge, pp. 1-21. (available through NetLibrary, <http://www.netLibrary.com/urlapi.asp?action=summary&v=1&bookid=95220>).

Rigg, J. 2003. Thinking alternatively about development in Southeast Asia. Chapter 2 in *Southeast Asia: The Human Landscape of Modernization and Development* (2nd edition), Routledge.

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.

16 October: VIDEO: *Blowpipes and bulldozers: the story of the Penan tribe and Bruno Manser* (Gaia Fims, 2009)

16 OCTOBER: Research paper description (one paragraph + 5 references) DUE

18, 23 October: Ecotourism and tourism development

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.

Kontogeorgopoulos, Nick. 2006. Towards a Southeast Asian model of “mass ecotourism”: Evidence from Phuket, Thailand and Bali, Indonesia. *ASEAN Journal on Hospitality and Tourism* 2:1-16.

Autthapon Sirivejjabhandu and Suthida Jamsai Whyte. 2010. Poverty alleviation through community-based ecotourism in the trans-boundary protected areas: the Emerald Triangle perspective. *South Asian Journal of Tourism and Heritage* 3(2):11-18.

18 October: 2nd exam (take home) questions emailed out (Politics of Large Dams + Alternative Development)

23 Oct: ROLE PLAY 2: Ecotourism

25 October: Conservation, identity and resource politics Part 1

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

25 OCTOBER: 2 nd exam (take home) questions DUE

30 Oct, 1 Nov: Conservation, identity and resource politics Part 21 Tsing, *Friction*, continued

6, 7 (x hour), 8 November: Research Team Presentations

13 November: Course wrap-up

13 NOVEMBER:	DUE: Individual Research Papers by 5 pm
---------------------	---

Sunday, 18 November @ 11:30 am: Final Exam Room TBD.

Assessment of Class Participation²

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.

² 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.