A Course Proposal

on

Environmental Humanities

(to be offered as BTech Breadth)

Submitted By

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Environmental Humanities (L-T-P: 3-0-0, CRD: 3)

Proposed Course Instructors

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Overview and Objectives

We are on the era of the 'Anthropocene' and humanity is rapidly transgressing a set of planetary boundaries including climate change, atmospheric aerosol loading, stratospheric ozone depletion, loss of biodiversity, etc (Stockholm Resilience Centre). That only science and economics, and incentive-driven public management solutions could address and tackle the deep-rooted environmental crisis does no more convince scholars from both the domain of natural and social sciences. Within this context, Science, Technology and Environmental Humanities is designed to

- introduce critical theoretical frameworks on environment across social science disciplines
- experiment with new practices of research and knowledge production and reproduction
- interpolate the South Asian/Oriental context within Environmental Humanities

Contents

1. What is Environmental Humanities?
1.1 Overview
1.2 The Era of Anthropocene and the Nine Planetary Boundaries
1.3 Approaches, Methods and Methodologies

2. From Ecology to Human Ecology
2.1 Ecology and Ecological Studies
2.2 Human Ecology

3. Environmental Social Sciences
3.1 Environmental History
3.2 Environmental Sociology
3.3 Ecological Economics and Green Economics
3.4 Other Allied Disciplines: Anthropology, Philosophy, Psychology

4. Political Ecology
4.1 Introduction and Overview
4.2 Third World Political Ecology
4.3 Water Political Ecology
4.4 Urban Political Ecology
5. The South Asian/Oriental Context
5.1 Overview and Relevance
5.2 South Asian Ecological and Humanistic Traditions

[Note: The course would pertain to the following basic structure. However, the sub-themes within these five major themes might vary and get different weightage based on analysis of interests and priorities of students which could be identified through constructivist method of interaction during the first two general introductory classes.]

Reasons for offering the new subject

- It is designed to inculcate rays of hope through critical theoretical frameworks and action-oriented research within the contemporary critical juncture of humanity and the unstable earth system.

- While environmental scientists, engineers and technocrats have focused on the non-human species and non-human world, humanities and social sciences have focused on 'the human' in a way that has often excluded or backgrounded the non-human world. Environmental Humanities ensures the enrichment of environmental research with a more extensive conceptual vocabulary, whilst at the same time vitalizing the humanities by rethinking the ontological exceptionality of the human.

- The thrust, framework, methods and methodologies of the new subject would provide a comprehensive treatment to environmental scholarship by bringing various social science approaches into conversations with each other in multiple ways. The ambit is all-pervasive, ambitious and hence, different from insular disciplines like Environmental Economics (EE) and Environmental Sociology (ES).

- Environmental Humanities is still confined within the west. The contemporary juncture gives us the opportunity to sharply and vehemently bring in the non-western/oriental South Asian or more specifically Indian context by exploring long traditions of rich, complex and diverse ecological and humanistic knowledge and wisdom.

The scope of Environmental Humanities as a full-fledged discipline

- Recently established research centers such as the Center for Culture, History, and Environment at University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Rachel Carson Center in Munich, the KTH Environmental Humanities Laboratory in Stockholm, and the Eco-Humanities Hub at Mid Sweden University are bringing scholars from the associated fields together. **Undergraduate and graduate programs in environmental humanities as a full-fledged discipline have emerged at universities in the United States, Australia, England, Germany, Sweden, and Taiwan since the present decade.**

- Networks such as Humanities for the Environment, the Transatlantic Environmental Research Network in Environmental Humanities, the Australian Environmental Humanities Hub, the Nordic Network for Interdisciplinary Environmental Studies (NIES), and the European Environmental Humanities Alliance, in addition, help to connect researchers in the environmental humanities regionally across institutions and disciplines.

Books

Theory (Text Books)
- Sorlin, S. (2012). Environmental Humanities: Why Should Biologists Interested in Environment take the Humanities Seriously? BioScience, 69(2), 788-789.
- Rose, D., Dooren, T.V., Chrulew, M., Cooke, S., Kearnes, M., and O'Gorman, E. (2012). Thinking through the Environment, Unsettling the Humanities, Environmental Humanities 1, 1-5.
- Forthcoming books under the series on I. MacCalman and L. Robin (eds.) The Routledge Environmental Humanities. https://www.routledge.com/Routledge-Environmental-Humanities/book-series/REH, accessed on August 26, 2016.
- Robbins, P. (2012). Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction (UK: Wiley-Blackwell). Second Edition.
- Bryant, R.L. (2015). The International Handbook of Political Ecology (UK: Edward Elgar).
- Durant, W. (1954). Our Oriental Heritage: The Story of Civilization (New York: Simon and Shuster), vol. 1.
- Olson, R.G. (2005) Technology and Science in Ancient Civilizations (Praeger Series on the Ancient World) (USA and UK: Praegar).

References (Literature)
- Agarwal, A. and Narain, S. (1997). Dying Wisdom: Rise, Fall and Potential of India's Traditional Water Harvesting System (New Delhi: Centre for Science and Environment).
- Guha, R. and Alier, J.M. (1997) Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Baindur, M. (2015). Nature in Indian Philosophy and Cultural Traditions (New Delhi: Springer).
- Guha, R. (2000). Environmentalism: A Global History (USA: Longman).
- Isenberg, A. (ed.) (2014). The Oxford Handbook of Environmental History (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Baviskar, A. (1997). Ecology and Development in India: A Field and its Future, Sociological Bulletin, 46 (2), 193-207.

- Enamul Haque, A.K., Murty, M.N. & Shyamsundar, P. (eds.) (2011). Environmental Valuation in South Asia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Mukherjee, J. (2015). Beyond the Urban: Rethinking Urban Ecology Using Kolkata as a Case Study, International Journal of Urban Sustainable Development, 7 (2), 131-146.

Lecture Distribution

Themes/sub-themes	No. of lectures
1. What is Environmental Humanities? 1.4 Overview 1.2 The Era of Anthropocene and the Nine Planetary Boundaries 1.3 Approaches, Methods and Methodologies	Total – 6 2 1 3
2. From Ecology to Human Ecology 2.1 Ecology and Ecological Studies 2.2 Human Ecology	Total – 5 3 2
3. Environmental Social Sciences 3.1 Environmental History 3.2 Environmental Sociology 3.3 Ecological Economics and Green Economics 3.4 Other Allied Disciplines: Anthropology, Philosophy, Psychology	Total – 9 3 2 2 2
4. Political Ecology 4.1 Introduction and Overview 4.2 Third World Political Ecology 4.3 Water Political Ecology 4.4 Urban Political Ecology	Total – 10 2 2 3 3
5. The South Asian/Oriental Context 5.1 Overview and Relevance 5.2 South Asian Ecological and Humanistic Traditions	Total – 6 2 4
	All Total - 36