NRSM 475/575: Environment and Development
Tuesdays & Thursdays 11:00 – 12:20 in Native American Center 011

Instructor information
Instructor: Dr. Jill M. Belsky
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Course description:

Environmental problems and their solutions are today widely discussed around the world, both by specialists and everyday people. But what is considered a “problem” and a “solution” vary by person, context, and historical moment. The dominance of biophysical experts has until recently overly emphasized biophysical processes and technological solutions. Increasingly biological scientists have acknowledged that environmental/ecological problems and processes are highly linked or “coupled” with social problems and processes and thus require approaching them together as “social-ecological systems.” Environmental social scientists – sociologists, geographers, anthropologists etc. – have argued for decades that society and environment are not just linked but co-evolved; they developed so closely together that they constitute one highly complex system. Understanding the connections between people and their societies and their natural resources and ecosystems necessitates attention to many factors that are constantly changing! On the social side it demands attention to a variety of social forces (notably culture, economics and politics) which require different analytical approaches (interpreting social action as well as observing its material actions). Because we are influenced by what happens over time (history and towards the future), as well as around the world (across geographical space/location), we need to take a “multi-scalar” approach. In this class we will apply a multi-scalar approach to examine the “big” processes that relate to organization of societies and economies (including colonialism, nation-state building and development, capitalism, and globalization). These exert profound influences on how people think about and have variable access to and control over resources (such as making policies and land grabbing for some, lacking voice and dispossession for others). We will examine especially how these processes influence how different types of people – differentiated by nationality, class, gender, age, ethnicity and their intersections – use natural resources over time and in their particular places across the globe.

We will explore how particular histories, framings and assumptions about society, environment and development have led to different assumptions of what is viewed as environmental “problems” and “solutions,” and how the latter themselves have created their own sets of opportunities and challenges for different states, regions, communities and individuals. Another way of saying this is in this class we will pay close attention to the politics of environment, development and conservation – who gets to decide how natural resources are used or not? Who gets to decide how particular uses are valued or not, including what indices we use to measure them and what constitutes “conservation” or “sustainability”? How have the uneven process of national development and globalization influenced who wins and who loses in the process of re-envisioning and re-creating more “sustainable” and “just” societies, especially in light of current challenges brought by climate change? These questions have raised serious challenges to dominant knowledge systems and practices through advocacy for traditional knowledge, environmental justice and integrated conservation and development programs that are not coercive and controlling but participatory and emancipatory—how are the latter doing? To get at these answers we will examine opportunities and challenges in community-based and market- based conservation approaches. Assignments will move across and link theory, grounded case studies and exercises for students to engage with ongoing, “real” environment and development initiatives occurring all over the world today.

The emphasis in this course is on learning to understand, think, and write critically about (largely) social forces in environment and development (though we will also address the ecological dimensions). Please be advised that the course will not cover all of the major environmental issues or conservation strategies in the world today. You will have the opportunity to pursue a particular issue or topic of your own choosing in your final paper. Please be prepared that the approach taken in this class is complex and will likely challenge you to rethink your own views and ideas. This can be unsettling. The instructor and TA will do their best to explain difficult and new concepts, and ground them in current issues and real life experiences. By enrolling in this class you are agreeing to do your best to undertake these challenges and to let the instructor or TA know when you do not understand something or wish to examine it further.

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- **Describe** key social forces influencing society-environment-development-conservation interactions and their historical context;
- **Analyze** different theories and perspectives on the causes, consequences and potential solutions to a selection of environment and development issues today, and
- **Evaluate** the opportunities and challenges of different strategies, programs and policies to reconcile tensions between environment and development, and their variable costs and benefits for different social groups and ecologies.
- **Demonstrate enhanced writing proficiency** through the various writing assignments.
Course Structure and Expectations

The course involves lectures, class discussions, videos (with written critiques), in-class exams and a final project. The instructor will provide background on readings and key concepts. Students are expected to participate in all required activities, take responsibility for their own educational development, and contribute towards a healthy learning community.

Expectations for reading-based reflection and discussion:

Classroom time is structured around students’ engagement with the assigned readings (see below), so it is imperative you read and think about the material before each class so you are prepared to contribute to professional discussion. To help you prepare for each class, please consider the following:

1. What questions do you have about this reading? Bring questions to class.
2. How does this reading challenge your assumptions? (Describe your “aha!” moments.)
3. How does this reading connect to other readings in this course?

The instructor recognizes that there are many readings, especially in the beginning and you are likely to find them challenging. She encourage you to bring your questions to class where our in-depth discussions and other learning activities can assist you to understand the material. All views are welcome in class but they must be communicated in a civil and never hostile manner.

Readings

475: There are no required textbooks. Reading assignments are listed under the date in which they are due under “Topics and Reading Assignments” below. They are available through download by week/topic from UM Moodle; search Moodle Link and login with your username/password and find our course (listed under NRSM 475). Some videos and other materials may be checked out from the Mansfield Library Reserve Desk under NRSM 475.

575: Graduate students enrolled in NRSM 575 are required to complete all assignments for 475 plus additional readings labeled as 575. These readings are optional for undergraduates. Depending on schedules, we arrange a few out of class “graduate seminar-style meetings.

Assignments

PARTICIPATION (10% of final grade):

Participation includes attendance, punctuality, attentiveness, effort, completing all readings prior to class, and offering your thoughts, ideas, opinions, and questions during discussion. Your participation grade is not based on knowing the "right" answers or the quantity or length of your comments but rather your willingness to contribute, evidence that you have completed and thought through material presented in the reading, and the increasing quality of your contributions.

FOUR VIDEO CRITIQUES (20% of final grade):

We will view five videos during the semester. You are required to submit written critiques on four of them. Each critique is due in hard copy (please do not email me your critique) in the class immediately after the one in which the video was shown. The purpose of the video critiques is to critically apply theory, major concepts and raise insightful questions, and to do so in grammatically correct and clear writing. Each video critique will entail two double-spaced pages (12 point font, 1 inch margins). I will use the following criteria to grade your critiques: excellent (correct summary, critical application of theory and insightful questions, excellent writing); good (good attempt to summarize, apply theory and raise questions but room for improvement in content and writing) and unsatisfactory (did not summarize correctly, nor sufficiently engage with the readings, raise good questions as noted in the guidelines below; and/or not well written). These will be translated into a letter grade at the end of the semester.

Please follow this format for completing each video critique:

1. Title: Write the video title on the top of the first page.
2. Description: Very briefly summarize the major theme or points of the video (one paragraph).
3. Analysis: Discuss how the video engages two key concepts or theories discussed in class (see list below for examples).
4. Evaluation: Drawing on your analysis, judge the video in terms of its application of (or failure to consider) a particular theory or body of knowledge, or its major conclusions or recommendations. Provide ample evidence and clear reasoning for your evaluation.
5. Questions: List three specific questions inspired by the video that are related to the course and your ongoing reflection on what you are learning.

Examples of key concepts and theories

- social construction of nature
- landscape as symbolic meaning
- socio-ecological systems
- colonialism
- development/development project
- ecological footprint
- modernization theory
• dependency theory
• world system theory
• Malthusian theory
• Hardin’s theory (derived from Tragedy of the Commons)
• common property/common pool resources
• globalization
• capitalism
• neoliberalism/neo-liberal capitalism
• trade liberalization; free markets
• outsourcing
• (labor) displacement
• global land grabs
• global countermovements
• agroecology
• biodiversity
• fair markets
• environmental externality
• sustainability/ sustainable development
• climate change
• renewable energy/green technologies
• resilience
• environmental justice
• social justice
• traditional ecological knowledge and practice (TEKP)
• market-based conservation
• payment for ecological services
• carbon credits/carbon markets
• participation
• governance
• devolution, decentralization
• community-based conservation
• food sovereignty
• feminist/gender

TWO IN-CLASS EXAMS (2x20% for a total 40% of final grade):
These will involve short answer and/or essay questions. Neither involves a multiple choice format. No need to bring blue books as paper will be provided.

475 FINAL PAPER: CASE STUDY ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION (total 30% of final grade):
Each student will select an ongoing “real” initiative or organization involved in responding to the tensions between environment and development and conduct independent research following the guidelines provided below. You are required to submit an abstract with a preliminary title and five references (5% of grade), be prepared to very briefly discuss your selection and key findings in class (5%), and submit a written final paper (20% of grade).

Purpose:
The purpose of the final paper is for you to select a topic related to your interests and use it to apply concepts and historical knowledge and interpretation from class to assess its approach and effectiveness at resolving tensions between environment and development, or working towards creating “sustainable” and/or “resilient” societies and environment. You will describe, analyze, and evaluate it according to criteria, lessons and evidence learned from class and your own readings, videos and discussions; and it will also enhance your professional writing skills.

Selecting a topic:
Please select an initiative or organization for your case study analysis and evaluation. Pick an organization or initiative that has an explicit concern for addressing environment/conservation/sustainable development. If the scope of the initiative or organization is very large, it is important to select a smaller program or project associated with it. You may choose something that is operating internationally, in the USA, or in Montana. You may make your selection based on the novelty of the initiative or organization’s approach, a noteworthy project, its geographical location, or prior experience with the organization. I encourage you to choose a topic that you would like to know more about and/or even volunteer or work for in the future. Do not select an initiative or organization with scant information as you will not be able to complete the assignment. I have included a list of possible initiatives and organizations in this syllabus but these are just suggestions; you do not have to pick from this list.

Abstract:
The purpose of the abstract is to ensure that you have selected an initiative or organization that is in keeping with the objective of the assignment and which you can find sufficient information to complete it. Summarize, in one, double-spaced page, the initiative or organization you have selected for your case study analysis and evaluation and provide a very brief description what you plan to examine. Include five references you will use in completing the requirements for the case study.
Final Paper:
You must follow the format below and label each section as outlined. The final paper should be around 8-10 pages (12 point font, 1 inch margins). You are welcome to discuss your paper with class members or anyone else with knowledge about the initiative or organization. However, the analysis, evaluation, and writing of the final paper must be your own individual work. The case study and evaluation must have the following sections:

1. Contact Information: At the top of the first page provide the name and contact information for the initiative or organization, including its website, mailing address, and phone number. (Half page)

2. Description: Building on your abstract, very briefly describe the initiative or organization and its overall mission or the particular project you have chosen. This section should be around 1 page.

3. Analysis: In this section, examine critically what the initiative or organization claims to be doing; interrogate their assumptions, claims, and look for contradictions between what they say and actual evidence (if you can find any). The point of this analysis is to dive beyond face value acceptance of what is written on an organization’s web page or pamphlets. Apply insights from class readings, lectures and discussions. To assist with your analysis, select two of the key concepts we have used in class (including but not limited to the ones noted above) appropriate to your topic and use them as a basis for the analysis, including how the initiative or organization defines its problem, selects an approach towards a solution(s) and explains its successes or failures. If you cannot find answers I will be judging how well you ask questions of the organization and its projects. This section should be around 3-4 pages.

4. Evaluation: Drawing on your analysis, briefly evaluate or judge what you see as the initiative/organization/project’s major strengths and/or limitations. This could be related to their framing of problems and mission, chosen strategy, practical accomplishments or ongoing struggles. Be as specific as possible with regard to your reasoning and the evidence you provide for your evaluation. Be attentive to real social and ecological conditions so your suggestions are feasible and practical. This section should be around 3-4 pages.

5. Literature cited: I expect you to cite all the literature and resources you used to describe, analyze, and evaluate the organization. Use resources from class as well as additional readings (e.g. website and internet resources, reports, articles, book chapters, information from key informant interviews). Please follow conventional social science citation protocols (APA format is preferable). (Half page)

Please note that the analysis and evaluation sections are the most important. You will need to do both original research and thinking. Search the library and internet for information about your organization and its activities. There may be formal evaluations available for larger organizations. Closely examine its website and other relevant sites. You are likely to need to email your chosen organization. Email someone involved with the initiative or associated with your organization early on with a concise list of questions, or if local, try to contact them by phone. Be polite and persistent, but realize that they are busy and may not respond immediately; hence the need to email them early and possibly often. On the next page are some examples of international organizations and topics; feel free to use one of these or select one of your own choice.

575 Final Paper
Graduate students have the option to complete the final paper assignment for 475, or to make special arrangements to pursue a topic which engages course material and concerns but which responds more directly to their graduate research. The latter requires a discussion and agreement with the instructor on the topic and structure of the paper, and should occur with enough time to enable graduate students to follow timeline for 475.

Suggestions of organizations and initiatives

International
Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) Village Ways
Lend with Care
Community Conservation, Inc. Food First
Coral Cay Conservation Wetlands International Population Institute Borneo Project
La Via Campesina
Highlander Research and Education Center Women’s Environment & Development Organization (WEDO)
Community Forestry International Fair Trade Federation
Catholic Relief Services CARE
SmartWood
Heifer International Alam Sehat Lestari (ASRI)
Inter-American Foundation Global Exchange Earthjustice
Friends of the Earth
Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN)

U.S.
Ecotrust
Quivera Coalition Sonoran Institute
Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) Defenders of Wildlife
Greater Yellowstone Coalition Rainforest Alliance
Pesticide Action Network Trust for Public Land
The Nature Conservancy
National Network of Forest Practitioners Sand County Foundation
Sustainable Northwest Land Trust Alliance The Wilderness Society
Institute for Local Self-Reliance Natural Resources Defense Council National Wildlife Federation
Grading

Please mark exams and assignment due dates on your calendar and plan accordingly. Please note that extensions require my prior approval and that in the absence of such approval (and presuming no serious emergency), a zero will be given if you fail to turn in an assignment or exam on time. This class is offered for traditional letter grade only; it is not offered under the credit/no credit option.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Throughout</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Video Critiques</td>
<td>Class after video shown</td>
<td>20 (5% for each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class Exam 1</td>
<td>Feb 13</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class Exam 2</td>
<td>March 12</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper Title &amp; Abstract</td>
<td>April 2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper (Short) Presentation</td>
<td>April 28 (Last name A-L) April 30 (Last name M-Z)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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Grades will be allocated using the following scale:

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<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Grade Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59 &amp; below</td>
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Course guidelines and policies:

Academic Conduct

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at: Student Conduct Code Link. Academic misconduct may result in being given a zero on any/all work and expelled from this course.

Advising

I encourage you to e-mail, phone, or come to my office during office hours. I also welcome you to make an appointment outside of my office hours (schedules permitting). I encourage you to talk with me as soon as you have questions or difficulties with the material. Do not wait until the day before an exam or an assignment is due.

The University of Montana Writing Center welcomes all students in all disciplines to take advantage of free support as they write for any course. To make an appointment and learn more about The Writing Center's by-appointment and drop-in hours, visit Writing Center Link or call 243-2266.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting me. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. "Reasonable" means the University permits no fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications.
## Course Calendar: (HEADING 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 23</td>
<td>The Development Project</td>
<td><strong>January 23</strong> The Development Project  • McMichael, P. 2012. Chap 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 11</td>
<td>Class Discussion/Review for Exam 1</td>
<td><strong>February 11</strong> Class Discussion/Review for Exam 1  [review lectures &amp; readings, bring questions to class]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 13</td>
<td>In-Class Exam #1</td>
<td><strong>February 13</strong> In-Class Exam #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Assignments</td>
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| February 18 | Consumption and Materialism          | [Review final paper guidelines and begin exploring a topic/initiative]  
• Watch the 20 minute video Facts from the Story of Stuff Video and “Facts from The Story of Stuff” |
• Malchik, A. 2016. Who owns the earth? Downloaded from https://aeon.co/essays/is-it-time-to-upend-the-idea-that-land-is-private-property  
| February 27 | Political Economy of Tropical Forests | • Read/watch short video Deforestation Video Link  
| March 5     | Corporate Power in the Transportation and EnergySectors | Video #4: Taken for a Ride  
• Thompson, J. The bid for a big grid. High Country News, August 21, 2017. p. 18-21  
• Dunbar, J. 2016. The “Citizens United” decision and why it matters. The Center for Public Integrity. Downloaded 12/7/2016 from Citizens United Link  
575: Coal - Holler promises. What the president talks about when he talks about coal. The Economist Dec 16, 2017. 26-27 |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 10</td>
<td>Class discussion and review for exam — review and bring questions to class</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 12</td>
<td>In-Class Exam #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 16-20</td>
<td>Spring Break, No Class</td>
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</table>
| March 24  | Adapting to Dynamic Change: Key Principles and Processes Guest presentation: Dr. Stephen Siebert, Emeritus Professor, Forest Management (FCFC) | • Siebert, S. and J. Belsky. 2014. Historic livelihoods and land uses as ecological disturbances and their role in enhancing biodiversity: An example from Bhutan. Biol. Con. 177:82-89.  
| March 31  | Sustainable Development, Sustainability: Sustaining what, for whom? Who Decides? | • Emas, R. 2015 The concept of sustainable development: definition and defining principles. Brief for GSDR. Availability at: [The concept of sustainable development link]  
| April 2   | Integrating Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Practice(TEKP)        | Due: Abstract for final paper (the title of the initiative or organization you have selected a very brief description of what you will examine and five references).  
   Video #5: Ancient Futures  
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 21</td>
<td>Class Debate on Market-Based Conservation</td>
<td>Debating teams will discuss the following resolution (you will have the first half of class for discussion and preparation): “Using the market is the most efficient and effective means to achieve environmental conservation.” • See readings and resources uploaded by class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 23</td>
<td>Capitalism and Climate change</td>
<td>Video #7: This changes everything • Book review of Naomi Kein. 2014. This changes everything: capitalism vs the climate. NY: Simon &amp; Schuster; reviewed in the NY Times Nov 6, 2014, downloaded 12/6/2016 from This changes everything NY times article link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 28</td>
<td>Class presentations on final paper (students last name begins A-L)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 30</td>
<td>Class presentations on final paper (students last name begins M-Z)</td>
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Your final paper is due on Wednesday, May 6. You may submit it earlier. Deliver a hard copy to your instructor’s office door #410 Clapp Building (place in black wire basket).

Graded Final paper (with final grade) can be picked up from Will Fabro in the Dean’s office in the (main) Forestry Building after May 13.