

CGS 4016F Globalization: Political Ecology  
Centre for Global Studies  
Huron University College  
Fall 2009  
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Office Hours: Thursday 12:00-2:00pm  
Course Information: Thurs. 2:30-5:30pm, W102

Introduction

The topic for CGS 4016 in 2009 is political ecology, the study of historical moments in a way that simultaneously accounts for (or examines the interactions of) economic, social, political and environmental dynamics. The core problematic of this approach to understanding 'life' is the human/environment interaction, and the (complex) manners in which both 'sides' are mutually constituting: humans do not exist independent of their environments, while environments do not exist independent of humans.

As we will see throughout the course, this political ecology approach to understanding globalization is tremendously useful, because it forces/allows breadth of analysis.

Readings

We are reading articles, most of which are available through the many on-line data bases we have access to through the library. In the one or two instances when they are not, I will make sure you have access to them. However, I reserve the right to change the readings (by replacing one with another) based on our progress as a seminar. Each year the composition of our seminar, your research interests, the passage of history around us and so on, all condition how we actually answer the questions that we have set out to answer with this course. We might literally need to read something different! And so it is very likely that I will (with fair and sufficient notice) change some of the readings, especially later in the course.

That said, the readings for the course are the articles identified below for each seminar date, and the book *Multitude* by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri.

Evaluation

Bibliography	15% (due October 8)
Essay proposal	25% (due October 29)
Presentations (2)	20% (10% each)
Participation	10%
Final Paper	30% (due December 7)

### Your Essay Topic

This project is an opportunity for you to pursue research into an area of interest to you. Your essay needs to be focussed on a 'case' through the lens of political ecology. 'A Case' is a phenomenon that you can locate in either one place or a number of places, and for which you can trace global ties.

For example, you might want to research "the political ecology of disaster management", and examine how global networks both set the stage for the disaster in question and are mobilized to address that same disaster. Consider for example the rapid release of a massive amount of chemical pollutants dangerous to human life in Bhopal India: it was in many ways 'a disaster waiting to happen' in the political ecology frame and an event which mobilized response that flowed throughout global networks. The 'entire' event, some argue, transformed how some social groups, both 'in India' and in more remote locations, such as the United States or England, think about global scale capitalism.

Your paper will be evaluated primarily for its thoroughness in making its case: rigorous and careful research (as well as the use of that research in your paper) and the care with which you make your argument in the paper. Your paper will also be evaluated for proper use of citations and research materials.

### Bibliography

This is a comprehensive review bibliography of your topic. The purpose of this exercise is for you to discover which topic has a sufficient literature to support it. Your bibliography should have no fewer than 25 items, though the actual number of references has no real bearing on your grade: ***it is the relevance and thoroughness of your research which will be graded.***

### Essay Proposal

This is the first articulation of your essay topic: what is your case? what is your thesis? which aspects of the case are you going to be considering? how are you using the literature you have chosen? The purpose of this exercise is to get you to think through the case, the argument you want to make, to determine if you have a sufficient literature, and to determine how much and what background information you need to put in your paper (that is, to isolate the features of your case which make it 'global'.)

Your proposal should probably be no fewer than 1250 words, typed, double spaced and fully cited. This project will also take you quite a bit of time to prepare, because you can't write this proposal until you have really thought through the case and issues you have decided to examine.

### Presentations (2)

You will be responsible for two presentations. The first: you will be required to present and lead discussion of one of our course readings (those in the weeks marked below with \* are eligible for presentation). The second is one small section from the Hardt and Negri

volume, presentations which will be extremely brief and chatty, and conducted during the final weeks of the course when we focus on this text.

For each of these presentations you will prepare a summary discussion of the main points in the article or section (not simply a summary of the article, but what you understand its main points to be). For your first presentation, please also prepare one or two questions to ask of the class about the article. Your discussion should take 10-15 minutes and then we will have 20-25 minutes of discussion. (Of course, we will likely take much longer for all of this, but that's how seminars should, in fact, unfold).

### Schedule of Topics and Readings

September 10            **Introduction**

September 17            **What is Globalization? I**

Anna Tsing is one of the most famous political ecologists in the work. Her work is consistent for recovering 'the local subject' as the subject of globalization. That is, like the best feminist post-colonial analysts, Tsing's analysis always proceeds from the level of people living in places, while never losing sight of the broad and seemingly invisible forces that are apparently distant from that same daily life. In the reading by Tsing for this week, despite its apparently 'ungrounded' topic, she goes to some length to carve out an understanding of 'globalization' which accounts for real lives, real difference, and real conflict. For this week, we all need to give this article a very careful read, considering carefully what Tsing is cautioning about the "charisma of globalization".

Following along from these two concerns- the status of the grounded experience of globalization and the charisma(s) of globalization ('what makes it so appealing...even...desirable...), I want each of you to find a passage from Hardt and Negri which helps you better understand these ideas. Then each of you can speak about it in class!

Also, please answer these questions for our discussion: what are some of the qualities of 'globalization'? What defines it to you? Second, are some citizens more 'global' than others in our perceptions of globalization? Do we think that only certain people 'do globalization' while others are constantly 'passed by'? Who is 'global' and who isn't? What is wrong with these questions? What do these questions tell us about dominant versions of globalization?

Hardt and Negri, Preface and Part 1.

\*Tsing, Anna

2000 "The Global Situation". *Cultural Anthropology* 15(3): 327-360.

\*September 24            **What is Globalization? II**

This week we have an up-to-date, well-researched 'political ecology' case which we will use to consider 'what political ecology is'. While reading this article, I want you to each

come up with ‘something’ or ‘somewhere’ that you think could be used as a case for a global-scale political ecology.

HINT! You can easily start with any one of the following: AIDS in [name a country]; environmental disaster in [name a place]; [name a commodity] in [name a country]. That is, you can really look at *almost any case* through the method of political ecology.

Loker, William M.

2003 “Dam Impacts in a Time of Globalization: Using Multiple Methods to Document Social and Environmental Change in Rural Honduras”. *Current Anthropology* 44:112-121.

\*October 1 **Agents and Subjects of Attachment and Desire Under the Conditions of Globalization: Workers, Marketers, Parents and Bodies in The Global Age**

Taken together the readings for this week provide an intentionally quirky entry into the dominant themes of the analysis of ‘globalization’: how do bodies (or parts thereof), capital and ideas move around (both literally and figuratively)? What kinds of subject positions are available to agents under global regimes? (Or, ‘who are persons allowed to be within global orders?’) Each author in these readings identifies some of those subject positions, and how these are both defined by and define ‘globalization’.

For this week, you each need to identify what those subject positions are.....

Applbaum, Kalman

2000 “Crossing Borders: Globalization as Myth and Charter in American Transnational Consumer Marketing”. *American Ethnologist* 27(2):257-282.

Bornstein, Erica

2001 “Child Sponsorship, Evangelism, and Belonging in the work of World Vision Zimbabwe”. *American Ethnologist* 28(3):595-622.

Brodkin, Karen

2000 “Global Capitalism: What’s Race Got to Do With It?”. *American Ethnologist* 27(2):237-256.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy

2000 “The Global Traffic in Human Organs”. *Current Anthropology* 41(2):191-211.  
please note that the comments to this paper not required reading.

\*October 8 **Agriculture 101: 14 000 Years in the Life of the Planet!**

The history of the world: Step 1, invent agriculture. Step 2a, build cargo ships. Step 2b, produce export surplus. Step 3, famine occurs. Step 4, invent ‘economic development’. Step 5, famine ‘occurs’. Step 6, repeat steps 2-5.

This week's readings are our second exploration of the manners of conducting 'political ecology'. The goal of this week is to consider the kinds of worlds that people have inherited in the post-colonial world, while also introducing the dominant mode of production/mode of resource which characterizes the globalized world: industrial agriculture.

Anonymous (not eligible for presentation)

2003 "Cotton: A Great Yarn". *The Economist* 20:43-46.

Davis, Mike

2001 "India: The Modernization of Poverty" in *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World*. London: Verso. pgs. 311-340.

Diamond, Jared (not for presentation)

1987 "The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race". *Discover*.

Dias, Jill

1981 "Famine and Disease in the History of Angola, 1830-1930". *Journal of African History* 22(3):349-378.

**\*October 15 "This is the Agricultural Revolution on Drugs": Export Agriculture Meets Petroleum**

As for last week, this week we are examining the ways in which commodities are produced within *ideologies*, ideologies which in turn submerge or displace other ideologies about the human/capital/environment relationship. (Hint, this tends to lead to conflict...)

For discussion, consider the style of production discussed in this week's readings. How is it in and of itself implicated in social disruption? For those of you not presenting this week as well, check out a website or two about current issues facing banana labour in Central or South America. How are the dynamics discussed in this week's readings predictive of the struggles that are going on over banana production today?

Marquardt, Steve

2002 "Pesticides, Parakeets and Unions in the Costa Rican Banana Industry, 1938-1962". *Latin American Research Review* 37(2):3-36.

Soluri, John

2000 "People, Plants, and Pathogens: The Eco-social Dynamics of Banana Production in Honduras, 1875-1950". *Hispanic American Historical Review* 80(3):465-501.

**\*October 22 "The Transnational Ecology of Corporate ... Farming"**

Why is the problem of ‘who’ owns productive knowledge and productive capacity a problem in a rapidly and unevenly globalizing world? How is the public concern about ‘food safety’ very different from the problem of ‘food security’?

Boyd, William, W. Scott Prudham and Rachel A. Schurman  
2001 “Industrial Dynamics and the Problem of Nature”. *Society and Natural Resources* 14:555-570.

Nigh, Ronald  
1999 “Agriculture in the Information Age: The Transnational Ecology of Corporate Versus Smallholder Farming”. *Urban Anthropology* 28(3-4):253-299.

\*October 29 **Globalization and Resource Extraction Industries (a brief introduction)**

What are the similarities and differences between global agriculture (or agricultural forms which rely on rapid and uneven global-scale connection) and the (continued) globalization of resource extraction industries? Does it matter ‘where’ a farm or a mine is located? Does ‘where’ have other impacts besides just how the mine or the farm operates? Why and how? How does the charismatic version of ‘globalization’ serve resource extraction industries?

Reed, Darryl  
2002 “Resource Extraction Industries in Developing Countries”. *Journal of Business Ethics* 39:199-226.

Watts, Michael  
1999 “Petro-Violence: Some Thoughts on Community, Extraction and Political Economy” and Appendix “Petro-Violence: The Ogoni and the Shock of Modernity”. Berkeley Workshop on Environmental Politics. Available: University of California e-Scholarship Repository  
[/http://repositories.cdlib.org/escholarship/](http://repositories.cdlib.org/escholarship/).

\*November 5 **Globalization and Resource Extraction Industries (a brief introduction part 2)**

Tsing, Anna  
2000 “Inside the Economy of Appearances”. *Public Culture* 12(1):115-144.

\*November 12 Hardt and Negri Discussions

\*November 19 Hardt and Negri Discussions

\*November 29 Hardt and Negri Discussions

Items to Note (quoted directly from the Template for Course Outlines at Huron College):

### **Accommodation for Medical Illness**

For UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and a downloadable SMC see: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf)

[downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading]

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

### **Accommodation for non-Medical Reasons**

Students seeking academic accommodation on non-medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

### **Prerequisite Information**

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites. If you do not have the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from the Dean to enroll in this course, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

### **Statement on Academic Offences**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf) .

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is an academic offence and will be treated as such. Students who are in doubt as to the nature of this offence should consult their instructor, Department Chair or the Dean, as well as the Huron University College Statement on Plagiarism, available at the reference desk in the HUC Library and at

<http://www.huronuc.on.ca/pdf/FASSonPlagiarism.pdf> . In addition, students may seek guidance from a variety of current style manuals available at the Reference Desk in the HUC Library. Information about these resources can be found at:

[http://www.huronuc.ca/library/research\\_guides\\_and\\_handouts](http://www.huronuc.ca/library/research_guides_and_handouts) .

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

### **Technology**

It is not appropriate to use technology (such as, but not limited, to laptops, PDAs, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and is distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

### **Program and Academic Counselling**

Centre for Global Studies students registered at Huron who require advice about modules and courses in the Centre should contact Dr. Mark Franke, [mfranke@huron.uwo.ca](mailto:mfranke@huron.uwo.ca), 519-438-7224 extension 242. Students should contact Debbie Chadwick or Kent Robinson, Academic Counsellor on other academic matters. See the Academic Counselling website for information on services offered.

[http://www.huronuc.on.ca/faculty\\_arts\\_social\\_science/academic\\_services\\_centre/academic\\_counselling\\_contact\\_and\\_services/](http://www.huronuc.on.ca/faculty_arts_social_science/academic_services_centre/academic_counselling_contact_and_services/)