

POLITICAL SCIENCE 646F
POLITICAL ECOLOGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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For years now we've watched the ideology and practices of Global Capitalism engulfing every nation, North and South. Rampant growth and industrialization has generated huge amounts of wealth and benefited many; while growing ecological crises and economic, social, and political injustices have been downplayed. Every indicator of major environmental well-being shows the condition of our biosphere worsening. Fresh water sources are being depleted and polluted around the world, ocean fisheries are collapsing, tropical and virgin forests are being chopped down, toxic waste products are infiltrating our food and water, biospecies are dying, global climate change is rapidly occurring and goes on the familiar depressing litany.

Drivers for Major Change Unleashed. Nevertheless, as a long list of books such as Richard Heinberg's *The Party's Over: Oil, War and the Fate of Industrial Societies*, and James Howard Kunstler's *The Long Emergency: Surviving the End of Oil, Climate Change, and Other Converging Catastrophes of the 21st Century* detail, our Society's present institutions and value-structures are about to be forced to **adapt** to unprecedented climatic crises and declining oil production, driving the price of oil to unprecedented levels.

At present, most governments [the U.S. esp] have advanced only Band-Aid reforms to address these problems. Mainstream Environmentalism has offered solutions that are too little, too late. The Left, while offering strong critiques of social and economic injustices, has lost effective power. Altho "sustainable development" has become a popular mantra among policy-makers, in practice it often is little more than a political smokescreen and "greenwashing" gimmick, rather than advancing genuine structural changes capable of reducing the impacts of environmental destruction, present and acoming. At best, policymakers adopt Sustainable Development Theory- "*Lite*" rules, which minimally require that economic activities be more ecologically "balanced."

New Voices. However, a new generation of thinkers is advancing coherent pro-environment, fair-economic, social justice alternatives to the Neo-Liberal philosophy presently guiding most public policymaking at local, national, and international levels. Their more radical perspective encompasses much more than Mainstream Environmentalism's "protection and preservations" ideals. Radical Sustainability goes way beyond just "balancing" economics and the environment, and assigns primacy to ecological systems and social justice. Political ecologists argue that "good development" must also meet multiple human needs (not just jobs and GNP economic growth), preserve indigenous values, and advance self-reliance and structural transformation. "Green" theorists add political dimensions to the solution-list, and encourage participatory democracy and decentralized decision-making, a community-based self-reliant economy, social justice, people-friendly community design, redesigned production systems, and a deeper (spiritual) understanding of natural biosystems, as

necessary ingredients to fix our crashing environment and reduce Greenhouse gas emissions sufficiently to prevent massive catastrophes.

New Actors. These expanded principles of sustainable development are now being fleshed out with specific policies to guide national and local decision-makers. Various actors, including government agencies, NGOs, and grassroots activists, are aggressively pushing these ideas around the world. Paul Hawken's new book, *"Blessed Unrest"* describes a global movement of more than a million groups advocating for fundamental political, social, economic and environmental changes to remedy the intertwined crises of social injustice and ecological collapse. Collaborative partnerships between NGOs, businesses, activist citizen participants, and governments are forming in many communities, cities, states, and even some nations, to building new institutions and programs to respond to ending dependency on fossil fuels and mitigating the impacts of Global Warming.

The course thus focuses on addressing **THE** World's fundamental Problematique -- responding in time and effectively to the rapid convergence of Peak Oil, Abrupt Global Climate Change, and Financial System Breakdowns. We need to understand "Why is this situation occurring?" before tacking the crucial political, social, economic, technological, environmental, psychological and cultural changes that must come about.

In terms of solutions, PS 646f explores the concept of "sustainable development" in many settings, large and small, from local communities to national Green Plans. The course emphasizes a mixture of theory and practice, as applied to "green philosophy," "managing" sustainable development," urban redesign, and new styles of policy making and politics called "civic environmentalism," "industrial ecology," and "natural capitalism." I am especially interested in issues involving agency and political activism — "Who will bring about these remarkable changes?" and "What should be their strategies?"

Participants will write brief weekly papers responding analytically to assigned readings, and a final Overview Essay that examines a specific topic in light of major concepts explored in this course. We will also meet with local policymakers and activists.

MAJOR TEXTS. Chertow & Esty, *THINKING ECOLOGICALLY: THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES*; Brian Tokar, *EARTH FOR SALE: RECLAIMING ECOLOGY IN AGE OF CORPORATE GREENWASH*; Andrew Dobson, *GREEN POLITICAL THOUGHT* (3rd ed); Ira Rohter, *A GREEN HAWAII: SOURCEBOOK FOR DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES*; Paul Hawkin, *THE ECOLOGY OF COMMERCE*.

Xeroxes, including excerpts from: Paul Ekins, *THE LIVING ECONOMY: A NEW ECONOMICS IN THE MAKING* Norman Vig and Michael Kraft, *ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY: NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY*. Ted Bernard and Jora Young, *THE ECOLOGY OF HOPE: COMMUNITIES COLLABORATE FOR SUSTAINABILITY*; Bryant & Bailey, *Third World Political Ecology*; etc.

Class Readings Calendar

Week 1. Major course themes.

Survey of participants' interests – US / Third World / developing nations? Theory, activism, administration, NGOs, global systems. Extent of environment backgrounds? Overview of course's approach.

Week 2. New Drivers and Solutions

"The Six Degree world: hellish vision of life on a hotter planet" by Mark Lynas

"The Long Emergency," James Howard Kunstler

"Climate change escalates Darfur crisis"

"Maintaining Presence: Environmental Advocacy and the Permanent Campaign," in *Environmental Policies: New Directions for 21st Century* (2006 edition)

Chertow & Esty, **Thinking Ecologically**. Ch. Introduction & ch 1. "Industrial Ecology; Overcoming Policy fragmentation."

Paul Hawken, "A Global Democratic Movement Is About to Pop," **Orion Magazine** May 2007

Week 3. Globalism and Political Ecology.

"Coke's Expansion into India." **Business Week**.

"Structure of Globalism" Ch.1 from Amory Starr, *Naming the Enemy: Anti-Corporate Movements Confront Globalism*

Principles of Political Ecology [Adrian Atkinson, pp.1-8]

Third World Political Ecology. Bryant & Bailey, Introduction. (Radical perspective, putting politics first, the Third world context)

Bryant & Bailey, *Third World Political Ecology*. Ch. 1 An Emerging Research Field; Ch. 2. A Politicized Environment; ~~Ch. 3. The State.~~

Week 4. COMPETING WORLD VIEWS

"How Many Planets? A Survey of the Global Environment," **The Economist**.

Paul Ekins, *The Living Economy: A New Economics In The Making*. [Intro selections: Critiques of conventional economic theorizing. "Human scale economics," true indicators of human progress, early efforts to articulate alternative theorizing to Neo-Liberalism]

Brian Tokar, *Earth for Sale: Reclaiming Ecology in the age of corporate Greenwash*. Introduction -- "Environmental Politics At the Crossroads" and Ch 1, "Questioning Official Environmentalism"

"An Economy for the Earth," Lester R. Brown

"Harnessing Corporate Power to Heal the Planet," L. Hunter Lovins and Amory Lovins

Week 5. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS: OCEANS, FORESTS, FOOD

"Charting a New Course for Oceans" by McGinn

"Reorienting the Forest Products Economy," by Abrartovitz & Mattoon," & "Logging Illogic"

"Where Have All the Farmers Gone?" Brian Halweil

"Escaping Hunger," Gardner & Halweil

"A Gold Rush To Organic Foods." Brian Halweil, **WorldWatch Magazine**, June 2001

Week 6. POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY ISSUES.

Andrew Dobson, **Green Political Thought**. Chs 1,2,3 on "Ecologism" & sustainability. *Expanding the discourse from "environmentalism" to a new ideology recasting economics and politics.*

Week 7. POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY II.

Dobson, **Green Political Thought**, Chs 4 "Strategies for green change" & 5 "Ecologism, socialism and feminism"

Week 8. REDEFINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BUSINESS AND

ENVIRONMENT? *If corporations rule the world, is change impossible? Or can a new discourse be crafted?*

Paul Hawkin, **The Ecology Of Commerce**. Introduction, Chs. 1-5; 9-11.

Week 9. ENLIGHTENED CORPORATIONS? II

Hawkin, "Natural Capitalism" article; "Eco-farming in Fiji" ; "Water Hyacinth"

"Harnessing the Market for the Environment" & "Reforming Subsidies" chart, Roodman.

"Valuing Nature's Services," Janet Abramovitz, **STATE OF THE WORLD: 1997**

Bryant & Bailey, **Third World Political Ecology**. Ch. 5. Business. (A global capitalist system, Transnational corporations, Third World (local) business)

"The Race Against Climate Change: How top companies are reducing emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases." Adam Aston and Burt Helm, **Business Week**, 12/12/05.

Week 10. New Political Forms. [I] Third Generation Policy Making.

Chertow & Esty, **Thinking Ecologically: The Next Generation of Environmental Policies**, Chapters 2. Ecosystem management and economic development 3. Property rights and responsibilities; 4. Land use; the forgotten agenda; 5. Sorting out a service based economy; 6. Globalization, trade, and interdependence; 7. Market-based environmental policies; 8. Privately financed sustainable development; 9. Technological innovation and environmental progress 10. risk and science; 11. Tort ecological law and policy; 12. Coexisting with the car; 13. Environmental protection from farm to market; 14. Energy prices and environmental costs; 15. A vision for the future.

Week 11. A FUTURISTIC MODEL OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Ira Rohter, **A Green Hawai`i: Sourcebook for Development Alternatives**. Chs 1-5,8.

Week 12. Rohter, *A Green Hawaii*, Chs 6,7,9, 10. *The transition from "good ideas" to implementation and real-life political change. Integrating ecological design, economic strategies, and community involvement ;*

"Curitiba City, Brazil" "Agraria"

Week 13 Environmental Activism – Band-Aids or is Genuine change possible?

Brian Tokar, *Earth for Sale: Reclaiming Ecology in Age of Corporate Greenwash*. Chs 2-4

Week 14 Activism [II]

Tokar's *Earth for Sale* 5. Ecology and Revolution; 6. Environmental justice; 7. The New Forest Activism; 8. Ecological Movements in the Third World; 9. Unifying Movements: Theory and Practice; 10. Ecology, Community, and Democracy.

[optional] "Environmental justice" Ringquist, in *Environmental Policies: New Directions for 21st Century* (2006 edition)

Bryant & Bailey, *Third World Political Ecology*. Ch 6. Environmental nongovernmental organizations. (Environmental NGOs and civil society); Ch 7. Grass-roots actors.

Week 15.

"From Protest to Program" by Michael Massing, & "The Global Alternative" by Jeff Faux **THE AMERICAN PROSPECT**

"Kerala, India"

"Women never surrendered: Mau Mau and globalization from below in Kenya 1980-2000," *There Is An Alternative: Subsistence And Worldwide Resistance To Corporate Globalism*, Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen, et al (eds)

Week 16. NEW FORM OF POLITICS [II] : COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING

The Netherlands National Environmental Plan," from Huey Johnson, *Green Plans: Greenprint For Sustainability*.

"Chattanooga (TN), and "What We Have in Common is the Salmon" Ted Bernard and Jora Young, *The Ecology of Hope: Communities Collaborate for Sustainability*.

Examples from *Community Forests, Forest Communities and "Civic Environmentalism"*

The Land That Could Be: Environmentalism and Democracy in 21st Century (2000), William Shutkin, excerpts from Intro, chs 1 & 2 on Civic Environmentalism.

Dec 10 Class pot luck & discussion of Final papers