

Dr. Rachel Slocum

Global Environmental Change

Geo 315

MWF 10:40-11:35 Room: Maxwell 111

Office: Maxwell 316C (elevator near Maxwell Aud. to 3rd floor, turn right)

Office Hours: by appt. Ext. 5591

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The purpose of this course is to introduce some of the topics that fall under the heading ‘global environmental change’. **The class will focus on social nature rather than looking at the physical aspects of environmental change.** We begin this exploration of social nature with readings and lectures on its theoretical background in Marxist, post-structuralist and feminist theory.

Social nature claims that nothing is ‘natural’. It does not argue that mountains are not real. Social nature claims that a mountain is both its physical attributes and discourses about mountains. These discourses included, for instance, the idea that mountains are part of pristine wilderness, that they are there to be mined and logged, that they are best enjoyed aesthetically, that they are for animals, not people and so on. Social nature also argues that science is not value-free and the science used as the basis for policy concerning mountain spaces should be understood as the consequence of human choices over which questions to ask and what to measure.

The class challenges the notion that there is a ‘natural’ state whether we are discussing natural in the sense of a subject position (e.g. woman, man), how we decide what’s an ‘appropriate’ sexual orientation, our understanding of wilderness, our view of transgenic organisms or our ideas about their physical world. Our understandings of nature and society are reflected in discursive constructions of race, sexuality, gender and class that have material consequences. These understandings and the science used to support them inhabit the spaces of zoos, stem cell research and pig farms as well as people’s daily lives. Thus social nature proposes that the making of nature and society, through science, capital and culture, is irrevocably political.

The section of the class covering environmental orthodoxies presents challenges to hegemonic views about environmental destruction and preservation. The research we will cover suggests alternatives to the facile, though popular belief that population growth=environmental degradation and that people in Africa, Asia and Latin America are the culprits in species loss and ecological catastrophe. The class, however, supports the view held by many social and physical scientists that significant environmental degradation is occurring, that space must be made for nonhuman life and that changes are necessary—the questions remain: what frameworks are most useful to understanding environmental degradation, what are the causes, what changes are better and who benefits from them?

Focusing on the US, the class will then look at the notion that some *people* are in need of environmental protection. The relationship of larger processes, namely capital accumulation and racism, results in working class and/or people of color, living and working in places where hazardous industries and their byproducts are located. While some grassroots groups and families fight for the lives of their children, livable towns and a good job, other communities fight to keep the environmental ‘bads’ out and the amenities in. Is this just? We will also consider the backlash against an environmentalism that advocates protection in the name of animals and aesthetically pleasing spaces where people can drive their SUVs rather than people who use the land for a living. Who supports this backlash and what are the positions that make no sense and some sense? How does one story about loggers and timber capital become another story about owls taking precedence over people? The manner in which an issue is proposed (owls vs. jobs) precludes other understandings of that question. What are the finer points of debates that get engulfed by stories presenting black and white images of good and bad?

The class will consider the relationship between the industrialization of food and what that means for people and animals. Who benefits from these technologies, genetic sciences and industrial practices? Who benefits from political processes that rely on particular parts of arguments—cost-benefit, profit and scientific fact—rather than ethics and critical interpretations of the intersection of culture, economy and science? The class will consider our reliance on the expertise of science as well as the failure to adequately learn from, consult with and inform the populace on matters of life and death—like eating BSE infected beef and drinking the water in some places.

We will consider new technologies that engineer life itself. We will look at transgenic fish, crops and tomatoes and the arguments used to promote or oppose them. We will read about movements organized to confront the relationship of capital accumulation, transgenics and the homogenization of food. Part of this section covers the implications of genetic technologies for people like therapeutic cloning and designer babies. The class also asks, how does our lifestyle aid in the creation of disposable women on the Mexican border, for instance, as well as disposable environments? How are we, as residents of the nation that uses the majority of the world's resources, implicated in the lives of others, human and nonhuman?

The course emphasizes, throughout, the importance of looking at local specificity in an analysis of what are understood as global forces. There is potential in local action, knowledge and re-interpretation of these forces. It also underscores the fact that these questions concerning social natures are open. I will not provide you with final answers—those are yours to determine if you choose.

Reader: Available at the Electronic Publishing Center 001 Sims Hall, 130 College Place (443-5500)

Reading: The reading associated with each lecture/topic should be done before the class for which it is due. Try to do all of it. If you cannot, make sure you know what the author **introduces** and what she/he **concludes**. Take notes on the readings as well as the lectures—there will be questions from both on the exams. The reading is difficult in the first few weeks because it is largely theoretical; I will go over it. We will read easier works later in the semester. I do not expect you to understand all of the concepts in the reading and I will be specific on what is necessary for the exam. These works are meant to be read for the *ideas* that make you think and for their case studies (if applicable). Read everything critically—determine what you agree with and disagree with, read for the interesting points, analyze for what is potentially useful and what is possibly nonsense.

Note taking: Anything in the lectures and the readings might be on the exams and will be part of discussion. Unless you have a photographic memory or prefer to write notes after class, please take notes on both the lectures and the readings. Be sure you are clear on the example(s) each reading provides, the big picture of the article, its possible connections to other readings and the ideas I highlight as important.

DO NOT simply copy the powerpoint slide. It is ONLY an outline. You will need to fill in the spaces between the outline points.

Exam questions will be given ahead of time. You must, in order to get a good grade, prepare a detailed outline of your answer incorporating lecture and reading notes. I will expect you to synthesize both. Preparation is essential. Do not attempt to answer based on memory alone. Organize your thoughts well ahead of the exam. Because I provide the question ahead of time, I expect well thought out answers.

Web page: Powerpoints for each lecture, evaluation questions and the syllabus are posted at:

<http://classes.maxwell.syr.edu/geo315-01/>

Grading:

No extra credit

Participation (attendance, oral or written indication that you have done the reading): 20%

Midterm: 25%

Final: 25%

Paper: 30%

Participation: If you prefer the written medium to the oral, I will accept several paragraphs of thoughts and questions on the reading in lieu of an oral contribution in class. These paragraphs should be sent to me via email prior to the class. Being able to demonstrate in oral or written form that you have done the reading *and thought about it* is essential. It is not necessary to understand all concepts nor remember every detail; I do not expect this in oral or written form. However, the big picture and the interesting ideas in the article should be noted.

Attendance: You are expected to attend class. I will take note of any unexplained absence.

Documentation is required for medical absence. Absence from more than three classes is grounds for a grade adjustment.

Communication: I expect students to check their email regularly as I may send changes to the syllabus or questions to consider via email. In addition, I expect students who are having difficulty with the material or experiencing uncertainty about continuing with the class to contact me in person or by email. If you disappear and do not respond to email queries and then show up later, your grade will reflect that absence.

Paper format: Double-spaced, page numbers, 1 inch margins, 12 point font, use spell check, include bibliography. Bibliography must be alphabetical and use the following format:

Last name, First name. Date. *Title of book*. Place:publisher

Last name, first name. Date. Title of article. *Journal title*. volume(issue):pages

If you access the New York Times online, put all of the above details (title, author etc.), and then the web page.

Citations in text: (Author's last name date) or for a quote (Author's last name date:page). See below

Quotes. If longer than one line, you must indent one tab stop on each side of the quote and single space the quote itself. Cite at the end. For example see below. Do not rely heavily on quotes—they are obviously a way to extend a paper and they often indicate you don't know what they mean. You must make reference to the quote in your argument either before or after it.

To be feminized means to be made extremely vulnerable; able to be disassembled, reassembled, exploited as a reserve labor force; seen less as workers than as servers; subjected to time arrangements on and off the paid job that make a mockery of a limited work day; leading an existence that always borders on being obscene, out of place and reducible to sex (Haraway 1991:166)

If you do not follow these requirements, you will drop a grade.

I do not accept late work.

Paper topic: Paper topics must be approved. They should cover an aspect of nature-society relations that the class has not dealt with or cover a subject in more depth than the class does. They must make an argument as opposed to providing a description. They must make use of theoretical frameworks introduced in the class. Papers should be about 10-15 pages in length. You must use the class readings that relate to your topic. You may use one web source; other sources should be from books, refereed journal articles and newspaper articles. The number of references you use aside from class readings should be about 10 sources. Papers must present an argument, provide a evidence for that argument in a structured manner and summarize/conclude that argument. Papers will be marked lower for poor writing.

Topic due: 10/28

Argument and outline due: 11/4

Sources you will use due: 11/11

Papers due by 11/25.

Please refer to: http://www-hl.syr.edu/advising/AS_Resource_Guide/Default.htm for guidance on academic honesty.

The following outline may be changed.

8/26 Introduction, class details

Notions of nature and people August 28-September 13

8/28 Introduction to social nature: what is natural?

First two pages of reader

Castree, Noel. 2001. Socializing nature: theory, practice, politics in Noel Castree and Bruce Braun (eds.). *Social nature*. Oxford: Blackwell. 1-21.

8/30 Nature and race: colonialism

Comaroff, Jean and John Comaroff. 1991. *Of Revelation and Revolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 3 Africa observed: discourses of the imperial imagination. 86-125.

Haraway, Donna. 1989. *Primate visions*. New York: Routledge. Chapter 3
Teddy bear patriarchy in the garden of Eden. 26-58

Monday 9/2 Labor Day No Class

9/4 finish colonialism

9/6 Nature and race: from eugenics to SimEve

Haraway, Donna. 1997. *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan©_Meets_Oncomouse™*. New York: Routledge. Chapter 6 Race: universal donors in a vampire culture. 213-266.

9/9 Nature and race: from eugenics to SimEve cont.

9/11 Animals R Us

Berger, J. 1980. *About looking*. New York: Pantheon Books. Why Look at Animals? 1-26.

Davies, Gail. 2000. Virtual animals in electronic zoos: the changing geographies of animal capture and display in *Animal spaces, beastly places: new geographies of human-animal relations*. Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert (eds.). London: Routledge. 243-267.

Mihm, Stephen. 2001. Cloning endangered species. *The New York Times* December 9, 2001 1-2

9/13 Finish Animals

9/16 Yom Kippur no class

Environmental orthodoxies and their consequences—September 18–October 16

Wed. 9/18 Population growth as causal

Harvey, David. 1974. Population, resources and the ideology of science. *Economic Geography* 50(3):256-277.

9/20 The tragedy of the commons

Hardin, G. 1968. The tragedy of the commons. *Science* 162:1243-1248.

Young, Emily. State intervention and abuse of the commons. *Association of American Geographers* 91(2):283-306.

9/23 finish tragedy

9/25 Wilderness

Neumann, Roderick P. 1998. Imposing wilderness: struggles over livelihood and nature preservation in Africa. Berkeley: University of California Press. Chapter 1 Landscapes of nature, terrains of resistance. 15-50.

Cronon, William. 1996. The trouble with wilderness; or getting back to the wrong nature. in *Uncommon Ground*. William Cronon (ed.). New York: W.W. Norton. 69-90.

9/27 finish wilderness

9/30 Conservation and development

Schroeder, Richard A. 1997. “Re-claiming” land in the The Gambia: gendered property rights and environmental intervention. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 87(3):487-508.

10/2 Finish conservation and development

Begin Conservation and Edenic narratives—the Amazon

Kane, Joe. 1993 September 27. With spears from all sides: letter from the Amazon. *The New Yorker*, 69(31):54-80

10/4 Video: Cashing in on Culture (Quechua people and tourism in Ecuador)

Be able to answer questions on handout

10/7 Finish conservation and the Amazon, start deforestation, Sahel

10/9 Desertification and deforestation in the Sahel

Fairhead, James and Melissa Leach. 1996. Rethinking the forest-savanna mosaic in Melissa Leach and Robin Mearns (eds.). *The lie of the land*. London: The International African Institute.105-121.

10/11 Fall Break

10/14 Biodiversity

Guyer, Jane and Paul Richards. 1996. The invention of biodiversity: social perspectives on the management of biological variety in Africa. *Africa* 66(1): 1-13.

10/16 Finish biodiversity, end of section on political ecology and environmental orthodoxies Review for exam

10/18 Exam

Health, justice, jobs and the environment—October 21-

10/21 Environmental justice

Di Chiro, Giovanna. 1995. Nature as community: the convergence of environment and social justice in *Uncommon ground*. William Cronon (ed.) New York, W.W. Norton: 298-320.

Churchill, Ward. 2002. Struggle for the land: native North American resistance to genocide, ecocide and colonization. San Francisco, City Lights. Pages 239-366

10/23 Video Power: The James Bay Cree and Hydro Québec

10/25 Discussion of Power

10/28 Owls, trees and property

PAPER TOPIC DUE

Proctor, James D. 1996. Whose nature? the contested moral terrain of ancient forests in *Uncommon Ground*. William Cronon (ed.). New York: W.W. Norton. 269-297.

Northern spotted owls losing genetic distinctiveness. June 11, 2001 Environmental News Network

Barnard, Jeff. Nd. Oregon promises better protection for spotted owls. The Olympian

Olympia, Washington. <http://news.theolympian.com/outdoors/wildlife/116341.shtml>

Schaleger, Ron. Nd. Sweet Home hard hit by federal, state logging restrictions www.sweet-home.or.us/forest/owl/index.html

Wallace, Richard L. Why endangered species protection vs. economic development doesn't have to be a win-lose scenario

Foden-Vencil, Kristian. May 9, 2001. Tillamook timber sales www.opb.org/nwnews/trans01/tilltimber.asp

10/30 Finish owls start Environmentalism and wise-use

McCarthy, James. 1998. Environmentalism, wise use and the nature of accumulation in the rural West in *Remaking Reality*. Noel Castree and Bruce Braun (eds.) London: Routledge. 126-149.

11/1 Finish Environmentalism and wise-use

Changing life itself—science and society

11/4 We are cyborg

ARGUMENT AND OUTLINE DUE

Begin reading

Haraway, Donna. 1997. *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan@_Meets_Oncomouse™*. New York: Routledge. Chapter 2 Femaleman@_Meets_

Oncomouse™: mice into wormholes: a technoscience fugue in two parts. 49-130.

11/6 Leaving the garden of genetic innocence: transgenics

Finish reading

Haraway, Donna. 1997. *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium.FemaleMan©_Meets_Oncomouse™*. New York: Routledge. Chapter 2 Femaleman©_Meets_Oncomouse™: mice into wormholes: a technoscience fugue in two parts. 49-130.

11/8 Finish Haraway, start therapeutic cloning and eugenics

Rose, Hillary. 1998. Moving on from both state and consumer eugenics? in *Remaking Reality*. Noel Castree and Bruce Braun (Eds.) London, Routledge. 84-99.

11/11 Living ‘globalization’ and commodification

PAPER SOURCES DUE

11/13 The darker side of ‘Got Milk’—RbGH

(these are short)

Use of rbST doesn't increase growth factor in milk. *FDA Consumer* 28 June 1994:2

Becky, Gillette. 1998. Doin' a body good? *The Environmental Magazine* 9(5):42-3

Glenn, Hess. 1999. Canada rejects bovine growth hormone; Monsanto vows to appeal the decision. *Chemical Market Reporter* 255(4):1-2.

Bellow, Daniel. 1999. Vermont, the pure-food state: how farmers and citizens fought the use of Monsanto's hormone for cows. *The Nation* 268(9):18-21.

Hiss, Tony. 1994. How now, drugged cow? *Harper's* 289(October):80-87.

Kennedy, Dan. 1994. Udder angst. *Garbage* 6(Summer):40-44.

11/15 RbGH cont.

11/18

Watts, Michael. 2000. Afterword: enclosure. *Animal spaces, beastly places*. Chris Philo and Chris Wilbert (Eds.) London, Routledge: 292-304.

11/20 GM food

PBS video

Union of Concerned Scientists. 2001. Genetically engineered salmon. www.ucsusa.org/agriculture/upd-gefish.html. 1-4.

Dorry, Niaz. 2001. Blue revolution spawns frankenfish. *Fishermen's Voice* October:1-5.

Friends of the earth. 2001. Frankenfish: GE salmon. www.foe.org/foenw/ge/gesalmon.html. 1-4.

11/22 Discussion of video and readings

11/25 Global justice v. neoliberalism

PAPERS DUE

Video: Landless Workers Movement in Brazil,

Video Bill Moyers on water privatization in Bolivia

Thanksgiving break 11/27-Dec. 1

12/2 Finish global justice

12/4 Review