Seminar in Resource Geography  
Fall 2008  

Professor Emel  
JAC 207  
jemel@clarku.edu  Class hours W 9-11:50

Course goals:

The purpose of this seminar is to provide geography graduate students a roadmap through the important literature and research on natural resource development, allocation, management and geopolitics. We focus on resource development for the global “market” and for relatively large-scale use systems (not subsistence systems). The production of and competition for the control of key natural resources, by corporations, societies, and states, are critical processes in constructing the global economy. These processes materially transform the conditions of societies, as well as, contribute to the shaping of those societies, politically and economically.

This semester, we will focus on minerals, water, and animals with attention to other resources as time permits. We will concern ourselves with major themes and debates including: natural resources and development, rent distribution and social justice, environmental effects of resource development, local community impacts from resource development, allocation models and conflicts, resource development and violent conflict, resources and the city, the role of the state, and long-term possibilities for the global economy and natural resources. We will use specific cases to examine more deeply the normative bases and operative structures of capitalism, neo-colonialism, and resource development as “development”. We will also consider how economics, geography, sociology, and anthropology differ as to the research and perspectives they bring to studying resource issues.

Course Requirements:

Attendance is required. All students will do the reading and participate in the discussion. One- to two-page response papers will be written and posted on blackboard by 6 p.m., the day before class. We will use these as the basis for discussion in class. Specific topics may be listed for discussion on cicada at times as well. All of this will be made clear as we go along. Your grade will be based on your class participation and your response papers. Written work and class participation will each represent 70% of your grade. To receive an A you should be reading, prepared, vocal and timely.

Readings will be assigned on a weekly basis. There are no required texts. All readings will be scanned and available on cicada. Assistance with scanning may be requested, depending upon departmental personnel availability.
In addition to the readings and short papers, each student will be responsible for selecting an actual case study to report on in class. These cases will provide real world fodder for our thematic and theoretical wanderings, in order to bring empirical justice to our considerations. These cases must be identified and briefly described by the second week of class. Each class period, you will provide an update on your case. A final report will be written by the end of the semester. The case study will be 30% of your grade.

**Topics:**

**Sept. 3**  
**Overview of Resource Geography**

**Sept. 10**  
**Summary Introductory Readings**

**Sept. 17.**  
**Roots of Resource Geography: Human Ecology and Pragmatism**

**Sept. 24**  
**Critiques of and Alternatives to the “Behavioral” Approach: Political Economy, Economic Geography and the Matter of Nature**


Bridge, G. 2008. The Economy of Nature: from political ecology to the social construction of nature. Unpublished manuscript (will be published in the *Sage Compendium of Economic Geography*).

Oct. 1

**Roots of Resource Geography: Industrial Geography, Regulation Theory**


Oct. 8

**Roots and Branches of Resource Geography: Cultural Geography, Feminism, and Science Studies**


Oct. 15 **Roots of Resource Geography: Development Theory**


Oct. 22 **Resources and Development: The Resource Curse**


Oct. 29 **Problem of Rent**


**Marx, K.** Vol III (Ch 45-47).


Nov. 5 **Property: Common, Private and Sovereign**

**Mommer, B.**


Nov. 12  
**Role of the State: State Theory, Geopolitics**


Nov. 19  
**Ecological Modernization**


**Emel, J.** 2002 The green disciplining of capital *Environment and Planning A*


Dec. 3  
**Urban Sustainability, Urban Ecology, Consumer Links**


Dec. 10  Class Presentations