Capstone Seminar in Environmental Studies

This seminar will examine several important developments in our shared environment: tropical deforestation, threats to freshwater ecosystems, urban and suburban sprawl, and the impacts of misallocating and misusing common resources. In studying these developments, we will seek to elucidate their causes, consequences, and implications, and examine how and why these seemingly different phenomena are related. And, by examining these topics in some depth, we will also be able to draw some deeper conclusions about the relationships between rich and poor, cities and the countryside, and more generally, between humans and nature itself. Finally, our investigation should allow us to determine how -- or whether -- such environmental crises might be resolved in the future. Our analysis will be deliberately eclectic in character, drawing on selected readings from a variety of disciplines. The seminar will conclude with the presentation of student team reports suggesting strategies for protecting threatened landscapes, communities, and populations in the years to come.

Formal Requirements and Grading: Since this is a seminar, regular and active participation in class is essential. Grading: Class participation will make up 15 percent of your final grade in this course. The rest of your grade will be based the following: 1, two short (5-7 double spaced pages) discussion papers on the weekly discussion topics (20 percent together); 2, regular (1-2 page) written responses to those papers (15 percent); and 3, a team report on a relevant topic of interest to you and your teammate(s). That report, together with the presentation of its findings, will count for 50 percent of your final grade. Reading: Note that there is a lot of reading for this course. Budget your time accordingly, particularly during those weeks with uncommonly heavy reading loads or those where a sizeable proportion of the readings are on reserve (NB: readings may occasionally change, but such changes will be announced well in advance). Please bring the readings to class, as we will refer to them during discussions.

Team Report: As noted above, the team report and associated work will count for 50 percent of your grade. Requirements for the report are as follows: 1, a proposal that briefly discusses the report’s topic, major themes, and methods; 2, an annotated bibliography indicating and describing the sources to be consulted; 3, a brief presentation to the class concerning the major findings of the report; and 4, the report itself – a major policy-oriented paper of 30-45 pages in length (depending on whether there are 2 or 3 persons in your group). Although I will offer suggestions regarding possible report topics, you are free to explore other topics on your own. However, all paper topics must be approved by me before you can proceed to research and write your report. Proposals and bibliographies will be due in my office by 5 p.m. on Friday, October 15. Final copies of the reports will be due in my office by midnight on Saturday, December 18.

Academic Honesty: Should you be unfamiliar with the College's policies on academic honesty, please take the time to review them. They can be found in the 2004-2005 Course of Study on pp. 26-29. Plagiarism is a very serious offense which can result in failing the course or worse. If you are in doubt about the rules of proper citation and attribution, please don't hesitate to ask. I strongly encourage you to discuss the readings and the issues they raise with your classmates, but all written work must be entirely your own (or your teammates’).

Disabilities: If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may affect your ability to carry out assigned course work, I urge you to contact the Office of Disability Services at PBX5453. The Coordinator of Disability Services, Erin Salva (salvae@kenyon.edu) will review your concerns and determine, with you, what accommodations are appropriate. All information will of course be kept entirely confidential.
Office Hours: My office is located at Acland 21 (PBX: 5638), and I am always happy to discuss readings, papers, and issues we have raised in class. My office hours this term are Tuesdays 9:15-11:15, Wednesdays 9:15-10:15, and Thursdays 9:15-11:15, or by appointment. Please don’t hesitate to stop by.

Books to Purchase:
F. Kaid Benfield et. al., *Once There Were Greenfields: How Urban Sprawl is Undermining America*
Kai N. Lee, *Compass and Gyroscope: Integrating Science and Politics for the Environment*
Marc Reisner, *Cadillac Desert: the American West and Its Disappearing Water*
William A. Shutkin, *The Land That Could Be: Environmentalism and Democracy in the Twenty-First Century*
Roger Stone and Claudia D’Andrea, *Tropical Forests and the Human Spirit: Journeys to the Brink of Hope*
World Resources Institute, *World Resources 2000-2001: People and Ecosystems – the Fraying Web of Life*

Course Outline

8-30 Introduction and Overview
Introduction to the Course. No readings assigned.
View and discuss film: “Bill Moyers Reports: Earth on Edge”

9-06 Thinking About Ecosystems: People, Resources, Power [100]
Additional reading to be assigned
No Papers or Presentations this Week

9-13 Tropical Rainforests: Sources of Degradation and Destruction [150]
Film: “Halting the Fires”
Catherine Caufield, *In the Rainforest*, Chapters 8-11 (reserve)
Paper Presenters:

9-20 Tropical Rainforests: Sources and Implications of Conflict [150]
Marcus Colchester and Larry Lohmann, *Struggle for Land and Fate of the Forests*, pp. 1-34 (reserve)
Susanna Hecht and Alexander Cockburn, *The Fate of the Forest*, pp. 141-179, 203-239 (reserve)
Paper Presenters:

9-27 Tropical Rainforests: Toward Sustainability [175]
Additional reading to be assigned
Paper Presenters:
**10-04** Water: A History of Misallocation and Misuse [160]
- Film: “Cadillac Desert: An American Nile”
  - Marc Reisner, *Cadillac Desert*, pp. 1-14, 41-51, 120-168
  - Kai N. Lee, *Compass and Gyroscope*, pp. vii-ix, 3-86

**Paper Presenters:**

**10-11** Fall Reading Days: Read Ahead for Class and Work on Team Report Proposals

**10-15** Team Report Proposals and Annotated Bibliographies Due in My Office at 5 p.m.

**10-18** Water Politics: Management, Negotiation, Conflict [250]
- Reisner, *Cadillac Desert*, pp. 214-305, 435-518
- Lee, *Compass and Gyroscope*, pp. 87-135

**Paper Presenters:**

**10-25** Water: Toward Conservation, Civic Participation, and Equity [150]
- Lee, *Compass and Gyroscope*, pp. 136-201

**Paper Presenters:**

**11-01** The Rise and Fall of Cities [165]
- George Moffet, *Critical Masses*, pp. 25-60 (reserve)

**Paper Presenters:**

**11-08** Cities, Sprawl, and Civil Society [160]

**Paper Presenters:**

**11-15** Civic Environmentalism and Empowerment [150]
- Shutkin, *The Land That Could Be*, Chapters 3-4
11-22  Thanksgiving Break: Work on Team Reports

11-29  Environmental Governance: Prospects and Challenges [150]
Shutkin, The Land That Could Be, Chapters 5-8
WRI, World Resources 2002-2004, pp. 137-172, 208-228
Paper Presenters:

12-06  Team Reports

12-13  Team Reports and Course Conclusion

12-18  Team Reports Due in My Office by Midnight