

POLITICAL ECOLOGY
Coordinated Studies Program, Fall 1986 - Winter 1987

"Political Ecology" is about the relationships between humans and the Earth's environments. The program deals with scientific, cultural, and philosophical views of nature, and how decisions are made about the environment and natural resources.

Faculty: Carolyn Dobbs, David Milne (Coordinator), Peter Taylor

Fall Quarter - 1986

The first quarter's studies featured an introduction to environmental studies, principles of ecology, environmental values of children in U.S. society, and the development of writing and speaking skills. A major focus was the examination of the local Northwest forest and salmon resources through lectures and reading, to illustrate the integration of ecological and social concepts having global application. The Native Americans' involvement with the resources, and the cross-cultural impacts of contact with European-based industrial society, were also studied in the Northwest context.

Theme Lectures: NW forest ecology (P. Taylor), NW timber industry & forest practices (B. Dick & S. Curry), Willapa Bay area environments & resources (P. Taylor), salmon biology & resource-properties (P. Taylor), forest-stream research (J. Nielsen), history of salmon fisheries & management (P. Taylor), Makah people: culture & history (L. Colfax), current status of Indian-Treaty fishing rights in Washington (D. Whitener), environmental activism (R. Grossman), and the forest ecosystem and management attitudes (C. Maser). Films shown were: "Life of the Sockeye Salmon" and "The Beach - A River of Sand"

Book Seminars: Weekly seminars were based on reading and writing responses to review questions for the following books: The Northwest Coast (J. Swan 1857), I Heard the Owl Call My Name (M. Craven 1973), The Water Link (D. J. Chasan 1981), Mountain in the Clouds (B. Brown 1982), They Tried To Cut It All (E. Van Syckle 1980), and Treaties on Trial (F.G. Cohen 1986).

Environmental Values Workshop: Each student examined the formative period of value-development during childhood by writing an autobiographical paper. Another project involved the students preparing a questionnaire and conducting interviews with children at a local elementary school to reveal their environmental values. The students tabulated and presented the results at a class meeting and hosted a discussion with the children and their teachers. Lectures and seminars were conducted to develop ideas about value formation during childhood. The seminars were based on four books from children's literature: Watership Down (R. Adams), Wind in the Willows (K. Grahame), Julie of the Wolves (J. George), and The Pond (R. Murphy). Also assigned were written responses to questions about the values represented in each book.

POLITICAL ECOLOGY 86-87: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION (continued)

Ecology Workshop: Weekly meetings included lectures on ecological principles applied to forest ecosystems and on global environmental problems featured in assigned reading in Living in the Environment, and review of field exercises. In teams of three or four, the students did weekly field exercises focused on study plots in forested areas of the campus. The exercises featured plant identification and ecosystem analysis, usually involving quantitative approaches.

Field Trips: Willapa Bay area (3 days) - for social & environmental history, & field ecology; George Adams Salmon Hatchery (half-day); and Kennedy Creek (half-day) - wild chum salmon "run".

Writing Workshop: Weekly sessions were held to support exercises in field-journal writing (two specified exercises and field observations for any field trips and field studies for the ecology workshop) and essay-writing (three essay assignments). The Practical Stylist (S. Baker 1985) was used for the essay-writing.

Topic Seminar: Students presented articles selected from semi-popular magazines on natural-history or environmental topics. There were two rounds of talks; each talk was limited to ten minutes, plus brief discussion.