FALL-2025
Course 26886 – LAS 4935

Course 26884 - LAS 6938

Knowledge, Conflict & Environmental Peacebuilding

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392 Grinter Hall

Office Hours: Office Hours: Tuesday 9:30 am-11:30am (and with an appointment)
Class Meeting Times and Location:
Friday 12:50 – 3:50pm (F- Period 6-8).
Grinter Hall 376

NOTES:

- Graduate Seminar open to advanced undergraduate students
- This course fulfills the requisites for international studies.
- Completing this seminar will meet the writing requirements for UFL students.
- This course fulfills the requisites for students seeking a minor in Latin American Studies

Course Description:

Developing societies and their ecosystems face a complex web of interconnected risks. Latin America remains the most dangerous region for environmental leaders, with increasing conflicts over land, water, and resource extraction. The recent COP16 Conference introduced the concept of *"Peace with Nature"*, highlighting the multiple crises and socio-environmental conflicts affecting both the region and global ecosystems. To build a more just and sustainable future, it is crucial to explore pathways for social justice and environmental peacebuilding—where diverse knowledge systems and ways of life can coexist and thrive.

This course examines the intersections of knowledge, power, and environmental peacebuilding through the lens of Science and Technology Studies (STS) and political ecology. It critically engages with the

production, contestation, and mobilization of knowledge in environmental conflicts, addressing how scientific expertise, local knowledge, and institutional policies shape responses to war, resource extraction, and ecological destruction. By analyzing how different actors—scientists, corporations, policymakers, Indigenous communities, and grassroots organizations—construct and contest knowledge about environmental harm, justice, and sustainability, students will develop a sociological understanding of science as a site of power and struggle in environmental peacebuilding.

Drawing on Latin American case studies, students will critically engage with the politics of expertise, environmental justice, and contested scientific production. The course integrates perspectives from Science and Technology Studies (STS), political ecology, and decolonial approaches to examine how knowledge is mobilized in war-peace transitions, environmental conflicts, and conservation initiatives.

Audience

This course is designed for graduate (and advanced undergraduate) students in fields such as political science, environmental studies, conflict studies, and international relations. It aligns with the interdisciplinary goals of several master's programs in the University of Florida. It provides students with analytical tools to navigate the intersection of environmental governance, development, and conservation, fostering critical engagement with pressing socio-environmental challenges.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- **Critically analyze** how knowledge about conflict, environmental justice, and peacebuilding is produced, legitimized, and challenged across different contexts.
- **Examine historical and contemporary cases** where scientific and technological knowledge has influenced environmental warfare, resource governance, and post-conflict ecological restoration.
- **Evaluate the role of scientific expertise, indigenous knowledge, and political discourse** in shaping responses to environmental destruction, with a focus on extractivism, conservation, and ecological justice.
- **Assess the distribution of environmental harms and benefits** in war-affected regions, particularly in relation to power asymmetries, marginalized communities, and socio-environmental inequalities.
- **Apply conceptual and methodological tools from STS, sociology of science, and environmental governance** to investigate real-world cases of environmental conflict and peacebuilding.

Students will be evaluated on their ability to **critically engage with complex environmental controversies**, synthesize **diverse knowledge systems**, and **communicate arguments effectively**

through written, oral, and visual formats. Assignments will emphasize **case study analysis, mapping controversies, and interdisciplinary research methodologies**.

Detailed Assignments

Assignment	Description	Weight
Forum Contribution – Posts Based on Readings (Canvas)	For each class, students must: (a) Identify and copy a key quote from the readings, placing it in quotation marks and citing the page number. (b) Provide a brief personal reflection on the readings and/or videos, discussing connections, critiques, or insights inspired by the material. These contributions should be concise but thoughtful, demonstrating engagement with course themes.	20%
Reading Discussion Leader & Questions	Each student will lead one class discussion by preparing a brief (5–10 minute) introduction to the key themes of the assigned readings. Students will formulate 3–4 critical discussion questions that encourage debate and deeper analysis, drawing connections to broader course topics.	15%
Exercise – Mapping a Controversy	Students will select a case study involving an environmental or social controversy (e.g., mining conflicts, water governance, biodiversity conservation, or climate policy). Using visual tools (such as concept maps, actor-network diagrams, or digital cartography), students will analyze and illustrate the relationships between key actors, interests, scientific debates, policies, and narratives. A short written reflection (500–750 words) will accompany the map, explaining its significance and the insights gained.	15%
Exercise – One Health Approach Analysis	Students will apply a One Health framework to a selected case study that connects human, animal, and environmental health (e.g., deforestation and zoonotic diseases, pesticide exposure and public health, antibiotic resistance in food systems). The analysis should identify the key ecological, social, and economic dimensions of the issue and propose interdisciplinary strategies to address it. Students will submit a 750–1000-word report integrating course concepts and research.	15%
Class Attendance and Participation	Active participation in class discussions, group activities, and exercises is expected. Students should demonstrate engagement with readings, ask questions, and contribute thoughtfully to debates. Attendance is essential, and unexcused absences may affect this portion of the grade.	15%

Assignment	Description	Weight
Final Project – Case Study Analysis	A 3,000-word research-based final paper integrating course concepts to analyze an environmental or social issue in-depth. Students will select a case study (approved by the instructor), apply relevant theoretical frameworks (e.g., political ecology, Science and Technology Studies, or environmental justice), and use empirical evidence to support their analysis. The paper should include a discussion of key actors, knowledge production, governance structures, and socio-environmental dynamics.	20%

Grading Scale:

A 94 – 100%	C 74 – 76%
A- 90 – 93%	C- 70 – 73%
B+ 87 – 89%	D+ 67 – 69%
B 84 – 86%	D 64 – 66%
B- 80 – 83%	D- 60 – 63%
C+ 77 – 79%	E <60

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/

Course Outline

This course will be structured into 12 sessions, each integrating key themes, case studies, and methodologies drawn from social sciences and development practice.

Week & Topic	Readings	Materials
Week 1: Introduction – Science, Knowledge and technology studies applied to Environmental Peacebuilding	Matthew, R. A., & Brown, O. (2021). The past and future(s) of environmental peacebuilding. International Affairs, 97(1), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiaa188	Coal Mining's Environmental Impact | From The Ashes
Week 2: War and the Environment in History – Knowledge, Power & Ecological Destruction	Tucker, R. P., & McNeill, J. R. (2025). War and the Environment. A Companion to Global Environmental History, 314-330. Dunlap, A. (2022). The self-reinforcing cycle of ecological degradation and repression: Revealing the ecological cost of policing and militarization. In Enforcing ecocide: Power, policing & planetary	How Warfare Is Destroying Our Environment | Footprints Of War

	militarization (pp. 153-176). Cham: Springer International Publishing. Travis, C. (2024). Environment as a Weapon: Geographies, Histories and Literature. Springer Nature. (Chapter to be defined).	
Week 3: Mapping Controversies - Data, Maps, Truth – Analyzing Scientific & Environmental Disputes	Whatmore, S. J. (2009). Mapping knowledge controversies: science, democracy and the redistribution of expertise. Progress in Human Geography, 33(5), 587-598. Spiegel, S. J., Ribeiro, C. A., Sousa, R., & Veiga, M. M. (2012). Mapping spaces of environmental dispute: GIS, mining, and surveillance in the Amazon. Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 102(2), 320-349. Elam, M., Solli, A., & Mäkitalo, Å. (2019). Socioscientific issues via controversy mapping: Bringing actor-network theory into the science classroom with digital technology. Discourse: studies in the cultural politics of education, 40(1), 61-77. Jolivet, E., & Heiskanen, E. (2010). Blowing against the wind—An exploratory application of actor network theory to the analysis of local controversies and participation processes in wind energy. Energy policy, 38(11), 6746-6754. Dussel, I. (2020). Educational technology as school reform: using actor-network theory to understand recent Latin American educational policies. Handbook of Education Policy Studies: School/University, Curriculum, and Assessment, Volume 2, 35-53.	Bruno Latour - on science and mapping controversies
Week 4: Science, Truth Commissions and Environmental Peacebuilding	Lyons, K. (2023). “Nature” and territories as victims: Decolonizing Colombia's transitional justice process. American Anthropologist, 125(1), 63-76. Killean, R. (2021). Imagining future reparations for environmental destruction. In Futures of International Criminal Justice (pp. 136-156). Routledge. Killean, R. (2021). From ecocide to eco-sensitivity: ‘greening’reparations at the International Criminal Court. The International Journal of Human Rights, 25(2), 323-347.	Kristina Lyons on "Nature’ and Territories as Victims in Colombia’s Transitional Justice Process"

Week 5: Indigenous Knowledge, Science & Coloniality & One Health approach	Adeyeri, J. O. (2021). Indigenous Knowledge for Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding among Nigerian Communities. Journal of Religions & Peace Studies. Randazzo, E. (2021). The local, the 'indigenous' and the limits of rethinking peacebuilding. Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding, 15(2), 141-160. Mato, D. (2016). Indigenous people in Latin America: Movements and universities. achievements, challenges, and intercultural conflicts. Journal of Intercultural studies, 37(3), 211-233. Cortina, R., & Earl, A. (2021). Embracing interculturality and Indigenous knowledge in Latin American higher education. Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education, 51(8), 1208-1225. Cediel-Becerra, N. M., Prieto-Quintero, S., Garzon, A. D. M., Villafañe-Izquierdo, M., Rúa-Bustamante, C. V., Jimenez, N., ... & Garnier, J. (2022). Woman-sensitive one health perspective in four tribes of indigenous people from Latin	IPBES: Indigenous and local knowledge in biodiversity assessments: from local to global
Week 6: Water Conflicts & Hydrosocial Territories	Hommes, L., Boelens, R., & Maat, H. (2016). Contested hydrosocial territories and disputed water governance: Struggles and competing claims over the Ilisu Dam development in southeastern Turkey. Geoforum, 71, 9-20. Hommes, L., Hoogesteger, J., & Boelens, R. (2022). (Re) making hydrosocial territories: Materializing and contesting imaginaries and subjectivities through hydraulic infrastructure. Political geography, 97, 102698. Bourguignon, N. (2023). Connected and disrupted hydrosocial territories: The making of modern socionatures through inter-basin water transfers. J. Political Ecol, 30, 241-273.	Riverhood and River Commons in Latin America and Europe by Prof. Rutgerd Boelens
Week 7: Food Studies, Knowledge Production, Conflicts & Peace	Giraldo, O. F., & Rosset, P. M. (2018). Agroecology as a territory in dispute: Between institutionality and social movements. The Journal of Peasant Studies, 45(3), 545-564. Iles, A., , Garrett Graddy-Lovelace, Ryan Galt, and Maywa Montenegro. (2021) Blindspots and Emerging Knowledge: The Entry of STS into Agriculture and Food.	Landless Workers' Movement (MST) is Latin America's largest organic rice producer

	Motta, R. (2021). Food for Justice: Power, Politics, and Food Inequalities in a Bioeconomy: Preliminary Research Program. POSIBLE GUEST LECTURER: RENATA MOTTA (HEIDELBERG UNIV.)	
Week 8: Extractivism, Neocolonialism & Science	Kingsbury, D. V. (2023). Lithium's buzz: extractivism between booms in Bolivia, Argentina, and Chile. Cultural Studies, 37(4), 580-604. Colther, C., Pezoa-Fuentes, C., & Doussoulin, J. P. (2024). How important is the scientific knowledge gap between leading research and producing countries of lithium?. Heliyon, 10(19). Barandiarán, J. (2019). Lithium and development imaginaries in Chile, Argentina and Bolivia. World development, 113, 381-391.	The battle for Chile's critical minerals
Week 9: Conservation, Militarization & Security Dilemmas	Dutta, A., & Simlai, T. (2022). If the army cuts trees, why can't we? Resource extraction, hunting and the impacts of militaries on biodiversity conservation. In Enforcing Ecocide: Power, Policing & Planetary Militarization (pp. 199-225). Cham: Springer International Publishing. García, N. A., & Fold, N. (2022). The coloniality of power on the green frontier: Commodities and violent territorialisation in Colombia's Amazon. Geoforum, 128, 192-201. Corredor-Garcia, J., & López Vega, F. (2024). The logic of "War on Deforestation": a military response to climate change in the Colombian Amazon. Alternatives, 49(4), 325-343.	Dunlap et al.: The Entanglements of Green Extractivism, Militarism & Conservation
Week 10: Knowledges & Gender in War-Peace Transitions & Livelihoods in Conflict Zones	Yoshida, K., Kezie-Nwoha, H., Holvikivi, A., Nkinzi, S., Sabrie, A., & Tabbasam, E. (2021). Defending the future: gender, conflict, and environmental peace. Mashaba, N., & Botha, D. (2023). Factors affecting the attraction of women to technical mining positions in South Africa. SA Journal of Human Resource Management, 21, 1-16.	#COP16: Women's Land,Coastal,and Water Rights:From Global Commitments to Local Actions

Week 11: Transitional Justice, Environmental Reparations & Ecocide	Rodeiro, M. (2024). Responding to ecocide through transitional justice. Diálogos, 47-79. Killean, R. (2022). Reparations in the Aftermath of Ecocide. Available at SSRN 4315496. Killean, R. (2021). Imagining future reparations for environmental destruction. In Futures of International Criminal Justice (pp. 136-156). Routledge. Branch, A., & Minkova, L. (2023). Ecocide, the anthropocene, and the international criminal court. Ethics & International Affairs, 37(1), 51-79.	An International Crime of Ecocide: The Proposal, Future Opportunities, and Challenges
Week 12: Education for Peace, Sustainable Development and Environmental Peacebuilding	Stewart, J. (2014). Education for peace and sustainable development in conflict affected countries. Sustainable well-being: Concepts, issues, and educational practices, 189. Tlili, A., Salha, S., Shehata, B., Zhang, X., Endris, A., Arar, K., ... & Jemni, M. (2024). How to maintain education during wars?: An integrative approach to ensure the right to education. Open Praxis, 16(2), 160-179. Bickmore, K. (2017). Conflict, peacebuilding, and education: Rethinking pedagogies in divided societies, Latin America, and around the world. Meaza, H., Ghebreyohannes, T., Nyssen, J., Tesfamariam, Z., Demissie, B., Poesen, J., ... & Vanmaercke, M. (2024). Managing the environmental impacts of war: What can be learned from conflict-vulnerable communities?. Science of the total environment, 171974.	Peacebuilding EDUCATION Documentary

Complementary bibliography

Venturini, T., & Munk, A. K. (2021). *Controversy mapping: A field guide*. John Wiley & Sons.

Swain, A., & Öjendal, J. (Eds.). (2018). *Routledge handbook of environmental conflict and peacebuilding*. New York: Routledge.

Required Policies

Statement on Use of Artificial Intelligence in This Course

While recognizing the significant impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools on education and our daily lives, this course will not incorporate the use of AI tools. Although AI tools could potentially assist in laying the groundwork for written assignments, they should not be used to write, paraphrase, or alter the style and composition of your work. Additionally, avoid entering any personally identifiable or relevant information into AI tools. We will explore AI literacy and digital literacy throughout the course, and I encourage you to bring up any questions or concerns.

Attendance Policy, Class Expectations, and Make-Up Policy

- **Attendance**: Attendance is mandatory, and you are responsible for all announcements made in class.
- **Class Rules**: To maintain a focused and productive learning environment, please avoid using cell phones during class sessions to the maximum extent possible. Cell phones should only be used in cases of emergency or when specifically instructed by the instructor for academic purposes.
- **Assignment Submission**: Please ensure that all work is submitted on time. If you encounter any issues or foresee a delay, contact me immediately. In extreme cases, we can explore flexible alternatives to complete the task.

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who encounter learning barriers and wish to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center at https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/. It is important to share your accommodation letter with the instructor and discuss your access needs as early as possible in the semester.

UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on providing feedback is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Notifications will be sent when the evaluation period opens, and evaluations can be completed through email, Canvas course menu.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: 'On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.'" You are also obligated to report any conditions that facilitate academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs.

Counseling and Wellness Center

For support, contact the Counseling and Wellness Center at https://counseling.ufl.edu/.