

GEOG 758
Fall 2011
Wed, 4:30 to 6:30 pm

Prof. Alison Rieser
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Research Seminar in Conservation

Overview: This course is an advanced readings seminar on nature conservation, focusing on two major facets of conservation: perceptions of climate change and biodiversity. It is intended for graduate students conducting or planning to conduct their own research in some aspect of conservation or who anticipate careers in conservation or natural resource management.

The goals of the course are to develop a critical perspective on both the theoretical frameworks and research methods applied to contemporary conservation issues. In addition, we will consider the history of conservation as a social movement, the politics and economics of contemporary conservation strategies, and the role of research scientists in conservation policy-making. If time permits, we will explore the apparent lack of constructive engagement between the social sciences and the physical sciences and possible ways to bridge the gap.

Learning objectives: to understand the history of conservation as an object of public policy, to learn to identify research questions and devise research strategies on questions where public policies are needed or contested, and to develop a capacity for critical evaluation of research findings and their relevance to public policy.

Readings: For an overview of the field of nature conservation and a guide to the literature, we will all read one short book, P. Jepson and R. Ladle, 2010. *Conservation: A Beginner's Guide* (Oneworld Publications: Oxford, UK), ISBN 978-1-85168-714-5. A limited number of copies are available for purchase from the instructor for \$12.00. The majority of the readings will be drawn from research journals and will be posted on the Laulima course web page in "Resources" folders corresponding to the discussion topics. Each "topic" class will have one or two common reading (CR) assignments that everyone will read and prepare to discuss. In addition, each student will select two additional papers and present a brief analysis and critique of them to the class. (Select only one additional reading if the common reading assignment is three papers.) Papers may be chosen from the Laulima folder on that topic, from the "further readings" chapter in Jepson and Ladle, or from your own literature search. Additional readings will be assigned in connection with guest speakers and student presentations.

Assessment: Each student will be responsible for identifying a social science research question relevant to either climate change or marine conservation policy, preferably one that can be studied here in Hawaii unless you are already planning field work in another location. At the end of the semester, you will submit and present a research proposal on your question and a literature review that summarizes and assesses current research on your question and closely related ones. This review should take the form of an essay rather than an annotated bibliography and should be on the order of 25 pages double-spaced, with additional pages of references and footnotes. (We will read a number of literature reviews to familiarize you with the genre.) Potential research questions will be discussed throughout the first weeks of the semester, as we review a number of emerging theories and methodologies in conservation research. The deadline for question

selection is Oct. 5, on which date you will turn in a two-page “pre-proposal” of your selected question. We will also have invited speakers from campus who are doing conservation-related research. Grades will be computed as follows:

Class participation (readings discussion; team agenda reports) 40%

Research proposal (topic selection; proposal and literature review; presentation) 60%

Syllabus

(readings are subject to change; watch for updates)

- Aug. 24 course introduction and overview; brainstorming a research agenda
- Aug. 31 social science research on a science-dominated issue: climate change
Common reading (CR): O’Neill, S.J. and M. Hulme, 2009. “An iconic approach for representing climate change”; Stehr, N. and H. von Storch, 1995. “The social construct of climate and climate change.”
- Sept. 7 history and scope of conservation
CR: Jepson & Ladle, pp. 1-81; Doughty, R.W., 1972. “Concern for fashionable feathers.”
- Sept. 14 contemporary conservation and its critics; future directions
CR: Jepson & Ladle, pp. 82-182; Gray, N.J., 2010. “Sea change: exploring the international effort to promote marine protected areas.”
- Sept. 21 tourism research – Skype discussion with **UH Hilo Prof. Kathryn Besio**
CR: Besio, K.T. and L. Johnston, 2008. “Sexy beasts and devoted mums: narrating nature through dolphin tourism.”
- Sept. 28 research in marine environmental history -- **Drew Porter**
CR: Bolster, J. 2006. “Opportunities in marine environmental history;”
Benson, E. 2010, “A difficult time with the permit process;”
Finley, C., 2009. “The social construction of fishing, 1949.”
- Oct. 5 social science research for “sustainable seafood” – **Jenn Bernstein**
CR: Johnston, R.J. and C.A. Roheim, 2005. “A battle of taste and environmental convictions for ecolabeled seafood: a contingent ranking experiment;”
Gulbrandsen, L.H., 2009. “The emergence and effectiveness of the Marine Stewardship Council.”
TURN IN YOUR 2-pg pre-proposal on your research topic
- Oct. 12 social science research for fisheries management
Guest speaker: **Prof. John Lynham**, UH Dept. of Economics
CR: B.H. Thompson, Jr., 2000. “Tragically difficult: The obstacles to governing the commons,” *Env’t’l L.* 30: 241-278, others may be announced.
See also below Oct. 20, Steven Gray, Geography colloquium.

- Oct. 19 research in conservation psychology – **James Hong**
CR: Stern, P. 2000, “Toward a coherent theory of environmentally significant behavior,” and Thompson, see Oct. 12.
- [Oct. 20 **Prof. Steven Gray**, NREM, “Managing marine fisheries as socio-ecological systems,” Dept. of Geography colloquium, 12 noon, Saunders 443.]
- Oct. 26 incorporating social science into conservation practice; social resilience to changing climate in coral reef management (ethnographic research)
Guest speaker: **Supin Wongbusarakum**, Senior Social Scientist, The Nature Conservancy
CR: at least one paper from the two “Supin” folders
- Nov. 2 ethical dilemmas in conservation research and policy – **Adair Fincher**
CR: MacLoed, R., 2001. “‘Strictly for the birds’: Science, the military and the Smithsonian’s Pacific Ocean Biological Survey”;
Dillon, W.S., 1980. “Margaret Mead and the government.”
- Nov. 9 discussion of progress on research topics; brainstorming methodologies
- Nov. 16 interdisciplinary research
CR: Kuelartz, J., 2007. “Nature and culture: using metaphors in restoring nature;”
L.M. Campbell, 2003, “Challenges for Interdisciplinary research: perspectives of a social scientist,” Marine Turtle Newsletter 100: 28-32.
<http://www.seaturtle.org/mtn/archives/mtn100/mtn100p28.shtml>
- Nov. 23 No class (make-up class is to attend a Dept. of Geography colloquium: e.g., Dr. Jeremy Firestone, Sept. 15; Prof. Steven Gray (see Oct 20 above); or Melissa Finucare, EWC, Oct. 27, climate change and risk perception in Pacific island communities) or another social science talk on campus
- Nov. 30 Presentations of Student Research Proposals
- Dec. 7 Presentations of Student Research Proposals