

Asia Pacific: Nature, Culture, and Power from Colonialism to 21 Century Capitalism

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In the Asia-Pacific, colonialism decimated the environment, yet under national independence many countries now experience even worse environmental degradation. What then does the future hold? This seminar seeks to answer this question by providing a critical examination of environment and capitalism in the Asia-Pacific region.

In answering the above question, this seminar provides a critical examination of the environment and capitalism in the Asia-Pacific. Major subjects of study will include: (1) agriculture and political economy; (2) political ecologies; and (3) contemporary engagements with place, terrain and territory, and new ecologies of the Anthropocene. Course readings and materials will engage theories and case studies of capitalist regimes of extraction during the colonial period, industrial and flexible forms of labor, subject formation under capitalist regimes, forms of resistance, capitalist imaginaries, and new studies on ecology and life in the midst of capitalist ruins. Materials are drawn from social theory, film, anthropology, geography, political science, and related disciplines.

The course will follow a seminar format of in-class discussions in conjunction with a few introductory lectures and films. Readings should be completed *before* the unit in which they are listed. It's crucial to keep up on readings, since they form the basis of the core concepts of this course, and since you will be asked to take part in and lead in-class discussions on the readings twice each week. You can expect an average of 75-100 pages of reading per class, but the amount will vary and some sessions will be a little more or less. I think you'll find the readings manageable and interesting. The core readings consist of books, journal articles and essays by anthropologists, sociologists, geographers, and other scholars of environment and society.