ENST 4000 – Seminar in Environmental Studies
Winter Term 2011

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**Please note: I do not respond to emails on evenings and weekends**

Seminars: Mondays, 11:35am – 2:25pm, Mackenzie Building 3165

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00pm – 2:00pm, Loeb A301D

ENST 4000 is the “capstone” course in the Environmental Studies program. It is an opportunity to consolidate, deepen, and apply the knowledges you have developed in other courses and to think through how these knowledges might translate to environmental policy-making, advocacy, activism, research, and governance.

Our task this year will be to think seriously about political change. We will consider how environmental issues can be meaningfully addressed and what sorts of strategies, practices, and relationships might be brought to bear on pressing environmental concerns. We will do so by a) learning as much as we can about a specific set of environmental issues – in this case, the environmental issues raised by mining – and the complex contexts within which they emerge and are addressed; b) learning about different approaches to political change; and c) applying these ideas to specific case studies.

Mining is a very productive site to examine environmental issues in all their complexity. There is no doubt that mining has environmental impacts: it is, by definition, a non-renewable form of resource extraction and results in lasting changes to lands, ecosystems, and communities. It can be highly polluting and often exacerbates social, economic, and political inequalities. But mining also draws our attention to the complexity of environmental issues and the limits of conceptualizing them only in terms of the ecological. Mining invariably brings up issues of property and land tenure, processes of capital accumulation, the socio-cultural and political-economic dimensions of rurality and rural employment, international networks of trade and development, Indigenous claims to land and histories of colonialism, and our own role in globalized consumption processes. It also draws our attention to the intricacies of policy, law, and public participation.

Because the issues raised by mining are so complex, and yet often so pressing, efforts to address its social, economic, political, and ecological effects are invariably situated, strategic, and partial. That is, there is no ideal, universal response to these issues. It is precisely this messy, murky, imperfect realm of political change that we will focus on this semester.

Discussion and participation are an important part of this class: be prepared to speak up, share ideas, and ask questions. Students will also be expected to read 30-50 pages each week in the first two parts of the term, and to undertake research and plan presentations as a group in the third part. Students can expect to develop their critical thinking, analytical, research, and writing skills as the course progresses.

In sum, students who successfully complete this class will:

- Understand the political-economic, regulatory, geographic, and historical contexts that give rise to current extractive activities, and within which those activities are governed and assessed;
- Analyze, through case studies, current resource extraction projects and the interests, frameworks, and practices influencing their outcomes;
• Evaluate different approaches to political change and apply these positions and strategies to the case studies considered in class;
• Articulate a strategy for influencing a particular resource extraction project.

**Part 1: Contextualizing Extraction**

In this section we will try to come to terms with some of the major political, economic, historical, and geographical dimensions of resource extraction.

**January 3: Introduction and overview**

**January 10: Mining and capitalism**

Required reading:
- Please research the extraction case studies listed on page 5 and come to class prepared to identify your preferred case study and potential group members

Additional readings:

**January 17: Mining and the state**

**Group membership and extractive case studies finalized**

Required readings:

Additional readings:

**January 24: Mining, property, and empire**

Required readings:

Additional readings:
In this section we will consider a range of strategies employed by various stakeholders for affecting the outcome of extraction projects.

**January 31: Government and Governance: Regulatory reform, monitoring, and state-based political change**

Required Reading:

Additional reading:

**February 7: Targeting corporations: boycotts, shareholder activism, and corporate social responsibility**

**Guest lecture: Catherine Coumans, Mining Watch**

**Group proposals due**

Required reading:

Additional reading:

**February 14: Group work on projects**

- Feedback will be provided on group proposals
- Please come prepared to work with your group

**February 21: Reading Week, **NO CLASSES**

February 28: Change the system: revolution and its discontents

** Final deadline for reading responses **

Required readings:

Additional readings:

Part 3: Case Studies

The third section of the course will involve focused work on case studies and group presentations and discussions.

March 7: Cases 1 and 2

March 14: Cases 3 and 4

March 28: Cases 5 and 6

April 4: Conclusion and final thoughts

In this class we will reflect on what we have learned through the case studies and on some of the dilemmas that remain in terms of political action regarding extraction. We will consider some of the emotional and ethical dimensions of acting on environmental issues as well as the importance and politics of hope.

Readings: TBD

**Final Assignments due by 4pm, April 8**

Evaluation

Participation (30%) Includes 4 reading responses (5% each) plus 10% for contributions in class
- Participation is a crucial component of this class. Participation includes attendance, doing thorough and critical readings of the assigned materials, contributing effectively in class discussions, and responding to your peers’ presentations.
- The 4 reading responses must be completed between January 10 and February 28 and are due at the beginning of class. They should be no more 300 words, and should provide brief summaries of the reading(s) and your responses to the readings, including questions and concerns you will bring to class that day.
- The remaining 10% is based on attendance and contributions in class.
Group projects (40%)

- 10% of your mark will be based on a group proposal outlining your synopsis of the case study and the key issues and stakeholders involved, key sources (at least three must be academic, and at least six must be provided), and your presentation plan. Proposals should be no more than three pages, single spaced. They are due in class on February 7.
- 10% of your mark will be based on self and peer evaluation of your contribution to the group process;
- 20% of your mark will be based on your presentation, with half assigned to the group and half assigned to the individual.

Additional guidelines and information will be provided in class. The potential case studies include:

- Uranium mining in Nunavut
- Enbridge pipeline in Alberta/Northern BC
- Hydro-fracking in Canada
- Coltan mining in the DRC
- Barrick Gold’s Porgera Joint Venture Mine in Papua New Guinea
- Matoush Uranium Project near Mistissini Cree Nation
- Red Chris Mine in Northern BC
- Catface Mine in Clayoquot Sound, BC
- Bill C-300

Final Assignment (30%)

- You have a choice of three different final assignments: a policy brief, a term paper, or a more creative or public piece of writing (i.e., a magazine article).
- Each must be accompanied by a 200-300 word rationale explaining your choice of the given writing style and audience, and why you think this is the best way to address the issue at hand. Each must contain references to academic sources and be between 2500-4000 words.
- Policy briefing papers should be addressed to a real or imagined leader (an MP or MLA, a CEO of a corporation, a Band Chief, etc.) who needs to be briefed on the policy and other political dimensions of an extraction case. It should identify the recipient’s interest in the issue, pressing events or emerging issues, and suggested courses of action.
- Term papers can explore any extraction issue discussed in class. Be sure to identify and articulate a strong argument throughout the paper, to engage with key sources, and to frame your paper in relation to academic issues and debates.
- Creative or public writing pieces should be written in the style of imagined venue (i.e., if you are writing a piece for Orion magazine, adopt the idiom of this magazine). The one exception to this is referencing: even if the venue does not typically provide academic and other references, please ensure you provide these (perhaps through footnotes or endnotes, which are less distracting to the reader than in-text referencing).

- Final assignments are due by 4:00pm, April 8, 2011

Course Policies

Laptops and Cellphones: Laptop and cellphone policies are designed to encourage a productive, engaging, and positive learning environment for all students. I understand that some students prefer to type notes rather than write notes using a pen and paper. Responsible use of laptops is permitted, although students are encouraged to put laptops away during class discussions and to take notes using pen and paper. Students using their laptops to check email, Facebook, or other non-course related activities will be asked to leave their laptops at home. Cell phones are not permitted in class. If you are expecting an urgent call, please ensure the ringer is off and please step outside.
**Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see [www.academicintegrity.org](http://www.academicintegrity.org)). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Students are reminded of the seriousness with which Carleton University treats academic dishonesty of any form, particularly plagiarism. Students should be familiar with the University’s Academic Integrity Policy (http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity/), and should not hesitate to speak with the Instructor if you have any questions.

*It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the regulations concerning academic integrity and to ensure that your assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity.*

**Lateness Policy:** Late assignments will be deducted 3% per day, including weekends and holidays. All assignments are due at the start of class, on the date indicated in the Evaluation section. Late reading responses will not be accepted; they must be submitted at the beginning of class on the day the readings are to be discussed.

All assignments must be handed in directly to the Instructor (email or drop box submissions will NOT be accepted unless pre-arranged with the Instructor. In the case of late submission of assignments, emailed versions will be accepted on weekends and holidays as proof of submission, and paper versions must be provided to the instructor on the next business day). Students assume all risk for lost or missing materials. Please be sure to keep a back-up electronic copy of all assignments.

**Extenuating Circumstances:** Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with extenuating circumstances (i.e. out of your control). Any requests for deadline extensions for writing assignments must be made to the Instructor at least 5 business days prior to the deadline. In case of missed deadlines due to unforeseen circumstance, an official medical note (or other applicable formal documentation) must be provided within 5 days of the missed deadline in order to negotiate new deadlines. Missed presentations must be accompanied by the same documentation, using the same protocol outlined above, and will result in the re-scheduling of the presentation, or alternative arrangement, depending on the scheduled timing. *With the proper documentation these accommodations will be considered, but will not be guaranteed. If no documentation is provided, the resulting grade of a missed assignment or presentation will be zero.*

**Academic Accommodations:** Carleton University is committed to promoting academic accessibility for all individuals. Please feel welcome to bring any issues related to disability, religious, pregnancy, or other accommodation to my attention. For students with disabilities, contact the Paul Menton Centre (613-520-6608, [http://www2.carleton.caPMC/ACCOMMODATIONS/](http://www2.carleton.ca/PMC/ACCOMMODATIONS/)) to obtain the necessary letters of accommodations. For religious observances or pregnancy, consult with equity services ([http://www2.carleton.ca/EQUITY/ACCOMMODATION/](http://www2.carleton.ca/EQUITY/ACCOMMODATION/)), or an equity advisor (613-520-5622), to obtain the necessary letters of accommodation.

**Course Readings and Additional Resources:** Most readings are available through the library’s online journal subscriptions. Readings that are not available online will be posted on WebCT. There are a variety of ways to get help if you are having difficulties with any of the course material, or managing to meet the requirements of a number of courses at once. The Instructor is here to facilitate your learning, so take advantage of your opportunities for interaction and ask for help when needed. You are especially encouraged to attend designated office hours. There are also a number of support services and resources on campus at your disposal, including: The Student Academic Success Centre ([http://www.carleton.ca/sasc](http://www.carleton.ca/sasc)) to help you in achieving academic success in various aspects of your university program; The Writing Tutorial Service ([http://www.carleton.ca/wts](http://www.carleton.ca/wts)) to help you improve your writing skills; and The MacOdrum Library ([http://www.library.carleton.ca](http://www.library.carleton.ca)) which offers library, research, learning, and IT support.