Course Description

This class analyzes the economic and environmental history of capitalism at the global scale as it has developed over the last 500 years. The framework is both historical and comparative. The story of larger global dynamics is unpacked and integrated through a detailed comparison of specific country level case studies. Capitalism is treated not simply as an economic and social system but also as an ecological regime, a system of organizing and continually re-organizing nature. At the heart of our investigation is the question of social power: who has it, why and how is it used? And how does nature shaped social power and how is it in turn shaped by it?

We will explore the origins, and environmental consequences, of the global North-South divide. This story reveals the deep history of the world economy’s environmental crisis, and the various spatial displacements of crisis that were part of the process of European imperial expansion. Special attention is paid to: state formation, war, imperialism, technology, energy, environmental change, economic crisis, and “long waves of accumulation” with an eye to how clean technology might play into that theory; and we focus on post-World War II developments like: The rise of Keynesianism on the global scale, the role of socialist economies, the economic aspects of the Cold War; “developmentalism” in the global south, the global crisis of profitability in the 1970s, the resultant political economic restructuring known as “neoliberalism.” Finally, we will address the economic rise of China as it impacts political economy and environmental crisis in the Global South.
Course Objectives

- Introduce students to the new environmental history of global capitalism which sees nonhuman nature and geography as core elements in world economic history.
- To provide an overview of modern economic history with the goal of close reading, summarization of key points, and argumentation from various perspectives.
- To trace the origins, trajectory, and internal dynamics of capitalism, particularly in the regions of target countries.
- To explore major theories of why the world is divided between developed core economies and less-developed peripheral economies.
- To evaluate the role of the state within the development of capitalism and its evolving role in environmental policy.
- To examine the roles of labor and nature within the production of economic value.

Learning Outcomes

As a result of this course, students should be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate knowledge of historical events in the modern era, including an understanding of the causal relationships between/among historical events, and the ability to develop a thesis based on historical evidence.
- To articulate the major theoretical schools of political economy that emerged in response to historical events.
- To interpret historical evidence from primary or secondary sources.
- To apply historical knowledge and interpretation toward the analysis of current events, and to understand connections between history and other disciplines.

Course Materials

Required readings, compiled in individual course readers, will be distributed at the start of each country program. If students would like to focus on a particular issue in more depth, guidance on further reading will also be provided.

Students are expected to complete required readings and listen to the required podcasts before each class session and to use readings for reference in discussions as well as essays. In addition, students are encouraged to make use of the in-country and traveling libraries and to investigate local resources, including news media.

Required books


Podcasts: As supplementary lectures, each class section will include at least one podcast relevant to the course texts. All of these are from Against the Grain, a radio program for
which I am a contributing producer. These podcasts are required listening before each class and can be used or cited in your course work. Note: many of the podcasts start 5 minutes into the audio file, after a news report.

**Course Schedule**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Theme</th>
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| California | 1 | **Introduction: Capitalism, Modernity and Globalization**  
In our first class we will introduce and define some of the key economic and political terms of the current era? What is capitalism and how is it different from previous economic and ecological regimes? What are the origins of capitalist modernity? How can we periodize globalization and global environmental problems?  

**Readings:**  
- David McNally, *Another World is Possible: Globalization and Anti-Capitalism* chapter 2, p 27 - 82  

**Optional reading:**  
- David McNally, *Another World is Possible: Globalization and Anti-Capitalism* chapter 1  
| Vietnam | 2 | **Markets, Commons and Enclosures**  
This class will focus on the question of primitive accumulation. Where do wealth and poverty come from? What were the historical and social dynamics that led to the ascendancy of “the West” over the last 500 years? We will consider the enclosures of land and labor in the British Isles and Europe as well as the conquest of the New World, with an emphasis on California, the San Francisco Bay Area and Vietnam. We will ask the question of whether enclosures were a one time event or an ongoing process. |
Readings:
- McNally ch 3 (p 83 - 136)

Podcast:
- Silvia Federici on witch burnings and enclosures [http://www.kpfa.org/archive/id/47741](http://www.kpfa.org/archive/id/47741)

Optional readings:

The “Columbian Exchange,” the biological consequences of 1492 and the Legacy of Imperialism

We will consider the making of the modern world from the point of view of the unequal encounter between the Eastern and Western hemispheres of the planet. We will evaluate the geographic, biological and climatic determinants for why the history of the last 500 years has turned out the way it has. We will also present critiques of monocausal and deterministic arguments for explaining the rise of the modern world system, and we will consider the ongoing resistance of indigenous people.

Readings:
- Charles C. Mann, 1493, *Uncovering the New World Columbus Created*, Alfred A Knopf, 2011, Chapter 7, p 238 – 278, Black Gold

Podcast:
- Jared Diamond on Collapse [http://www.kpfa.org/archive/id/67044](http://www.kpfa.org/archive/id/67044)

Optional reading:

Optional Podcast:
- Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz on Native American resistance to dispossession (first half only) [http://www.againstthegrain.org/program/426/id/151218/mon-4-11-11-](http://www.againstthegrain.org/program/426/id/151218/mon-4-11-11-)
### War and its Aftermath

In this class we will consider colonialism and war from two perspectives. First, through the work of David McNally, we will analyze the economic and political motivations for the military interventions of the US and other powerful nations. Secondly, we will consider what development strategies Vietnam embarked on after its wars of the mid-20th century finally came to an end.

**Readings:**
- David McNally, *Another World is Possible: Globalization and Anti-Capitalism*, chapter 5, p 204 – 266, “The Marines Have Landed”

**Podcast:**

**Optional reading:**

**Optional podcast:**
- Catherine Lutz speaks about US military bases abroad (first half only) [http://www.kpfa.org/archive/id/55644](http://www.kpfa.org/archive/id/55644)

### The Role of the State

In this class we will consider the role of the state in post WWII capitalism, with an eye towards the differences between the Global North, Asia and the Middle East. We will examine Keynesianism, developmentalism and planning in China, Vietnam and the socialist states as well as Japan, South Korea and the other Asian “tigers”. We will also consider the arguments of Joel Kovel, James O’Connor and other eco-socialists concerning the role of the state in addressing the climate crisis.

**Readings:**
- Philip Armstrong, Andrew Glyn, John Harrison, *Capitalism Since 1945*, chapters 1 through 5, p. 3 to p 80

**Podcast:**
Joel Kovel discusses capitalism's relationship to the growing ecological crisis. [http://www.kpfa.org/archive/id/40640](http://www.kpfa.org/archive/id/40640)

**Optional reading:**


### Resources, Scarcity and the Limits to Growth

Is overpopulation the root cause of environmental crisis? We will examine the work of Parson Malthus and his critics, with special attention paid to the gendered nature of Malthusian discourses. We will consider the way in Malthusian assumptions about scarcity are prevalent in debates about water, food, energy, gender and population in Morocco and North Africa.

**Readings:**


**Podcast:**


**Optional reading:**


### Race, Gender and the Geography of Inequality

This class will examine the social construction of race in the context of capitalism, colonialism and modernity. We will consider the semiotic aspects of race as well as the political economic ones. Central to this discussion will be an understanding of race, class, gender and coloniality as deeply interconnected categories.

**Readings:**

- David McNally, Chapter 4, p 137 – 203, *The Color of Money*
- Karen Pfeifer, “How Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan and even Egypt became IMF
### ‘Success Stories’ in the 1990s,” *Middle East Report*, No. 210, (Spring, 1999), pp. 23-27

**Podcast:**
- The social history of white bread

**Optional Reading:**

**Optional Podcast:**
- Land enclosures in Africa

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### Neoliberalism as Ideology and Political Economy

This class will consider the rise of neoliberalism in response to the global crisis of the early 1970s. Special attention will be paid to the environmental consequences of such policies.

**Readings:**
- David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Chapters 1, 3, p 5 – 38, 64 - 86

**Podcast:**
- David Harvey on the history of neo-liberalism
  [http://www.kpfa.org/archive/id/19854](http://www.kpfa.org/archive/id/19854)

**Optional reading:**
- David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Chapter 2, 4

**Optional podcast:**

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### The Making of the Third World and the Case of Bolivia

Why are some countries developed and others “undeveloped”? Using Bolivia and South America as case studies, we will attempt to integrate historical, biological, political and technological factors in understanding this problematic.

**Readings:**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading List</th>
<th>10</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Latin America as Neoliberal Laboratory</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>What happens when the economic experts at the IMF and the Chicago School get everything that they want? In this class we will examine the social and environmental consequences of neo-liberalism triumphant.</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Podcasts:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• David Harvey on the Enigma of Capital</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kpfa.org/archive/id/64613">http://www.kpfa.org/archive/id/64613</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Optional Podcast:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• David McNally on global crisis and social movements</td>
<td><a href="http://www.againstthegrain.org/program/469/id/342214/tues-8-23-11-when-people-take-over">http://www.againstthegrain.org/program/469/id/342214/tues-8-23-11-when-people-take-over</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Future Reading List</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Democracy Against Capitalism?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the prospects for the future? Using Bolivia as a case study, we will focus on the multifarious forms of response to both economic exploitation and the despoiling of the environment.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>All of these readings are for your future perusal but you may read them and use them for your class work if you so desire.</td>
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Course Requirements

Fieldnote Journals
It is expected that each student will keep a fieldnote journal throughout the duration of the program. This is for recording everyday observations and experiences as well as reflecting on the readings. These might include notes from specific field visits, observations made during homestays or on the street, as well as more concerted reflections which draw on some of the concepts elaborated through the classes. While there is no formal grade for these journals, they will provide the backbone of the student’s research and will thus impact significantly on the quality of the graded assignments. There will be some guidance at the beginning of the course as to the function of these journals, what might be included in them and how they can be used as part of the research and writing work.

Class Participation (30%)
Students are expected to participate actively in faculty sessions and to complete required readings beforehand. Faculty sessions will be connected to and complemented by site visits and guest lectures in each city, as well as content from other courses. Participation is more than just showing up or speaking out; it means that you actively contribute to the intellectual growth of the group by thoughtfully engaging with guest lectures, faculty, and fellow students and integrating information from field visits, other courses, observations and discussions from homestays, daily experiences and so forth.

Assignments
As well as class participation, there are three graded assignments on this course. The objective of these assignments is to encourage students to bring historical, social and political reflections to bear on particular issues relating to food and/or water within each of the three countries we visit. While there may not be much opportunity for in-depth research, it is hoped and expected that these assignments will enable students to develop their critical capacities, helping them to ask better questions about the complex situations they encounter. The faculty will provide productive comments and suggestions after each assignment.

Vietnam: Written Paper (35%)
The first written assignment is a 1500 word essay to be submitted on Monday, October
14 in Vietnam. The paper is to be a critical discussion of some of the theoretical and historical themes introduced in the course so far.

Morocco: Written Paper (35%)
The second assignment is a 1500 word written paper to be submitted on the morning of Monday, October 28 in Morocco. Drawing on examples and observations from at least two of the countries visited, students will be asked to apply some of the theoretical and historical approaches of the course material to an analytical and comparative essay on political economy and climate change.

Grading
Faculty will give grades in the form of points and will return assignments with written comments. In the case of group assignments, an overall points score will be awarded for each group project as well as an individual score based on the performance and effort contributed individually to the group. At the end of the semester, the cumulative point score will be calculated in order to determine the final letter grade for the course. The final letter grades will be determined on the basis of cumulative points on assignments completed across the countries.

For final grades in IHP Climate Change courses it is useful for both faculty and students to think of letter grades in the following way. An “A” represents truly outstanding work that exemplifies thorough analysis, superior insight, and crystal clear presentation. A "B" signifies highly competent work that accomplishes the task at hand very well, through considerable thought, reasonable analysis, and an organized presentation. A "C" represents adequate work that meets basic requirements but demonstrates no distinction in terms of analytical insight or organization. A "D" is characterized by poorly or partially completed work that reflects a lack of initiative, inconsistent analysis, and/or erratic presentation. Plus and minus indicate relatively better or poorer work within each category. There is no A+.

Attendance and Participation
All students are expected to be present at every program session, with the only exceptions being illness (written note required from a non-IHP adult, e.g. homestay parent, or preferably, health care professional). Unexcused absences and habitual lateness will result in penalties reflected in your participation grade. Please inform the instructor if tardiness is anticipated. All students are expected to come to class on time.

Late work
In keeping with IHP policy, papers handed in late will drop one point per day, unless permission is granted otherwise. Course assignments are due at the beginning of the day.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad handbook for policies on academic integrity, ethics, warning and probation, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and the academic appeals process. Also, refer to the specific information available in the Student Handbook and the Program Dossier given to you at Orientation.