

ECL 0637 Political Ecology

Growing out of a general interest in power relations and the control of natural resources, Political Ecology analyzes the complex links between society and nature. It is not a concise theory but a collection of ideas, approaches, and methods whose focus has moved from explanatory/descriptive studies of isolated, homeostatic, and seemingly well adapted communities, to a critical examination of local global phenomena —integration, disruption, and constant change. The results of this latter focus have challenged the notion that environmental problems are created by simple causal mechanisms. In this context, this course seeks to engender a deeper understanding of the various ways in which humans have conceptualized their relationship(s) to the environment and how these actors have acted on these conceptualizations through conservation efforts, policies, conflicts, etc. This course seeks, in the particular contexts of the Galápagos and mainland Ecuador, to build a general theoretical toolkit and hone skills in critical thinking, research and analysis.