

# **GEOG 370: Problems of Resource Management**

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## **Overview**

What is environmentalism? Are humans a part of nature or separate from it? How has American society both exploited and conserved natural resources like timber, coal, and oil? What is the difference between conservation and preservation, and how does this difference continue to shape environmental politics today? In a world experiencing wide-ranging environmental crises—from global climate change to species extinctions—it is more crucial than ever to understand the theory, politics, and practices of environmental conservation and resource management. GEOG 370 will address how American society's ideas about the environment have changed over time, and how changing attitudes toward nature have resolved some environmental crises while simultaneously giving rise to new problems.

This course recognizes that environmental conservation is itself a social process, shaped by scientific, political, cultural, and economic forces acting across both space and time. Not only will we trace the development of environmental thought and action as it has occurred in the United States, but also we will examine both local and global conservation dilemmas that remain highly relevant and controversial today. Should hydraulic fracturing (fracking) be permitted on National Forest lands? Should wealthier, industrialized nations pay poorer nations to keep their forests standing? Can and should freshwater be treated as a commodity available for purchase on the global marketplace? Closer to home, are dams in the Pacific Northwest an ecological scourge to be avoided or a clean, cheap energy source to be celebrated?

## **Role of Service-Learning in the Course**

In this course, we explore the theory, politics, and practices of environmental conservation and resource management. By engaging in service learning, students will gain first-hand experience with the economic, social, cultural, and political contexts that shape environmental thought and action. Students will get an understanding of the types of environmental projects that organizations pursue, and how and why such projects are carried out.

## **Assignments Related to Service-Learning**

Service learning will culminate in a reflective paper (serving as the final paper for the course) in which students will put their service experience into conversation with classroom theories and concepts. Papers will specifically consider how different ideas about nature (e.g. conservation vs. preservation) shape the mission(s) of the organization or project with which he/she worked. Students will also be responsible for completing a mid-term journaling assignment that will help them work toward the final reflective paper.

## **Carlson Leadership & Public Service Center**

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