



Political Ecology and Environmental Justice

Dr Will Lock

Department of International Development

30-Credit, Year 3 Module

Spring Term 2026/27

US

UNIVERSITY
OF SUSSEX

—

GLOBAL STUDIES

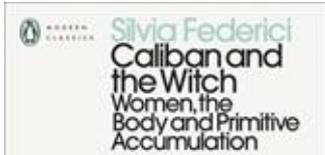
Module Overview

Should we all be **vegan**? What is **extractivism**? What are the environmental consequences of **electric cars**? How does **carbon offsetting** work? How are indigenous groups mobilising against **environmental violence**? In this module, we engage with these and other environmental justice concerns through the lens of **political ecology**.

Political ecology is a **multidisciplinary** field of study that analyses the relationships between **Nature and Society** and the connections between **environmental change** and **social (in)justice**.



Module Overview



A Billion Black
Anthropocenes
or None

Kathryn Yusoff

THE RED DEAL
INDIGENOUS ACTION TO SAVE OUR EARTH



In the first section of the module, we explore the origins of political ecology through **feminist** and **decolonial** theories on extractivism, capitalism and dispossession.

The second section provides you with **methodological and practical training** on public communication tools which you will use for your final podcast and blog assignments.

The third section consists of a series of case studies – on **plantations**, **animal agriculture**, **resistance** and **toxicity** – drawing on current issues of political ecological concern and featuring guest lectures from political ecologists at Sussex.

Teaching Format and Assessment

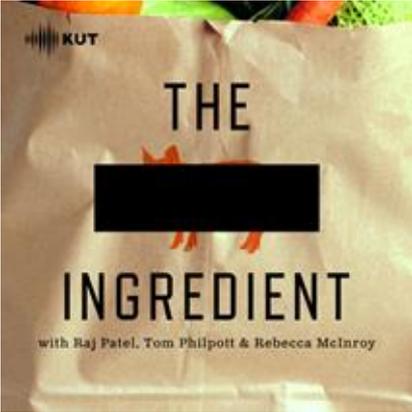
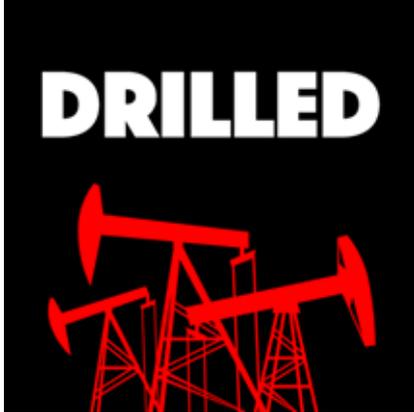
This is an interactive module, with a 3-hour seminar each week. Your assessments will encourage you to approach political ecology as a **public-facing discipline** that engages with social movements.

In Week 9 you will submit a **short group-produced podcast** and **associated personal reflection** highlighting an environmental justice concern, drawing on your emerging understanding of political ecology. These could be global or local in scope (for example, fracking, air pollution, carbon offsetting or pipeline developments on indigenous territories).

The final assessment will be a **long-form blog submission** (3,000 words) designed to enhance public understanding of a contemporary environmental justice concern.



Podcasts and Public Communication





Module Convenor

My research focuses on the emerging world of **'Green Capitalism'** and the role of **carbon markets, for-profit conservation** and **nature-based solutions** in delivering **'Net Zero'** carbon promises.

I conducted fieldwork in a conservation and reforestation project in the Peruvian Amazon, working with cocoa farmers implementing **agroforestry models** and producing **FairTrade and organic** certified beans for largely European chocolate consumers.

I am interested in both the emergence of **reforestation as a climate solution** and the link between sustainable supply chains and conservation/deforestation at **forest frontiers**, as well as possible avenues for reframing **ecosystem restoration**, beyond carbon plantations and commodity crops (such as rewilding).

Dr Will Lock

Lecturer in
Anthropology and
International
Development

Email:

w.lock@sussex.ac.uk

Office: Arts C 257

