



S F S THE SCHOOL
FOR FIELD STUDIES

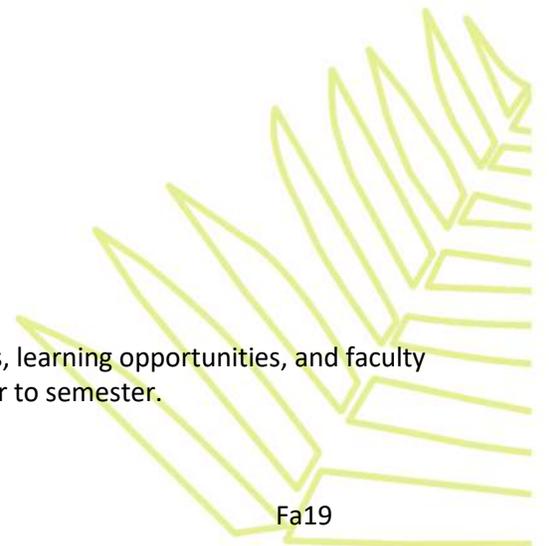
Environmental Ethics & Development

SFS 3820

Syllabus

Center for Sustainable Development Studies (SCDS)
School for Field Studies (SFS), Atenas, Costa Rica
Atenas, Costa Rica

This syllabus may develop or change over time based on local conditions, learning opportunities, and faculty expertise. Course content may vary from semester to semester.



COURSE CONTENT SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Please note that this is a copy of a recent syllabus. A final syllabus will be provided to students on the first day of academic programming.

SFS programs are different from other travel or study abroad programs. Each iteration of a program is unique and often cannot be implemented exactly as planned for a variety of reasons. There are factors which, although monitored closely, are beyond our control. For example:

- Changes in access to or expiration or change in terms of permits to the highly regulated and sensitive environments in which we work;
- Changes in social/political conditions or tenuous weather situations/natural disasters may require changes to sites or plans, often with little notice;
- Some aspects of programs depend on the current faculty team as well as the goodwill and generosity of individuals, communities, and institutions which lend support.

Please be advised that these or other variables may require changes before or during the program. Part of the SFS experience is adapting to changing conditions and overcoming the obstacles that may be present. In other words, the elephants are not always where we want them to be, so be flexible!

Course Overview

Linking environmental justice to sustainability is an emerging field that combines the important dimensions of economic and social rights with the environmental underpinnings of sustainability. There are few places as well suited to examine the intersection of these rights and the environment as Costa Rica, which is home to the InterAmerican Court of Human Rights and a national political system that has fostered strong environmental protection policies. Although Costa Rican development efforts have improved many lives, areas of unregulated growth have created obstacles to political participation and limited access to livelihoods for marginalized groups and rural communities.

The foundation for ending such inequality is an examination of rights and their application, from the most fundamental, such as the right to life among and between species, to more contested guarantees like that of clean water. In this course, we will investigate fundamental questions like: what duty do we have to protect the biodiversity of the planet for future generations? What rights of use do indigenous people have to protected land in their territories? What duty does the government have to keep people safe from agrochemicals? How do our consumption choices impact those at the site of production and how can we change our consumption and travel habits to be more sustainable?

A main objective of the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals is to shift from compartmentalized conceptualization to learning and implementing development solutions that focus on integrated solutions. In this course we will use a multidisciplinary methodology, including ecology, economics, sociology and law, to consider how social policy and poverty, demographic change, development funding, agriculture, indigenous rights and climate change fit within the matrix of sustainable development.

These issues are then brought to life in the Costa Rica context through field labs, site visits and local research. Meeting with park rangers, farmers, and other specialists is essential to course objective of forming a complete understanding of rights and development issues first hand. On-site studies of tourism's impacts, waste reduction strategies and community participation in creating multifunctional green spaces are key to conceptualizing solutions that balance development needs. Fieldwork will incorporate socioeconomic principles with scientific methodology, in order to gather and analyze feedback from various stakeholders on issues ranging from tourism impacts to responses to climate change. Class and fieldwork are designed to enhance students' understanding of the challenges and opportunities prompted by developing in a more sustainable manner within the Costa Rican context.

Learning Objectives

The core skills students will learn in this course are critical thinking and analysis, field techniques, communication skills as well as collaboration and time management. The specific objectives of the course are as follows:

1. To become acquainted with concepts and methods of ethics that apply to issues regarding development, public policy making, environmental laws, public attitudes regarding humankind's dealings with the natural world.
2. To critically analyze the complexities in environmental issues, including the responsibility to future generations, the problem of moral standing of human and non-human species,

sustainability regarding human development, global environmental challenges, and environmental justice.

3. To examine stakeholders and events in the historical development of Costa Rica and how they impact present day development strategies and rights protection.
4. To critically assess alternative approaches to a code of responsibility to nature (i.e., an environmental ethic). To differentiate sustainable and non-sustainable practices in agriculture including social and environmental effects.
5. To identify the socio-economic and environmental impacts of tourism at the individual and community level and use data to recommend effective means of facilitating sustainable tourism.
6. To compare the development and protection of related rights in Costa Rica with the Panama situation on an extended field trip.
7. To formulate your own environmental ethic and to articulate and defend these ideas with clarity and consistency.

All trips, discussions, materials, movies and readings are part of the course so please come prepared to enjoy *and* learn throughout the program! You will learn and develop experimental design, interviewing techniques, basic descriptive statistics, proposal writing and communication skills.

Assessment

We expect active participation in all aspects of the course, including discussions and analysis of the assigned readings, to the review of literature, classes and fieldwork. Part of the course experience is a group effort; others represent your individual work.

Student performance in this course will be evaluated based on the assessment items and their proportional weight to your final grade described below.

Assessment Item	Grade Value (%)
Field Lab (FLAB)	15
Field Exercise (FEX)	20
Sustainable Solutions Assignment	15
Midterm Project	20
Final Exam	20
Participation and Reflections	10
TOTAL	100

Field Lab (FLAB): Creation of urban/nature interactions: The municipal counsel of Ciudad Colon, a small town to the west of San Jose, has approved the creation of a park along the town's main river. The objective of the project is to create multiuse green spaces that encourage strengthened connections between community members and the environment. We will partner with A-01, the sustainable design

firm that is planning the park, to gather data from community members to conduct a park and land use before and after survey. Using surveying techniques, students will collect information on community-identified public use, whether there are class or generational difference in use and how park spaces could be organized to meet community needs. This baseline data can be used to compare community satisfaction with services and water quality improvements longitudinally. This lab aims to track change of green space interaction through this innovative sustainable urban development project.

Field Exercise (FEX): SWOT Analysis of Panamanian Tourism: For the SWOT analysis project students will evaluate a policy, business, or tourist practice experienced on our visit to Boquete, Panama. This exercise is designed to understand and evaluate sustainability of tourism practices in relation to their Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT). Data collection methods will include observations, field lectures and conversations with stakeholders. The objective is to identify and analyze an aspect of the tourism experience, including a tour to a Ngobe village, to assess the potential positive and negative cultural, social, economic impacts. Students will make recommendations on how stakeholders, surrounding communities and the government can facilitate more positive outcomes of tourism offerings. The project offers students the chance to think critically about the impacts of tourism on local populations in the context of educational tourism. Another objective is to develop new skills they can be used in environmental and community evaluation more generally and can be applied to future directed research projects.

Sustainable Solutions Community Assignment– This activity highlights the application of intersecting social and environmental sustainability concepts covered in the course. Will we work with one of our community partners to assisting in ongoing efforts to collect and analyze data on community initiatives to improve environmental health including eliminating plastic use by local business and improve water quality and river health. Final group projects will include analysis of data collecting in the field as well as sharing ideas and suggestions will stakeholders. These projects will also be the basis for midterm project presentations

Final Exam: The examination will be an assessment of material covered over the duration of the course. A review session will be held in preparation the final exam.

Participation: A student's ability to synthesize and share ideas is critical to the individual and classroom learning process. Participation in class and a general high contribution to group learning is expected at SFS. One's ability to be a strong member of a learning community will enhance the grade assigned at the end of the program. Evaluation will reflect your actual contribution to the analyses, not simply the amount of time you talk. Thus, making thoughtful contributions that build upon topics of discussion are an important element of participation. Participation will also include brief, written reflections on readings and effective leadership of one class reading discussion during the semester.

Grade corrections of any of the above items should be requested in writing or person within 24 hours after assignments are returned. Corrections will not be considered afterwards.

Grading Scheme

A	95.00 – 100.00%	B+	86.00 – 89.99%	C+	76.00 – 79.99%	D	60.00 – 69.99%
A-	90.00 – 94.99%	B	83.00 – 85.99%	C	73.00 – 75.99%	F	0.00 – 59.99%
		B-	80.00 – 82.99%	C-	70.00 - 72.99%		

General Reminders

Class courtesies:

- Arrive to class on time.
- Come to class ready to participate.
- Do not use computers or other electronic devices for reasons other than note taking. If internet access is too great of a temptation, do not bring devices and computers to class.
- If you cannot come to a class due to illness or other serious issues, email or check with professor to find out what you have missed.

Readings: Assigned readings will be provided in a packet before the course begins. It is important that you read all materials before class, since the volume of the material in the class requires a brisk pace. You are expected to have read all of the assigned articles. In each class, two students will lead the group by highlighting important concepts and raising relevant questions for the group to consider and discuss.

Plagiarism and Cheating: Using ideas and materials of others without giving due credit is cheating and will not be tolerated. A grade of zero will be assigned to anyone caught cheating or aiding another person to cheat, either actively or passively (e.g., allowing someone to look at your exam). Unless specifically stated otherwise, all assignments should be individual pieces of work.

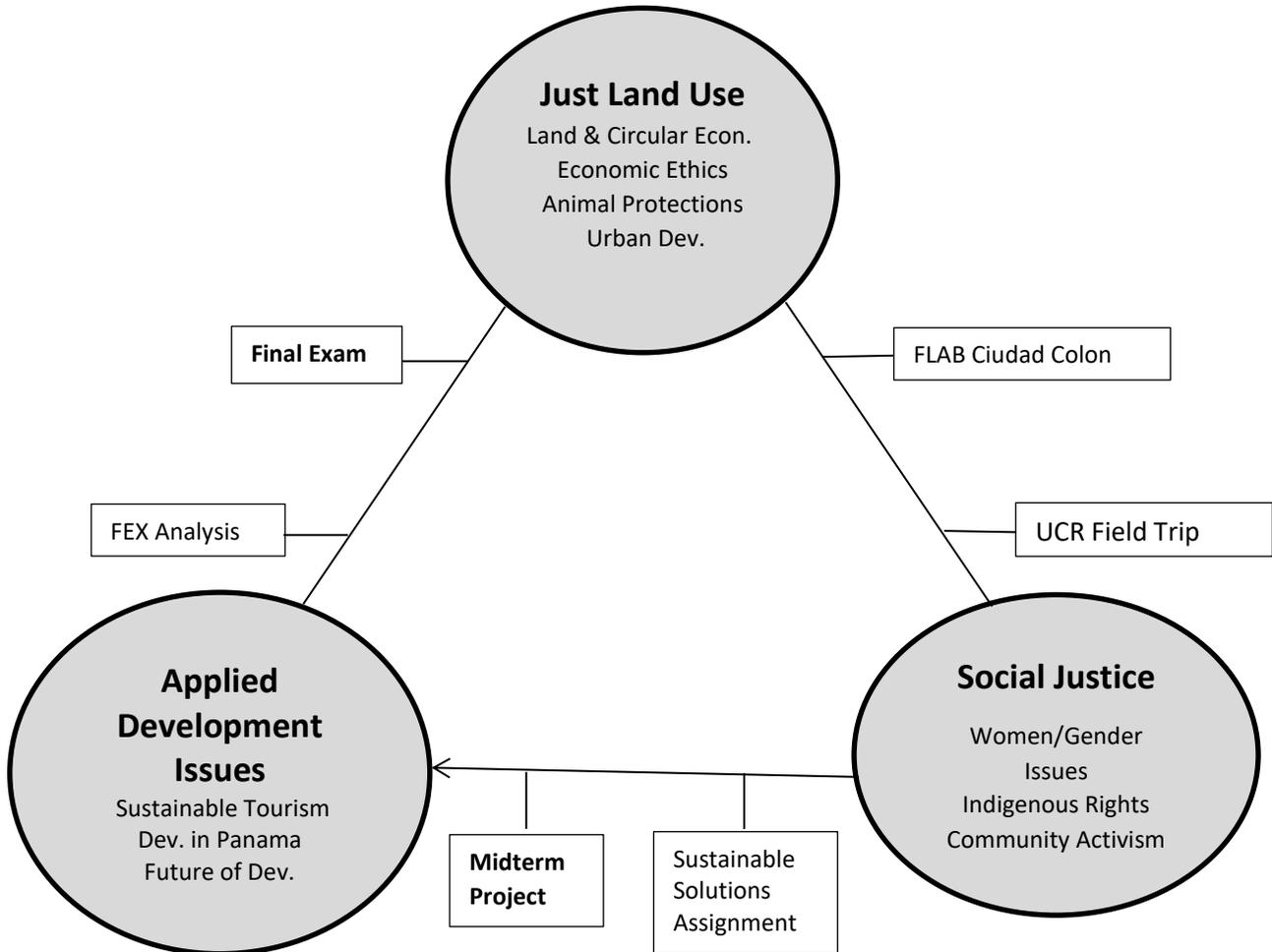
Appropriate use of technology: SFS has worked hard to provide internet access to all its staff and students. Inappropriate uses include gaming or excessive video/music downloading and use for non-academic purposes during class. Inappropriate use will result in the loss of this privilege.

Deadlines:

Activities and assignments are closely and carefully scheduled due to the pace of the program. Since students must not fall behind, deadlines are *firm* and extensions will only be considered under the most extreme circumstances. Late assignments will incur a 10% penalty for every day that they are late. This means an assignment that is a day late will have 10% removed. If an assignment is more than three days late it will receive a grade of zero.

Course Themes and Timeline

Introduction – Costa Rica culture & the pursuit of sustainable development



Course Content

Type of activity- L: Lecture, **FL:** Field Lecture, **FEX:** Field Experiment, **D:** Discussion, **GL:** Guest Lecture, **O:** Orientation/Context information, **FLAB:** Field Lab, **LAB:** Lab, workshop

No. and Type	Title and Objectives	Time (hrs.)	Required Readings
FT	Manu/El Progreso Farm/ Dole <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable farming practices and challenges Social and env. impacts of multinational monoculture production. 	4	
Class 1 L/D	Course introduction: Environmental Ethics and Sustainability Costa Rican culture & the pursuit of sustainable development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental ethics and social justice. Costa Rican social system and development Costa Rica's main social and env. dev. issues Ethical Issue: What factors have advanced and limited Costa Rica's sustainable development model?	1.5	1- Sada, The Curious Case of Costa Rica. OR 2- Garza – Puede el gobierno de Carlos Alvarado salvar el planeta?
Class 2 L/D	Agriculture and the Circular Economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand challenges around monocultures Importance of whole food systems Evaluate challenges and solutions to securing food supplies 	1	
Class 3 L/D	Development & Extractionist Economies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> History of colonial extraction particularly in Latin America How these traditions impact capitalism model and personal consumption Ethical Issue: How do we ensure environmental justice for communities of color, low incomes and in the global south as well as future generations?	2	3- Bader, Costing the Earth
Class 4 L/D	The social and environmental impacts of agriculture production <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tragedy of the commons 	1.5	4- Shiva, Shiva: Everything I Need to Know I Learned in the Forest.

No. and Type	Title and Objectives	Time (hrs.)	Required Readings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right to a clean and safe environment • Peripheral production for core consumers Ethical Issue: How can we meet the humans' needs while reducing environmental harm?		- Film: Luxury at what Cost: Pineapple Production in C.R.
FT D	Monteverde Field Trip <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism waste production and local solutions 	4	
Class 5 L/D	Externalities & Community Responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply & demand • Externalities • Holding perpetrators responsible • Values of consumerism Ethical Issue: How do we fairly measure an assign accountability to externalities of production? What are the best ways to reduce those externalities?	1.5	5 – Crook, Ecocide, genocide, capitalism and colonialism
Briefing	Ciudad Colon Field Trip Briefing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rio Pacacua Urban park plans • Survey preparation • Discussion of Quitirrisi Indigenous group 	1	
Field Trip FT/FLAB/GL	Pacacua River Urban Park Field Trip: Creation of urban/nature interactions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather data on community members' perception/ use of river plus desired env. & community spaces • Guest Lecture on Indigenous Issues 	4	
Class 6 L/D	Urban Development and Sustainable Cities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban design and ecological protection • Projects in Costa Rica Ethical Issues: How to incorporate ecological protection in urban areas by improving communities?	1.5	Film: Maas – Resilient Urbanism
Class 7	Indigenous rights and contributions to environmental protection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous cultures in Costa Rica • Concepts of nature and identity 	1.5	6- McPhual, Costa Rica Struggles with Indigenous Land Rights

No. and Type	Title and Objectives	Time (hrs.)	Required Readings
L/D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation objectives and indigenous people's roll in land management <p>Ethical Issue: How can indigenous people protect their lands and cultures within existing frameworks?</p>		7- Sylvester, O. et al. The Protection of Forest Biodiversity can Conflict with Food Access for Indigenous People.
Class 8 L/D	<p>Protection of wild spaces and animals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation vs. preservation • Aims of Costa Rican's protected areas • Animal rights and protection in Costa Rica <p>Ethical Issue: Do non-human animals have rights & if so, what rights should those be?</p>	2	8- Singer, All Animals Are Equal. 9- Daniel, Costa Rica's Hunting Ban.
Field Trip	<p>University of Costa Rica & San Jose Field Trip</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field trip to UCR – Lecture on urban habitats • Walking tour of San Jose, urban development 	4	
Class 9 D	<p>Urban Ecology Discussion</p>	2	
Class 10 L/D	<p>Women and gender in development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of gender in colonialism and development • Genders perceptions of work and care • National and regional protection mechanisms • Gender roles in C.R., past and present <p>Ethical Issue: How do historical gender expectations influence society and specifically environmental sciences?</p>	1.5	10- Patel & Moore, "Cheap Care". 11- Anders, Women's Development: Costa Rica Continues to Fall Short Says UN
Class 11 D/LAB	<p>EED Assignment Preparation/Data Collection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss community sustainability initiatives • Discuss assignment objectives and data collection strategies • Start data collection in Atenas 	3	

No. and Type	Title and Objectives	Time (hrs.)	Required Readings
Class 12 LAB	EED Assignment Data Collection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue data collection in Atenas • Data entry and begin reports *Meet w/ professor about sustainable solution project if needed	3	
Classes 13	EED Assignment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work on assignment report • Meet with prof. if needed 	1.5	
Midterm Project	Midterm Project Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a presentation based on assignment data and report that is useful to stakeholders. • Present to class and professor 	1.5	
Class 14 L/D	Tourism as a development tool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social, economic and environmental impacts of tourism • Objectification of the <i>other</i> or cross-cultural learning? • Sustainable Tourism Certifications • Community participation in tourism Ethical Issue: Can tourism be economically, socially and culturally sustainable?	1.5	12- Honey, "Costa Rica: On the Beaten Path" in <i>Ecotourism and Sustainable Development</i> .
Class 15 L/D	Sustainability and environmental ethics in Panama <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical influence on economic development • Environmental policies and development • Environmental and social impacts of tourism Ethical Issue: What are the benefits and challenges tourism for various social groups?	2	13 - THEODOSSOPOULOS, Tourists and Indigenous Culture as Resources: Lessons from Embera Cultural Tourism in Panama
FT	Extended field trip to Panama <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FEX on willingness to pay, sustainable tourism in Panama City 	13	

<i>No. and Type</i>	<i>Title and Objectives</i>	<i>Time (hrs.)</i>	<i>Required Readings</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lectures and discussion on development and social rights in Panama 		
Class 16 FEX	Panama Sustainable Tourism FEX <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment explanation and data analysis 	1	
Class 17 L/D	Regenerative tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiencing new places while spurring positive impacts Movie: The Goose that Laid the Golden Egg 	1.5	14 -Smith, Transforming Travel: Realising the Potential of Sustainable Tourism, Introduction
FT	Toledo Organic Coffee Farm Field Trip Challenges and benefits of organic production	2	
Final Exam	Review Exam		
	Total Contact Hours	63	

Required Readings (in order presented in course):

Sada, M.J., The Curious Case of Costa Rica, *Harvard International Review*, Sept. 17, 2015.

Garza – Puede el gobierno de Carlos Alvarado salvar el planeta? *La Republica*, Friday August 23, 2019.

Bader, Costing the Earth,

Crook et al, Ecocide, genocide, capitalism and colonialism: Consequences for indigenous peoples and global ecosystems environments. *Theoretical Criminology*, Vol. 22(3) 298–317, 2018.

Shiva, V., “Everything I Need to Know I Learned in the Forest”, *Yes! Magazine*, Dec., 2012.

McPhual, J., “Costa Rica Struggles with Indigenous Land Rights”, *Tico Times*, Dec. 7. 2015.

Sylvester, O., et al. The Protection of Forest Biodiversity can Conflict with Food Access for Indigenous People, *Conservation and Society* 14(3): 279-290 2016.

Singer, P., All Animals Are Equal. *Philosophical Exchange* 1, (1974), 103-116.

Daniel, A., Costa Rica’s Hunting Ban. *NOVA*, Sept., 2013.

Patel, R. and J. Moore, *The History of the World in Seven Cheap Things*, Univ. of California Press, 2017.

Anders, W., Women's Development: Costa Rica Continues to Fall Short, UN Says, Costa Rica Star, March 24, 2017.

Honey, M., "Off the Beaten Path" from Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise?, Island Press, 2008.

THEODOSSOPOULOS, D., Tourists and Indigenous Culture as Resources: Lessons from Embera Cultural Tourism in Panama, In: Carrier, James and Macleod, Donald, eds. *Tourism, Power and Culture: Anthropological Insights. Tourism and Cultural Change*, Channel View, Bristol, pp. 115-133.

Smith, *Transforming Travel: Realising the Potential of Sustainable Tourism*, CABI Press, 2018.

Recommended Readings:

Baatz, A., Climate Change and individual duties to reduce GHG emissions. *Ethics, Policy and Environmental*, 17(1), 1-19.

Banerjee, J and E. Duflo. *Poor Economics*, Chapter 1, 2011.

Hardin, G. The Tragedy of the Commons, *Science*, Vol. 162, No. 3859 (13 December 1968), pp. 1243-1248.

Colbert, E. "A Reporter's Field Notes on the Coverage of Climate Change", *The Yale Environment* 360, March 11, 2009.

Hawken, P. *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*. New York, New York: Penguin Books, 2017.

Klein, N. No is Not Enough, Chapter 4, *The Climate Clock Strikes Midnight*, 2017.

Koeppel, D. *Banana: The Fate of the Fruit that Changed the World*. Hudson Street Press, 2008.

Klytchnikova, I, and P. Dorosh. How tourism can (and does) benefit the poor and the environment - a case study from Panama, (2009), World Bank, available at <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/10237/520460BRI0EnBreve1460Box345549B01PUBLIC1.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

McDonough, W., & Braungart, M. *Cradle to cradle: Remaking the way we make things*, London: Vintage, 2009.

MacLennan, M. and Perch, L., Environmental justice in Latin America and the Caribbean: Legal empowerment of the poor in the context of climate change, *Climate Law* 3, 283–309, 2012.

National Academy of Sciences, "Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change", 2010.

Paterson, B. Ethics for Wildlife Conservation: Overcoming the Human–Nature Dualism, *BioScience*, Volume 56, Issue 2, 1 February 2006, Pages 144–150.

Pollen, M. *The Botany of Desire*, Chapter 4 Potato, Random House, 2002.

Purdy, J., Our place in the world: A new relationship for environmental ethics and law. *Duke Law Journal*, 62(4), 857-932.

Sachs, J. *The Age of Sustainable Development*, Colombia Press, 2015, Chapters 1 and 2

[Schmidtz](#), D. and Willcott, E., *Environmental Ethics: What Really Matters, What Really Works*, Oxford University Press, 2011.

Sen, A. "Development as Capacity Expansion", *Readings in Human Development*, 2003.

Van Tassell, D. The Paradox of Ecotourism in Costa Rica: Can Economic Development and Environmental Preservation Co-Exist?, *Development Review of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 7 No. 2 December 30, 2006.

Vendermeer, J. and Ivette Perfecto, *Breakfast of Biodiversity: The Political Ecology of Rain Forest Destruction*, Chapter 11, 2013.

Weisman, A. *Countdown*. Little, Brown and Company, 2013.

Wise, S. Animal Rights, Animal Wrongs: The Case for Nonhuman Personhood, *Foreign Affairs*, April 28, 2015.