



SESYNC Feedbacks

News from the National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center



INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES | People, Politics, & Money

What are inherent to pretty much all socio-environmental challenges? **People, politics, and money**, of course! Therefore, adopting interdisciplinary approaches that draw upon the studies of these topics is critical for devising effective solutions. In the following SESYNC resources, experts introduce learners to the basics of **anthropology**, **political ecology**, and **economics**. These explainers, lessons, and videos provide users with background on the disciplines, their fundamental methodologies, and examples of their applications and relevance to socio-environmental research. Learn more below.



Lesson: Introduction to Anthropology for Socio-Environmental Science

This lesson introduces **anthropology to learners primarily trained in ecological or environmental sciences**. It aims to help learners identify existing and potential intersections between biophysical science and anthropological approaches to environmental problems and socio-

environmental systems thinking.

Lesson: Collaborating Across Anthropological and Environmental Science Domains

This lesson challenges students to think about how anthropology and environmental science are synthesized to understand complex systems. It exposes students to a range of perspectives on the challenges and possibilities involved when working with methods, data, knowledge, and epistemological frameworks from these distinct disciplinary backgrounds.



Lesson: Introduction to the Methods of Anthropologists

This lesson is meant to help students identify complementary anthropological approaches to environmental issues and subjects. Focusing on socio-cultural and linguistic anthropological approaches, this lesson aims to have learners develop an understanding of the scale and scope of data generated by these methods.

Explainer: Perspectives in Political Ecology

This brief explainer article provides an overview of the basic concepts of political ecology. It includes the origins of the concept, illustrative examples, and relevant research questions. It also provides recommendations for further reading for learners interested in delving in further.



Lesson: Introduction to Political Ecology

This lesson defines and explains political ecology as a perspective, and shows how political ecology is linked to environmental and social equity. It enables learners to understand how environmental vulnerability relates to social capital and geopolitical context rather than simply environmental risk.

Lesson: Political Ecology in Action: Water and People

This lesson serves to help participants put the more conceptual and theoretical topics covered in the above lesson, "Introduction to Political Ecology," into practical thinking. Using issues at the intersection of water and communities, this lesson illustrates how political ecology frameworks can help provide insights into the origins, dynamics, and inequities associated with socio-environmental problems.



Video: Why Draw from Political Ecology?

In this lecture, **Dr. Christina Hicks** discusses **political ecology** and argues that while this discipline draws on many theories, it is more aptly described as a method rather than a theory. This is due to how political ecology influences the lens through which one views a system and subsequently the related questions one asks. She explains that political ecology reveals why socio-political and power issues shape ideas, actions, and our interpretation of the world.

Explainer: Valuation of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Services: Economic Methods

This explainer provides an overview of valuation of ecosystem services as a way to measure individual and social preferences. It explains why it is difficult to apply dollar values; provides an overview of non-market methods, including revealed and stated preference methods, and their limitations. It also offers examples of non-market valuation research questions and illuminates why value estimates often do not represent the total value of an ecosystem service.



Classical versus Behavioral Economics: Environmental Applications

This explainer lays out the basics of integrating **behavioral economics (BE)** into **sustainability research and policy**. It shows how by applying BE to environmental policy, we may gain powerful tools that can seed and sustain widespread pro-environmental behavior. Some of these tools, like changing default settings to more sustainable choices, require little-to-no effort from the public and do not traverse fraught political or ideological lines that might discourage any behavior perceived as environmental.

Economic Valuation of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Services Lesson

This lesson introduces learners to various valuation methods used to determine monetary values for ecosystem services.

This resource aims to get learners to understand these methods, the data they use, and their limitations, as well as how users should interpret and apply these values. This lesson ultimately tries to deepen learners' understanding of why such estimates are used in decision making and public discourse.



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