Teaching Plan for the session (2021-22)

odd semester July 2021-December 2021

(BA ‘Honours other than History’ Hons V semester)

PAPER: **GE-V**

**Politics of Nature**

SEMESTER: V

SESSION: 2021-22 (odd semester)

TEACHER NAME**: Dr Madhuri Sharma**

SYLLABUS

**Unit 1: ‘Spaceship called earth’ – competition for bounded resources and livelihoods**

**Unit 2: Energy in Human History: –**

a. Before the era of coal, gas and oil

b. Era of fossil energy

**Unit 3: Ecological Imperialism**

a. Flora-fauna transfer

b. Diseases and Migration

**Unit 4: Unequal access and Industrial Production,**

a. Industrial Agriculture

b. Gendered access to natural resources

c. Cities and inequalities

**Unit 5: Anthropocene**

a. Climate change and writing ecological histories

b. Debating the Anthropocene / Capitalocene

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This introductory course familiarises students with the major themes in the history of human organization of nature -- for food, energy and raw materials. It studies the long-term transformations in the organization of Nature by the state and to manage energy production, plant and animal transfers, circulation of commodities and people, urbanization and industrialization of production.

This will help students understand the ecological articulation of social inequalities including

class, gender, ethnicity, caste, and nationality. By focusing on the planetary scale of ecological interconnectedness students will learn how to situate the politics of Nature that integrates extremes: poverty in the fertile plains, the development of cities and related environmental degradation elsewhere, scarcity of energy where dams and mines exists, and inequalities produced by carbon-energy regimes. Unit 5 will introduce the students to the issues and debates related to the ecological predicaments of the twenty-first century in a historical perspective.

**TEACHING TIME**

(No. Of Weeks) 16weeks- 5+1 credits

The six credit course will comprise of theory classes (five credits) and tutorials (one credit).

Each credit is equivalent to one hour of class-room instruction per week

Teaching plan is divided into 5Lectures + 3 Tutorials per week (8 hours per week)

CLASSES: 120 Classes

**UNIT WISE BREAK UP OF SYLLABUS**

**Unit-1:** This unit introduces student to conflict over natural resources and changing livelihood patterns.**(Teaching Time: 2 weeks Approx.)**

**Unit-2:** Introduces the emerging field of energy studies to understand the way societies fulfilled their energy requirements. In-depth reading of the use of forest, pastures, agricultural land and related issues on environmental changes will enable students to critique the predominant notion of harmony that existed between man and nature in the pre-modern societies.**(Teaching Time: 3 weeks Approx.)**

**Unit-3:** This unit explores how Empires of the New World transferred flora and fauna across

continents, affected the demography of local societies and completely transformed landscapes. The second rubric explains how colonialism generated new patterns of consumption by appropriating global resources and fossil fuels for industry, to produce an inter-connected but unequal world.**(Teaching Time: 4 weeks Approx.)**

**Unit-4:** This unit studies the new energy regimes of the modern world, with a special focus on industrial agriculture. It offers a historical perspective on increasing inequality of access to natural resources for women and the poor (within their own locations and across the world). It also critically examines the new forms of deprivation.**(Teaching Time: 3 weeks Approx.)**

**Unit-5:** Introduces the concept of Anthropocene to discuss emergent concerns regarding the influence of humans on the planet’s history. This provides a long-term historical perspective on contemporary environmental issues including global warming and need for innovation, policy change at the international level and the production of post humanist histories.**(Teaching Time: 2 weeks Approx.)**

**ASSESSMENT**

Internal Assessment: 25 Marks

Students will be regularly assessed for their grasp on debates and discussions covered in class. Two written submissions and at least one presentation will be used for final grading of the students. Students will be assessed on their ability to engage with a sizeable corpus of readings assigned to the theme for written submissions, i.e. being able to explain important historical trends and tracing historiography reflected in the assigned readings.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completion of this course the student shall be able to:

• Critique an understanding of environmental concerns based on a narrow scientific/ technological perspective

• Discuss environmental issues within a social and political *(*or *social scientific?)* framework

• Examine the role of social inequality. How does unequal distribution of and unequal access

to environmental resources help understand the environmental crisis of the world - from the

global to the local

• Examine the complexities of resource distribution and inequalities of resource use, locating

these within specific social contexts, with reference to case studies regarding water rights and

forest rights

• Locate solutions to environmental problems within a framework of greater democratisation

of resource use

• Problematise (or *critique?*) the notion of a pristine past - of perfect balance between human

societies and nature in pre-modern times.

**Essential readings**

**Unit 1**

• Bhattacharya, Neeladri. (1995). “Pastoralists in a Colonial World”, in David Arnold & Ramachandra

Guha, eds., *Nature, Culture, Imperialism: Essays on the Environmental History of*

*South Asia*.Delhi: Oxford University Press. pp. 49-85. (*Available in Hindi also*)

• Swaminathan, M S. (2008), ‘Agriculture on Spaceship Earth’, in Mahesh Rangarajan, ed.,

*Environmental Issues in India*. Delhi: Pearson. pp.161-183. (*Available in Hindi also*)

**Unit 2**

• Burke III, Edmund. (2009), “The Big Story: Human History, Energy Regime and the Environment” in Edmund Burke III and Kenneth Pomeranz, eds., *The Environment and World History*. Berkeley: University of California Press. pp. 33-53.

• Bulliet, Richard. (2005). *Hunters, Herders and Hamburgers: The Past and Future of Human- Animal* Relationships. New York: Colombia University Press.

• Urry, John. (2013). ‘The Century of Oil’, in *Societies Beyond Oil: Oil Dregs and Social Futures*. London: Zed Books. pp. 36-52.

• Crosby, Alfred W. (2006). *Children of the Sun: A History of Humanity’s Unappeasable Appetite for Energy*.New York: W. W. Norton. pp. 159-166 & pp. 117-158.

**Unit 3**

• Crosby, Alfred W. (1988), “Ecological Imperialism: The Overseas Migration of Western Europeans as a Biological Phenomenon” in Donald Worster, ed., *The Ends of the Earth*.New

York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 104-105.

• Cronon, William. (1983).*Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New*

*England*.New York: Hill and Wang, pp.3-18.

• Crosby, Alfred W. (1967). “ConquistadoryPestilencia: The First New World Pandemic and

the Fall of the Great Indian Empires”. *The Hispanic American Historical Review,* Vol.47(No.

3), pp.321-337.

**Unit 4**

• Kroese,Ron. (2002). “Machine Logic: Industrialising Nature and Agriculture”, in Andrew

Kimbrell, ed., *The Fatal Harvest Reader: The Tragedy of Industrial Agriculture*.London: Island Press. pp. 87-91

• McKittrick, Meredith. (2012). “Industrial Agriculture”, in J. R. McNeill & E. S. Maudlin,

eds., *Companion to Global Environmental History*. Oxford:Blackwell. pp. 411-432.

• Agarwal, Bina. (1992). “The Gender and Environment Debate: Lessons from India”. *Feminist Studies,* Vol. 18(No. 1), pp. 119-158.

• Merchant, Carolyn. (2017). ‘Gender and Environmental History’, in J. R. McNeill and Alan

Roe, eds., *Global Environmental History*.London: Routledge. pp. 82-87.

• Bauer, Jordan and Melosi, Martin V. (2012). “Cities and the Environment” in J. R. McNeill

and E. S. Maudlin, eds., *Companion to Environmental History*.Oxford: Blackwell. pp.

360-376.

• Heynen, Nik, Kaika, Maria and Swyngedouw, Erik. (2006). ‘Urban Political Ecology: Politicizing the production of Urban nature” in Nik Heynen et al. eds., *In the Nature of Cities:Urban Political Ecology and Politics of Urban Metabolism*.London: Routledge. pp. 1-19.

**Unit 5**

• White, Sam. (2012). ‘Climate Change in Global Environmental History’ in J. R. McNeill and E. S. Maudlin, eds., *Companion to Environmental History*. Oxford:Blackwell. pp. 394-410.

• Lewis, Simon L. and Maslin, Mark A. (2015). “Defining the Anthropocene”, *Nature,* Vol.

519, pp. 171-80.

• Steffen, Will, Crutzen, Paul J. and McNeill, J. R. (2008). “The Anthropocene: Are Humans

Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature”. *Ambio*, Vol. 36(No,8), pp. 614-621

• Moore Jason W. (ed.,) (2016)*Anthropocene or Capitalocene?: Nature, History and the Crisis of Capitalism*.Oakland: PM Press.

• Morrison, Kathleen D. (2015). “Provincializing the Anthropocene”. *Seminar*, Vol.673 (Sept), pp. 75-80.