Program: CET Colombia
Course Code/Title: (CA / GEOG 310) Environmental Conflicts, Territorialities, and Ethnic Groups in Colombia.
Total Hours: 45
Recommended Credits: 3
Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Geography, Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, and Economics
Language of Instruction: English.
Prerequisites/Requirements: None.

Description
The purpose of this course is to examine the main dynamics and debates about environmental and territorial conflicts in Colombia. Although the orienting approach is geographic with material from political ecology and environmental geography, the course encourages an interdisciplinary discussion and communicates extensively with the broad social sciences. It is open to students from different backgrounds, providing them with tools to analyze the main environmental and territorial conflicts that have taken shape in Colombia over the last few decades.

This course has three modules. The first one has a theoretical emphasis and explores relevant research to introduce the students to the topic, making sporadic references to the Colombian case. The second module focuses not only on the impact of armed conflict on the territories of ethnic minorities, but also on the evolution of illegal economies and their associated environmental conflicts. The third and final module presents relevant cases of territorial, environmental and gender/identity-based collective actions from below.

Objectives
By the end of the course, students will have:

- Learned some of the basic notions of human geography, such as environment, conflict, and territory, with an emphasis on the Colombian context. These concepts will be developed from a geographical perspective, although, a conversation with other fields such as sociology and anthropology will be stimulated.
- Built a historical overview of the civil war in Colombia and its impacts on the configuration of territories for minorities and ethnic groups.
- Discussed the main environmental conflicts that have emerged during the last decades and their relationship with the different illicit economies in this country, developed with strength in the countryside (our emphasis).
- Analyzed different journalistic sources that will put into context the central components of the transnational chain of illicit economy, especially coca and illegal mining.

Course Requirements
The course consists of class lectures, open discussions, and field visits to organizations, communities, and government offices. This course examines issues that are present in rural
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communities and the implementation of both territorial policies for ethnic groups and environmental agendas. Students are expected to actively participate in all lectures and out-of-classroom activities, and to read 30 pages, on average, per week to prepare for each lecture. Each student is required to write five 2-page short critical essays that summarize and analyze the main aspects of the literature assigned for each of the weeks selected. One midterm is scheduled at week 9. Students are expected to write a final 6-page paper resulting from extensive analysis of both the required and optional reading. The final manuscript draws attention to the relationships between environmental conflicts, illicit economies, and the evolution of territorialities for minority and ethnic groups.

Students are expected to attend each class and field-based course component, as outlined in the CET Attendance Policy.

Grading
- Short critical essays (5) – 50%
- Midterm (1) – 20%
- Final paper (1) – 30%

Readings


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Massé, Frédéric, and Phillippe Le Billon. “Gold mining in Colombia, post-war crime and the peace agreement with the FARC.” *Third World Thematics*, 2018.


Reyes, Jesus. “Despojo de territorios o reconocimiento de la tierra: coca, palma y poder en el Consejo Comunitario de Alto Mira y Frontera, Tumaco”. *Conflictos y procesos de paz:
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Vergara, Aurora. Afrodescendant Resistance to Deracination in Colombia. Massacre at Bellavista-Bojayá Chocó. Palgrave, 2018


Outline of Course Content

Topic 1: Course overview
- Environmental conflicts
- Territorialities
- Ethnic groups

Topic 2: Introduction to human geography
- Notions of Space
- Place
- Environment

Topic 3: Geographic research on conflict
- Diasporas in Africa
- Rwanda
- Genocide
- Final solutions

Topic 4: Environments in Latin America
- Conflict and violence in comparative perspective
- Colonization in the frontier
- Insurgencies in contemporary history

Topic 5: The new rush for land in Latin America
- Extractive economies
- Land grabbing and concentration
- Flex crops
- Conservation, forestry, and green grabbing
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Topic 6: The armed conflict in Colombia
- History of violent colonization
- Territorially differentiated settlement
- Armed confrontation

Topic 7: Deracination in Chocó
- Violent dispossession
- Afro-descendant diasporas
- Community Councils in Colombia and Choco

Topic 8: Land structure in the new century
- Violence as a territorialization strategy
- Palm and Banana in Urabá
- Curvaradó and Jiguamiandó
- Agribusiness actors and the armed conflict

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- Violence as a territorialization strategy
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- Curvaradó and Jiguamiandó
- Agribusiness actors and the armed conflict

Topic 10: The system of war in Colombia
- Rentier capitalism
- The system of war
- The resource curse in Colombia

Topic 11: Illicit economies
- Coca and cocaine in Colombia
- The war on drugs
- Psychoactive substances

Topic 12: Illegal mining in the Pacific
- Illegal mining
- Deforestation
- Paradoxes of development

Topic 13: Women as “violated objects” in the Colombian context
- Everyday land dispossession based on gender
- Land restitution
- Territories of violation