

## **Nature, Society and Power: Reading Political Ecology**

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### **Summary:**

Enframing of nature is often found to have intrinsic association with power, imagination and visuality having a distinct historicity and method of representation materialised by users located at various socio-economic and political strata. As nature is endlessly made available to the society through multiple practices and performances, following Edward Said it can be argued that modern enframing of nature and space has an inherent imagination of colonisation featuring coercion, appropriation and transformation. A central concern in the studies of nature- society interaction thus includes a thorough understanding of the instrumentalities that make the above framework operationally possible.

Since the last decades of the twentieth century nature has taken the centre stage of development discourses making its understanding a thoroughly interdisciplinary pursuit. It has synchronised with a time of huge politico-economic transformations at global scale associated with tremendous technological development on the one hand, and large-scale ecological catastrophe and cultural crisis, on the other. In the neo-liberal climate that subsequently has swamped the world, natures in both developed and less developed countries have got tangled with contradictions stemming from differentials in people's imagination of nature and that of the power structures. Interventions of power and simultaneous marginalisation of communities or their organic experiences have gradually brought the issue of social construction of nature to the fore. For the same reason, transformation of 'received nature' and its embedded politics at multiple scales have emerged as one of the prime concerns in environment and development studies in current times opening up possibilities of multifaceted interdisciplinary researches having focus on environmental and social justice, rights to nature, resource struggles and responsibilities. Significance of Political Ecology lies at this juncture.

The Course, through an extensive survey of literature produced in related areas, seeks to investigate the above complexities and develop a critical perspective of nature-society-power relations at both global and local levels.