On January 9, 2012, the US government announced a twenty year moratorium on new uranium concessions within one million acres surrounding the Grand Canyon. For most Americans, the moratorium responded to a belief that extraction of any sort -- but especially of radioactive minerals -- would violate the sanctity of Nature as it has been preserved in the wilderness area surrounding the National Monument. But mines are always located deep within -- and hence in some respect “violate” -- nature. Indeed, the US government supports and promotes mineral extraction in numerous sites within the US, as well as in recognized “wilderness” and natural conservation areas of the many other countries where US mining corporations hold mineral concessions. Why are some natural regions worthy of protection from mining and others not? How is the “nature” from which we extract minerals shaped by the histories and lives of the people who live there? Why does it strike us as absurd to construct an open pit coal mine in the middle of a city, but not in an agricultural or “undeveloped” mountain area?

In this class we will draw on anthropological, historical and legal texts to explore the social memories, value systems, and affects through which “nature” is appropriated, contested and reclaimed in relationship to practices of mineral extraction. In what ways has the historical practice of mining itself shaped our understanding of nature as both resource and reserve? How are cultural and political lives shaped by the latent--and often unfulfilled--promise of invisible, subsoil resources? What does it mean to live next to a mine? What cultural and political resources do local populations mobilize to negotiate their relationships to the ongoing activities of established mines, and the latent promise and threat of nearby mining concessions? How is nature configured in law? In what ways do international regulatory regimes shape local perceptions of nature? How can alternative understandings of landscape, territory, home and consent find footing within transnational discourses of regulatory and environmental safeguards?

Requirements: This course will be run as a lecture discussion class. The instructor will provide a brief lecture and presentation on the assigned readings, followed by class discussion. Students should come to class prepared to actively engage in discussion of both the lectures and assigned readings. Discussion questions will be circulated for each set of readings in advance. In addition, as preparation for discussion you should make note of any concepts, arguments or other material in the assigned readings that you found to be either particularly interesting, difficult,
confusing or troubling. In addition to texts, we will be viewing several films in the class. The films will be screened in class. In addition, all films will be on reserve in the MSEL library.

Writing assignments include:

a) **five** short (1-2 page) **response pieces** in which you record your reactions to one of the assigned readings for the day on which you turn in the response paper. The purpose of the response papers is to facilitate your participation in class discussions. Your response should therefore be focused on issues you found either particularly important and interesting, or problematic in the readings assigned for that week. It should not be a summary of the assigned article or book. The five response papers can be distributed over the course of the semester, but you can do only one response paper per week. Response papers will be read by the instructor, but they will not be assigned a letter grade. Because response papers are intended to facilitate your participation in class discussion, they may not be turned in late.

b) **three short** (5-6 page) **essays** due on **February 23 and March 29.** Prompts for the essays will be handed out in class one week before the essays are due.

c) **a final 8-10 page essay due on May 16.** For this final essay, students will discuss and critically evaluate any one of the books or films we have read or viewed in the course, situating it in relationship to the other case studies or arguments we have discussed in class and in the other assigned readings.

*Grading criteria for each of the three essays will be discussed and explained in class.*

Final grades will be determined based on the following distribution:

- Response papers (15%)
- Essays (45% - 10% for each of first two essays; 20% for third essay)
- Class participation and attendance (40%)

All readings will be available on electronic reserves at Eisenhower Library. Assigned and recommended books (*We Eat the Mines and the Mines Eat Us; Not Ours Alone; Crude Chronicles. Dependency and Exploitation in Bolivian Tin Mines; and A Brief History of Neoliberalism*) have been ordered for purchase at the University Bookstore. They are also on overnight reserve at Eisenhower Library. Films will be screened in class, and will also be available for viewing at the Eisenhower Video Reserve desk.

**Syllabus of readings**

January 31 Introduction
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jessica Banko</td>
<td>“Mother of God, Child of Zeus.”</td>
<td>Virginia Quarterly Review, Fall 2010:94-121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karl Marx</td>
<td>“The Precious Metals.”</td>
<td>In Grundisse: Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/ch02_4.htm">http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1859/critique-pol-economy/ch02_4.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/grundrisse/ch03.htm">http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/grundrisse/ch03.htm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>recommended</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>William Balée &amp; Clark Erickson, ed. (New Orleans: Tulane University Press)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>David Cleary</td>
<td><em>Anatomy of the Amazonian Gold Rush.</em></td>
<td>Iowa City” University of Iowa Press; <strong>Read</strong>: pp. TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Film: <em>Streams of Gold,</em></td>
<td>2004. A documentary video by John Tweedy and Beret E.Strong (59 minutes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Extractive States**

February 28


March 6


**recommended:**


March 13


March 20  
**Spring Break: No Class**

March 27  


March 29: Second Essay Due

Resources and Resistance

April 3  
**Film: Crude: The Real Price of Oil (Joe Berlinger, 2009, 104”).**


**recommended:**  

April 10


April 17

**Film:** *Even the Rain* (Iciar Bollain, 2008, 103”)


**Recommended:** For background information on the main historical characters portrayed in the film see:

Bartolome de Las Casas:
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bartolom%C3%A9_de_las_Casas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bartolom%C3%A9_de_las_Casas)

Antonio de Montesinos:

**Hatuey:** [http://www.historyofcuba.com/history/oriente/hatuey.htm](http://www.historyofcuba.com/history/oriente/hatuey.htm)

April 24

**Film:** *Tambogrande: Mangos, Murder, Mining* (Ernesto Cabellos & Stephanie Boyd, 2007, 85”).

May 1


May 8

Study Week

May 15

Third Essay Due