Indigenous Peoples and Development: A Political Ecology Approach

Instructor’s Name & Profile
Prof. Da-Wei Kuan (官大偉), Associate Professor, Department of Ethnology, College of Social Sciences, National Chengchi University

Course Date & Time
July 23, 24, 25, 30, 31, August 1
9:10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Course Objectives
The objectives of this course is to: 1) Help the students to understand both the theories and critiques of modernization and development; 2) provide a framework for learning the cultural ecology of Taiwan indigenous peoples, their experiences of encountering modernization, and current efforts to seek for alternative development; 3) enhance the students’ ability to dialogue between political ecology theories and case studies.

Course Description
Peoples speaking Austronesian languages in Taiwan lived independently and autonomously for thousands of years until the colonial powers landed and began the process of modernization. Modernization is a set of powerful discourses and practices integrating indigenous peoples and their lands into state politics and market economy. It is also a set of monotonous discourses and practices eliminating indigenous cultures and ecological knowledge. Meanwhile, indigenous peoples’ continual struggles to survive their unique identities and relations to the lands are inspiring us to image the pluralistic and alternative possibilities.

Based on the objectives described above, this course includes four main themes:
1) the theories of development and modernity;
2) the historical context of Taiwan indigenous peoples and modernization;
3) the indigenous struggles and testimonies;
4) the political ecology reflections of contemporary efforts that Taiwan indigenous peoples made to seek for alternative development with culture and identity.

Course Outline or Topics
【7/23】Theme: Conceptualizing Modernization and Development
【7/24】Theme: Precolonial indigenous cultures, colonial contact, and State-led Development
【7/25】Theme: Indigenous Movement + Contemporary Indigenous Societies (I): Political Participation
【7/30】Theme: Contemporary Indigenous societies (II): Land and Natural Resources
【7/31】Theme: Contemporary Indigenous societies (III): Cultural Revitalization and Representation
【8/01】Theme: Seeking for Alternative Development
Course requirements/ Grading Standards

20% course participation and discussion
20% Proposal for short essay (submit by the end of first week)
60% short essay (approximately 2500 words, submit in mid-August)

Reading Materials

1. [General References]

2. [References for Conceptualizing Modernization and Development]

3. [References for Precolonial indigenous cultures, colonial contact, and State-led Development]

4. [References for Indigenous Movement + Contemporary Indigenous Societies(I):political Participation]
5. **References for Contemporary Indigenous societies(II): Land and Natural Resources**

6. **References for Contemporary Indigenous societies(III): Cultural Revitalization and Representation**
   - Michael Rudolph. 2008. Ritual Performances as Authenticating Practices: Cultural representations of Taiwan’s aborigines in times of political changes. Berlin: LIT.

7. **References for Seeking for Alternative Development**
   - Lin, Yih-Ren*; Lahuy Icyeh; Da-Wei Kuan, 2008. 01, "Indigenous Language–Informed Participatory Policy in Taiwan: A Socio-Political Perspective," Documenting and Revitalizing Austronesian Languages, University of Hawaii Press, pp.134-161.