Environmental Justice and Political Ecology Field Course: Indigenous Perspectives, Activism and Coalitions
5 Credits, Fridays 10:30am–2:20pm
Co-taught via zoom by Profs. Jonathan Warren and Patrick Christie
https://redstick.wixsite.com/website
https://smea.uw.edu/faculty/patrick-christie/

There are two options to enroll:
JSIS 478 A (for UNDERGRADUATES, 5 credits) and
SMEA 572 (for GRADUATE students, enroll in both for total of 5 credits total)

Most environmental and natural scientists have failed to appreciate how the mismanagement of the Salish Sea is a direct by-product of the social injustices generated by settler colonialism.

Further, non-Indigenous conservationists and environmentalists have held problematic imaginings of Indigenous people and the natural environment, which have impeded (rather than advanced) environmental recovery. Ideas of Manifest Destiny and a human-free wilderness have set them at odds with Indigenous communities for decades. Fortunately, these divisions have begun to wane but there is much work still required to strengthen, amplify, and solidify these nascent inroads.

This course is aimed at helping to advance this process by 1) identifying and challenging racist tropes about Indigeneity and the natural environment, 2) teaching Indigenous histories, cultures, and treaty rights, 3) explore world views and how they underpin environmental policies, 4) studying coalition building within environmental (often Indigenous-led) social movements, and 5) examining Indigenizing efforts within historically white environmental organizations.

Students read and view films on these issues, learn from Indigenous guest lecturers, meet with Indigenous and non-Indigenous leaders engaged in environmental stewardship on two or three field excursions to indigenous communities – the Puyallup Tribe, Tulalip Tribes and perhaps one other.

Grading is based on completing the readings, viewing the films, active class participation, and the writing of three one-to-two page self-reflection papers.