

Instructor, Course Information & Objectives

**Bren School of Environmental Science & Management
UC Santa Barbara
Spring Quarter 2022**

ESM 296: Advanced Topics Seminar: *Decolonizing Conservation*

Instructor Information

Instructor:	Rae Wynn-Grant, Ph.D
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Office Hours:	Fridays 12:30-1:30pm and by appointment

Course Description

This seminar will introduce concepts of Decolonizing Conservation and will focus on reimagining the wildlife extinction crisis in Africa as a function of European colonialism, resource extraction, and brutality in the 1800s. The aim of the course will be to collect multiple sources of evidence to argue that wildlife poaching (a phenomenon largely carried out by Black African men and resulting in their incarceration) is a problem because of the reckless abuse of resources by Europeans. We aim to measure the threshold of resource extraction that tipped the scales to bring us to the extinction crisis we're in today where the loss of a single animal is catastrophic.

The course will lean on multidisciplinary sources of information and aims to result in arming the students with knowledge and informed opinions in order to write popular media pieces that push society to rethink who the villains are in the poaching discussion. This course will not be exhaustive, and will continue to build on previous work at each iteration.

- 1) April 1: Intro/First Day
 - a. What is “decolonized conservation”
 - b. How has conservation itself perpetuated racism, neo-colonialism, and been harmful to POC
 - c. Mordecai Ogada’s critiques about race and conservation in Kenya (<https://www.theelephant.info/features/2018/09/13/a-dark-truth-the-racist-dynamic-at-the-heart-of-kenyas-conservation-practices-and-policies/>)
 - d. Exercises:
 - i. Orient ourselves to the continent of Africa and the legacy of colonialism (including geographic legacy)
 - ii. Read more direct and current “decolonized conservation” papers
- 2) April 8: Leah Thomas, guest
 - a. Topic: Intersectional environmentalism
 - b. Discussion: how does this relate to a decolonized approach to conservation/environmental science
- 3) April 15: Understanding the wildlife extinction crisis in Africa
 - a. Where are we today
 - b. Why do we think it might be directly linked to colonialism
 - c. Homework: watch King Leopold’s Ghost
- 4) April 22 (*cancelled due to student presentations*)
- 5) April 29: Poaching vs hunting
 - a. Continuation of group preliminary data gathering
 - b. Continue watching “Trophy”
 - c. Current event: first non-Black person in African arrested for poaching
- 6) May 6: Understanding the assignment
 - a. The role of interdisciplinary research
 - i. Are there public figures whom we may want to contact?
 - b. Are there other ways to quantitatively analyze our question
 - c. Decisions on who will do what kind of project
 - i. Team A: data data data
 - ii. Team B: crafting the popular-media piece
 - iii. Team C: written history of these trends
 - iv. Team D: alternative tbd
 - v. Independent option tbd
- 7) May 13: Poaching Part 2
 - a. Read media pieces and look for articulation of East Asian involvement
 - b. Invite Laurel Chor to discuss the anti-Asian messaging in poaching activism

- 8) May 20: Check-in and report-backs
 - a. What can we determine about population trajectory of key wildlife species
 - b. What is our critique on how accessible or inaccessible the data are. What is the thought-piece here and does anyone want to take it on as their project?
 - c. How can we get a media piece started

- 9) May 27: Group/individual in-class work session

- 10) June 3: Group presentations & class discussion
 - a. Where should we take this moving forward
 - b. Plan the future of the media piece(s)