

Gregory M. Thaler

Department of International Affairs
School of Public and International Affairs
University of Georgia
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Appointments

- 2017-present Assistant Professor of International Affairs, University of Georgia
- 2017-present Core Faculty, Latin American and Caribbean Studies Institute, UGA
- 2017-present Faculty Affiliate, Center for Integrative Conservation Research, UGA
- 2019-present Faculty Affiliate, Sustainability Certificate Program, UGA
- 2021-present Faculty Affiliate, Interdisciplinary Qualitative Studies Certificate Program, UGA

Education

- Ph.D., Government, Cornell University, 2017
- M.A., Government, Cornell University, 2014
Exchange Scholar, Anthropology, Stanford University, 2012
- B.A., Political Science, Yale University, 2007
summa cum laude, with distinction in Political Science; Phi Beta Kappa

Publications

Book

Thaler, Gregory M. *Saving a Rainforest and Losing the World: Conservation and Displacement in the Global Tropics*. Reviewed and under contract with Yale University Press.

Articles and Book Chapters

- 2022 Ritter, Ellie* and Gregory M. Thaler. "Technical Reform or Radical Justice? Environmental Discourse in Non-Governmental Organizations." *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*. doi: 10.1177/25148486221119750. [*co-authorship with student]
- 2021 Thaler, Gregory M. "Ethnography of Environmental Governance: Towards an Organizational Approach." *Geoforum* 120: 122-131.
- 2021 Thaler, Gregory M. "Equifinality in the Smallholder Slot: Cash Crop Development in the Brazilian Amazon and Indonesian Borneo." *Comparative Politics* 53 (4): 687-722.
- 2020 Partelow, Stefan, Klara Johanna Winkler, and Gregory M. Thaler. "Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations and Global Environmental Discourse." *PLOS ONE* 15 (5): e0232945.

- 2019 Thaler, Gregory M., Cecilia Viana, and Fabiano Toni. "From Frontier Governance to Governance Frontier: The Political Geography of Brazil's Amazon Transition." *World Development* 114: 59-72.
- » Winner of the 2022 Virginie Mamadouh Outstanding Research Award, Political Geography Specialty Group, American Association of Geographers
- 2019 Schmink, Marianne, Jeffrey Hoelle, Carlos Valério Gomes, and Gregory M. Thaler. "From Contested to 'Green' Frontiers in the Amazon? A Long-Term Analysis of São Félix do Xingu, Brazil." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 46 (2): 377-399.
- 2017 Thaler, Gregory M. "The Land Sparing Complex: Environmental Governance, Agricultural Intensification, and State Building in the Brazilian Amazon." *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 107 (6): 1424-43.
- 2017 Thaler, Gregory M. and Cut Augusta Mindry Anandi. "Shifting Cultivation, Contentious Land Change and Forest Governance: The Politics of Swidden in East Kalimantan." *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 44 (5): 1066-87.
- 2015 Thaler, Gregory M. "The Twenty-First Century Agricultural Land Rush." in *The Oxford Handbook of Food, Politics, and Society*, edited by Ronald J. Herring, 822-43. New York: Oxford University Press.

Manuscripts in Preparation

Thaler, Gregory M. and Laura German. "What Value are Food Systems?"

Thaler, Gregory M., Carlos Valério Gomes, Evandro Neves*, Gabriel Soyer*, and Bruno Ubiali*. "New Perspectives on Traditional Extractivism in Brazil." [*co-authorship with student]

Grants, Fellowships, and Awards

External

- 2022 Virginie Mamadouh Outstanding Research Award, Political Geography Specialty Group, American Association of Geographers (for Thaler, Viana, and Toni 2019)
- 2018 Virginia M. Walsh Award for Best Dissertation in Science, Technology, and Environmental Politics, American Political Science Association
- 2017 Agrarian Studies Program Post-Doctoral Fellowship, Yale University (declined)
- 2015 NSF GROW Travel Award, National Science Foundation and Swedish Research Council
- 2014 USINDO Travel Grant, The United States-Indonesia Society
- 2014 CAORC Research Grant, American Institute for Indonesian Studies (AIFIS)
- 2012 SSRC Dissertation Proposal Development Fellowship, Social Science Research Council
- 2011 Fulbright-Hays Group Project Abroad Fellowship, Consortium for the Teaching of Indonesian
- 2011 NSF Graduate Research Fellowship, National Science Foundation

2008 UNESCO-Fulbright Fellowship, United Nations Better World Fund

2007 Fulbright U.S. Student Grant – Ecuador, U.S. Department of State

Internal

2019 LACSI Ambassador Travel Award, Latin American and Caribbean Studies Institute, UGA

2019 Provost International Travel Funds, UGA

2018 LACSI Ambassador Travel Award, Latin American and Caribbean Studies Institute, UGA

2012 Graduate School Research Travel Grant, Cornell University

2012 Tinker Grant, Latin American Studies Program, Cornell University

2010 Sage Fellowship, Graduate School, Cornell University

2007 Gordon Grand Fellowship, Yale University

2006 Bates Fellowship, Yale University

2006 Perloth Prize, Yale University

2006 Southeast Asia Studies Grant, Yale University

Teaching

Award

2020 Department of International Affairs Award for Teaching Excellence, UGA

Instructor

Department of International Affairs, University of Georgia

INTL 1100 Introduction to Global Issues (undergraduate)

INTL 4530 Globalization and Distributive Justice (undergraduate)

INTL 4610 Environmental Politics (undergraduate)

INTL 8500 Qualitative Research Methods (graduate)

Guest Lectures and Seminars

2022 “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Political Science,” GRSC 7001 *Being a Political Scientist*, Department of International Affairs, UGA

2022 “Organizational Ethnography,” ANTH 6620 *Methods in Sociocultural Anthropology*, Department of Anthropology, UGA

2018 “Ecological Modernization and the ‘New Conservation,’” ECOL/ICON 8400 *Perspectives on Conservation Ecology and Sustainable Development*, Odum School of Ecology and Integrative Conservation PhD Program, UGA

2016 “NGOs and the New Conservation Science” (lecture) and “Land Sparing and Land Sharing” (seminar), HEKX10 *Global Environmental Justice*, Human Ecology Division, Department of Human Geography, Lund University

Training

2018-2019 Teaching Academy Fellows Program, UGA

Graduate Advising

Doctoral Committee Member:

Andrew Bonanno (Anthropology)

Jennifer Inglett (Political Science & International Affairs)

Louisiana Lightsey (Anthropology)

Master’s Capstone Advisor:

Christina Maticotta (Master of International Policy)

Iván Ruiz-Hernandez (Master of International Policy)

POLS 9200 Special Problems in Political Science – Directed Reading (two students)

Undergraduate Advising

INTL 4721 International Affairs Internship Research (one student)

INTL 4960R/4970R/4990R Undergraduate Research/Thesis (seven students)

Invited Talks and Seminar Presentations

2022 “Perspectives on Extractivist Economies: Local and Global Reflections,” Amazonian Institute of Family Agriculture (INEAF), Federal University of Pará, Belém, Brazil, 15 June.

2021 “Saving a Rainforest and Losing the World: Conservation and Displacement in the Global Tropics,” Dirty History: An Interdisciplinary Workshop on Agriculture, Environment, and Capitalism, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 03 December.

2020 “Putting Capitalism in Its Place: Variables and Relations, Development and Ecocide,” Global & International Studies Forum, Department of Global and International Studies, University of California, Irvine, California, 14 May. [online due to COVID-19]

2020 “Agroforest Dialectics: Tropical Smallholders in Global Landscapes,” Orfalea Center for Global and International Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, California, 11 May. [postponed due to COVID-19]

2018 “False Equivalencies of the Smallholder Slot: Cash Crop Development in the Brazilian Amazon and Indonesian Borneo,” Agrarian Studies Program, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, 07 December.

2018 “Frontier Governance or Governance Frontier? The Political Geography of Brazil’s Amazon Transition,” Espaço Interações, Amazonian Institute of Family Agriculture (INEAF), Federal University of Pará, Belém, Brazil, 04 June.

- 2017 “Model Municipalities and Environmental Governance in the Brazilian Amazon,” Tropical Conservation & Development Program, Center for Latin American Studies, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, 25 September.
- 2016 “Learning the TENG0: Transnational Non-Governmental Organizations in Environmental Politics,” LUCID Seminar, Lund University, Lund, Sweden, 12 May.
- 2015 “The Land Sparing Fallacy: Forest Governance in the World System,” LUCID Seminar, Lund University, Lund, Sweden, 03 December.
- 2015 “Subnational REDD+ Initiatives – East Kalimantan,” Mulawarman University, Samarinda, East Kalimantan, Indonesia, 09 March.

Conference Papers and Presentations

- 2019 “False Equivalencies of the Smallholder Slot: Cash Crop Development in the Brazilian Amazon and Indonesian Borneo,” III Latin American Congress of Political Ecology, Federal University of Bahia, Salvador, Brazil, 18-20 March.
- 2018 “Science, Spectacle, and Social Order in the Anthropocene,” Democracy in the Post-Truth Condition: Contentious Knowledge, Populism, and Expertise, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 28 September.
- 2018 “Land Sparing and Frontier Displacement in South America,” American Association of Geographers (AAG) Annual Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana, 10-14 April.
- 2018 “Regimes, Complexes, and Coalitions: A Global Political Economy Framework,” International Studies Association (ISA) Annual Convention, San Francisco, California, 04-07 April.
- 2017 “Extraction, Production, and Socio-Political Organization in the Capitalist World Ecology,” Ecological History in Asia and the World, Council on East Asian Studies, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, 27-28 October.
- 2017 “Protecting and Becoming Wehea: The Wehea Dayak and Their Forest, 1970-2015,” American Association of Geographers (AAG) Annual Meeting, Boston, Massachusetts, 05-09 April.
- 2017 “Organizational Ethnography of Global Environmental Governance,” International Studies Association (ISA) Annual Convention, Baltimore, Maryland, 22-25 February. Recipient ISA Travel Grant.
- 2016 “The Land Sparing Complex: Environmental Governance, Agricultural Intensification, and State-Building in the Brazilian Amazon,” American Association of Geographers (AAG) Annual Meeting, San Francisco, California, 29 March-02 April.
Earlier version presented at American Political Science Association (APSA) Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, 28-31 August 2014. Recipient APSA Travel Grant.
- 2015 “Learning the TENG0: Transnational Non-Governmental Organizations in Environmental Politics,” American Political Science Association (APSA) Annual Meeting, San Francisco, California, 03-06 September.

- 2015 “Shifting Cultivation, Contentious Land Change, and Forest Governance in Eastern Borneo,” Land Grabbing, Conflict and Agrarian-Environmental Transformations: Perspectives from East and Southeast Asia, Land Deal Politics Initiative (LDPI), Chiang Mai University, Thailand, 05-06 June.
- 2013 “Green Neoliberalism in the Agro-Forest Landscape: Reflections from Brazil and Indonesia,” Grabbing ‘Green’: Questioning the Green Economy, University of Toronto, Canada, 17-19 May.
- 2013 “Towards a Forest Transition in Brazil? Agricultural Development and Governance in 21st-Century Amazonia,” Association of American Geographers (AAG) Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, California, 09-13 April.
- 2012 “Roundtables, Moratoria, and Deforestation: Agri-Food Governance and Forest Conversion in Indonesia and Brazil,” UCLA Indonesian Studies Conference: Indonesia in Global and Transnational Perspective, Los Angeles, California, 27-28 April.
- 2011 “Food and Domination in the West Papua Conflict,” 32nd Conference of the International Commission on the Anthropology of Food and Nutrition: Food in Zones of Conflict, Leiden University, The Netherlands, 19-21 August.

Conference Panels

- 2020 Co-organizer of panel and workshop: “Brazilian Natural Resource Governance: Towards an Integrative Approach,” Integrative Conservation Conference, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 06-09 February.
- 2016 Co-organizer and discussant: “Interrogating Environmental Pragmatism: Philosophy, Ecology, and Politics,” ENTITLE Political Ecology Network Conference: Undisciplined Environments, Stockholm, Sweden, 20-23 March.
- 2015 Co-organizer: “Non-State Actors in Environmental Politics,” American Political Science Association (APSA) Annual Meeting, San Francisco, California, 03-06 September.

Workshops and Short Courses

- 2020 Co-organizer, “Ecological History Virtual Workshop,” 16-17 August 2020.
- 2019 “The Environmental Science, Policy, and Land Use Impacts of Remote Sensing in Tropical Forests,” invited speaker/participant, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, 22-26 April.
- 2016 “Theories of Nature – Anthropocenic Views,” PhD course, Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies (LUCSUS), Lund, Sweden, 11-13 April.
- 2016 “Ecological History DPDF Reunion Seminar,” University of Washington, Seattle, Washington, 03-04 April.
- 2016 Organizer of workshop “Political Ecologies of Degradation and Sustainability,” Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies (LUCSUS), Lund, Sweden, 17 March.
- 2016 “GCS M2/Benefit Sharing Writeshop,” writing workshop, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), Bogor, Indonesia, 11-15 January.

2012 Co-convener, Political Ecology Reading Group, funded in 2013-2014 as an Institute for Comparative Modernities Graduate Reading Group, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

Affiliations

2015-2016 NSF GROW Fellow, Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies (LUCSUS), Lund, Sweden

2014-2015 Affiliated Researcher, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and Forest Policy and Climate Change Centre (FPCCC/PUSPIJAK), Bogor, Indonesia

2013-2014 Collaborating Researcher, Center for Sustainable Development (CDS), University of Brasília (UnB), Brazil

2007-2008 Affiliated Researcher, Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO), Quito, Ecuador

Professional Service

Reviewer

Bulletin of Latin American Research, Ecology and Society, Forest Policy & Economics, Geoforum, The International Forestry Review, International Studies Review, The Journal of Development Studies, Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences, Land Use Policy, MIT Press, Palgrave Macmillan, The Royal Society (UK), Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), World Development

Profession

2019 Selection Committee Member, Virginia Walsh Dissertation Award, Science, Technology and Environmental Politics Section, American Political Science Association

University

2021-present Advisory Board, Sustainability Certificate Program, UGA

2021-present Curriculum Committee, School of Public and International Affairs

2019-2020 Co-Convener, School of Public and International Affairs Diversity & Inclusion Discussion Group, UGA

2018-present Co-Director, Brazil Natural Resource Governance Initiative, UGA

2018-2022 Executive Committee, Center for Integrative Conservation Research, UGA

2018-present Advisory Board, Latin American and Caribbean Studies Institute, UGA

Department

2022-present Faculty Affairs Committee

2020-2022 Co-Coordinator, Diversity & Inclusion Working Group

2018-2021 Curriculum Committee

Community

- 2019 Invited lecture: “Alternatives to Development: People and Planet, or Profit?” Advocates for Inclusive Development, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 26 March.
- 2018 Invited lecture: “What’s Up with Palm Oil? Part 2 – Global Political Economy,” Real Food UGA, Speak Out for Species, and Students for Environmental Action, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, 27 February.

Other Professional Experience

Employment

- 2009-2010 Consultant, Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences and Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, UNESCO, Paris, France
- 2008-2009 UNESCO-Fulbright Fellow, Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences and Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, UNESCO, Paris, France
- 2007 Apprentice, Willow Pond Farm, Sabattus, Maine

Reports

- 2014 “The ‘New Amazonian Frontier’ and Environmental Governance in São Félix do Xingu, Brazil,” preliminary research report submitted to the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, 12 November (with Marianne Schmink, Jeffrey Hoelle, Carlos Valério Gomes, and Charles H. Wood).

Languages

Fluent: English, French, Portuguese, Spanish

Advanced: Indonesian

2011 Advanced Indonesian Abroad, Consortium for the Teaching of Indonesian, Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia

2005 Intensive Portuguese Course and Junior Term Abroad, Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio), Brazil

Fieldwork

Bolivia 2018, 2019

Brazil 2012, 2013-2014, 2018

Ecuador 2007-2008

Indonesia 2014-2015