



“Assessing the Coupled Human-Environmental Impacts of Global Change on Smallholder Coffee Farmers in Jamaica”

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Location: Blake Hall, Rm 131, Cook Campus

Date: Wed., October 11th, 2017

Time: 12:30 to 2:00 PM

In his paper, Dr. Rhiney applied a coupled human-natural systems framework to illustrate the complex interactions that have taken place between different feedbacks in Jamaica’s coffee industry since 2006 that eventually led to the widespread outbreak of the coffee leaf rust disease in 2012/2013. The talk will highlight how these interactions were mediated across different spatial and temporal scales and institutional levels to produce various vulnerability outcomes among Jamaica’s smallholder coffee farmers. The paper makes clear the link between the 2006-2008 global economic recession, the onslaught of extreme climate events that took place post-recession, and the eventual re-emergence and spread of the coffee leaf rust disease in the Jamaican Blue Mountains (BM). Dr. Rhiney will also argue that effective farm-level responses to the leaf rust were further constrained by individual farmers’ own behavioral practices, shaped largely by a complex interplay of asymmetries in knowledge and power, resource shortages, market restrictions and inadequate agricultural extension support. The paper is informed primarily by field data collected through focus groups conducted in twelve BM coffee-producing communities as well as interviews with the Coffee Industry Board leadership and other key sector actors. The data collection occurred during the summer of 2015.

Kevon Rhiney is an assistant professor of human-environment geography at Rutgers University. Prior to joining Rutgers, he taught at the University of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica. His research centers on the social, economic, environmental and justice implications of global change for small and developing states, with an emphasis on the Caribbean. His work largely focuses on rural/agrarian landscapes and employs an interdisciplinary approach, drawing strongly on political ecology and social theory. He has published widely on issues surrounding economic globalization, environmental justice, climate change and food security and recently co-edited two books: *Globalization, Agriculture and Food in the Caribbean: Climate Change, Gender and Geography* (2016, with Clinton Beckford) and *Global Change and the Caribbean: Adaptation and Resilience* (2016, with Duncan McGregor, David Barker and Thera Edwards).