

Syllabus
INTL 4610 – Fall 2014
Selected Topics in Politics: Environmental Politics

Instructor:

Dr Jennifer Joelle White

Class Time:

MWF, 14.30-15.20

Office hours:

Tuesdays, 14:00-16:00, or by appointment

Class Location:

Park 269

Office:

Candler B03

E-Mail:

jenx@uga.edu

Course Description:

“Topics include global warming, deforestation, and pollution of air, water, and noise. Regional and global policy responses will be examined.”

Prerequisite: INTL 3200 or INTL 3300

Raison d’Être of the Course: In this course, we shall examine the various levels of analysis, actors, inputs, and outcomes that are part of the political process with respect to environmental matters. As stated in the general course description, and owing to the nature of environmental issues, the study of environmental politics draws on the two subfields of International Politics: International Relations and Comparative Politics. Hence, we shall review the theoretical frameworks employed in each of these subfields and critically assess how best to analyze environmental political issues and which strategies policy makers may best employ to address these issues.

Given the number of popular concerns such as dependency on oil and the dangers of oil drilling; food chain vulnerabilities; and the increasingly tangible threat of global environmental problems such as climate change – the study of issues of environmental concern and their impact on the policy-making process has become a very hot topic, and promises to remain so for some time to come as the world continues to globalize. In this course, we shall acquaint ourselves with a selection of environmental issues, examine how environmental problems have been translated into the policy-making arena and the actors involved, and consider the effects (intended and otherwise) of the decisions that politicians, organizations, and even individuals in the US and around the world have made and may make concerning the environment.

The topic of environmental politics is extremely broad, *so please be aware that we shall not be able to cover all environmental topics*; rather, our main goal will be to establish the necessary critical framework and tools to research and analyze environmental issues within political systems. You will have the opportunity, however, to choose an environmental topic of interest to you and to work as groups to perform further research, presenting the results of this research to the class (see below).

Course Objectives

In this course, we shall work to:

- develop a clearer understanding of the **politics of the environment**, and the similarities and differences among different countries with regard to their histories and responses to environmental challenges
 - explore the **political institutional, cultural, and economic** aspects of environmental issues so we can better understand how these factors affect political outcomes
 - **compare** these systems and countries in particular to the case of the United States, which we shall use as a base reference
 - engage in **critical assessments** of the differences and similarities we find, asking whether or not changes in a country's political institutions may provide **viable answers** to some of the current problems and controversies that many countries face today with regard to migration issues (such as security, the rise of far-right politics, development, and social stability)
 - develop sharper **critical thinking skills** that will enable you to better understand and assess the value of news articles, research papers, and proposed policies relating to migration issues
 - use theoretical tools from the course to **explain, predict, or prescribe policy reform** and political behavior as a researcher or practitioner in the field of politics
 - be able to **comprehend and communicate theoretical concepts and findings** with more effective written and verbal communication skills
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Texts:

We shall use two main (required) textbooks for the course. The first half of the course shall draw on the following:

Axelrod, Regina, Stacy D. **VanDeveer** (eds.). *The Global Environment: Institutions, Law, and Policy*. Los Angeles: CQ Press, 2015.

ISBN: 978-1-4522-4145-6 (paperback)

978-1-4833-1200-2 (e-book)

(Noted as "**AVD**" in the course schedule below.)

Readings from this text will be denoted "AVD" in the reading schedule below.

The hard copy format of our textbook for the second half of the course is **very** expensive, but an on-line version is available through the Library, and I shall put a hard copy on reserve:

McBeath, Jerry, and Jonathan **Rosenberg**. *Comparative Environmental Politics*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer, 2006.

ISBN: 978-1-4020-4763-3 (e-book)

Link to e-book: From UGA Library site (MyID Password required if off-campus), OR <http://www.springerlink.com/content/978-1-4020-4762-6/#section=436091&page=1&locus=23>

(Noted as "**MR**" in the course schedule below.)

There will also be selected readings from other texts and news articles, some of which are listed in the course schedule below, and some which will be determined later. All of these readings will be posted on the course's site on the eLC. **Please NOTE:** *The readings that will be posted on the course Web site are for use by students in this course ONLY! Please do not share these copyrighted materials with others, else I shall receive a nasty "cease and desist order" from the publishers. Not fun.*

Ground Rules

Each day's assignments and readings must be completed before class, and each student must be ready to conduct a quality discussion on the day's material. Also, lectures will not be mere repetition of the reading material, and students will be expected to come to class ready to expand on the readings and assignments. In effect, we shall be building the lectures together, so each student must be engaged in the discussions (and, of course, this counts towards your participation grade!).

Please note the following:

1. The use of laptops, cell phones, iPods, or any other electronic device will not be allowed *except* in the case that information relevant to the discussion can be found on-line. I shall grant permission for the use of e-devices in those instances and for that purpose only.
2. ***You may accrue up to three unexcused absences without penalty.*** If you are absent for more than three class meetings and do not bring a valid (per University policy) written excuse, your participation grade will be lowered by one letter grade per unexcused absence. As participation is a part of your grade, you cannot participate if you do not attend class.
3. ***If you are absent on a day when an assignment is due, you must provide an acceptable excuse per University policy in order to make up the assignment.*** In addition, if you know you will be absent (e.g., for religious observance, an extra-curricular event, or illness), I would appreciate an e-mail notification ahead of time, if possible.
4. ***Be sure you know what the heck plagiarism is*** (see www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/plagiarize). ***Work submitted for this course must be your own work; all necessary citations must be properly provided when you cite anyone or anything else:*** All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Students are responsible for knowing these standards ***before*** performing any academic work, and we shall discuss points of academic ethics and plagiarism in class. For more information, see: honesty.uga.edu/ahpd/culture_honesty.htm. ***To reiterate:*** any incidents of plagiarism or intellectual fraud (see www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fraud) will be treated as the ***most serious offense***. If you need help in determining what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid committing this most egregious intellectual sin, please consult me or our kickin' SPIA Librarian, Elizabeth White (elwhite1@uga.edu).

5. Our discussions may touch upon ideas or topics on which we may not all agree – in fact, this will probably be the case. Each student is expected to be courteous and respectful of the viewpoints and ideas of all others in the class, although disagreements are certainly acceptable. ***In discussions, you should make an effort to provide either a theoretical or empirical basis for your comments – this is a major part of becoming a critical thinker, and it is part of the goal of this course.***
 6. This syllabus is a general plan; **it may be necessary for me to amend any part of the syllabus as we proceed through the course.** Announcements will generally be made in class and on the course Web site, so you should be sure to attend each class, and to **check the course Web site on ELC often.**
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Class Agenda

For each class, students are expected to have **completed the readings listed for that day** in the course schedule. Generally, the first two days of the week will be focused on the textbook readings, and Fridays will be dedicated to discussion of the material, current events, or an activity. The week's schedule will of course be different around holidays and during presentation weeks.

Students are also expected to **be familiar with current events** related to migration/immigration, and we shall have discussions of these events and how they bear on our studies to that point each week. As this is a course in which you are expected to sharpen your critical thinking skills, you should try to check out at least *two (2)* news sources each day and thoughtfully assess each source's presentation of the information. This may be most easily accomplished on-line, by going to the "world news" section in any of the following sources:

- The New York Times (www.nytimes.com – free [for now]; registration required)
- NPR (www.npr.org, also carried on WUGA on-line and at 91.7FM)
- The BBC On-Line (news.bbc.co.uk)
- The Guardian On-Line (www.guardian.co.uk)
- Le Monde (www.lemonde.fr – in French)
- Der Spiegel (www.spiegel.de – in German)
- The Christian Science Monitor (<http://www.csmonitor.com>)
- Check out **Google News** (<http://news.google.com/nwshp?hl=en&tab=wn>), and choose "World" to see the world's news in the country of your choice – there are many news sources here in English (e.g., Canada, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa) as well as other languages.
- With a Google account, you can use "Google Alerts" to set up and filter Google News to receive environmentally-related news items (under "Google Account Settings → Alert Settings").

You can take a look through various environmental journals on-line or at the Library. Here are a few possible journals of interest that may also help you with your class projects:

- *Global Environmental Politics*

- *Environmental Politics* (again, to see all of the possible on-line issues available – including the most recent – use the www.metapress.com link to view full archive on-line [this will take you to www.informaworld.com Journals site])
- *Journal of Environment and Development*
- *Review of Environmental Economics and Policy*

Reading Assignments

This course includes a significant reading load (approximately 100 pages per week). To get through this material as efficiently as possible, you may find it more effective to approach the reading in this manner: Read the introduction and then conclusion to identify the author’s main argument(s). Then scan section headings (or the first sentence in each paragraph) to see how the author develops and supports the main argument. Finally, reserve detailed reading for those sections that clarify the argument or provide supporting evidence. Give yourself time to *think* about the reading, challenging its arguments or coming up with additional evidence that you believe supports the presented arguments.

We shall discuss these readings thoroughly, and to prepare for the class discussions, you should always consider the following: What is the author’s main point or argument? What evidence does s/he offer to support this view? Is the argument and evidence compelling? Can I think of arguments / evidence that support / undermine this? Why is this piece on the syllabus? How does it relate to previous readings? How can I use this piece in an essay?

Grading

Participation	→	10%
Office Meeting	→	5%
Quiz	→	5%
Data Coding Project	→	15%
Film Essay	→	10%
Environmental Issue Group Presentation	→	10%
Individual Issue Report	→	15%
Issue Debate (Peer Review)	→	10%
Final	→	20%
Total:		100%

Grading will be based on several group and individual projects; a mid-term; journal reflections (to be assigned during class and completed on the eLC course Web site); a final; and participation (which includes a **mandatory** office meeting with me to take place in the course of the semester). Exact details of the assignments will be given in class well in advance of each assignment’s due date.

Group Projects:

1. Students will work in pairs to **code data** from a specific international environmental agreement.
2. Each student will work as part of a group to give one (1) **presentation** on an environmental topic that the group selects.
3. Each group will also participate in a **debate**; an issue related to the group's environmental topic will be given, and the group will then be divided, one half arguing the "pro" position, and one half arguing the "con" position.
4. Note that the grades for the debate will be peer graded.

Details concerning the presentation and coding project will be discussed in class well in advance of the respective due dates. **Additional assignments** may also be given during class, either to be completed in class or turned in during the next class session.

Individual Projects:

1. Each student will prepare and submit via the course Web site one (1) film essay on the second film we view in class.
2. Each student will be responsible for writing an individual report on her/his work on the environmental topic group presentation.

Again, further details on these projects will be given in class well ahead of their due dates.

Final:

There will be a final exam that will enable you to reflect on what we have covered in the course and to offer possible future considerations for the study of environmental politics. A review for the final will occur on the last day of class.

Participation:

As one of the objectives of the course is to develop better critical thinking skills and to be able to communicate concepts and ideas more effectively, participation counts heavily toward your final grade. Silently attending lectures and completing all assignments on time earns you a C- or 70% (so keep this in mind with regard to how late you get in the night before we have class). A higher grade is contingent on **active participation**. I define participation broadly, for example: raising questions or expressing confusion about the material; interacting with me outside of the classroom; posting interesting articles on the eLC course Web site that relate to our course material. If you are concerned about participation, contact me and we can discuss strategies to raise your grade, but **do not wait until the last day of class to do this**, as it will be too late by then!

Note that part of your participation grade (5%) is an office visit to see me at some point **before classes end**. If you have a question or comment about the course or an assignment, or if you would like to discuss some issue from class in greater detail, this would be an excellent opportunity to do just that. Keep in mind that I am teaching four classes this Fall, and that if you wait until the end of the semester to come see me, you may not be able to do so if other

students have also waited. I will of course try to meet students on an appointment basis for those who cannot visit me during my office hours, but I **cannot guarantee** my availability outside of my office hours. So, plan that office visit accordingly!

Grading Scale:

Grading for the course will be deemed as follows:

>=93	A	83-86	B	73-76	C	<60	F
90-92	A-	80-82	B-	70-72	C-		
87-89	B+	77-79	C+	60-69	D		

Contested Grades:

If you have a concern about the grade you received for a test or assignment, you must submit a **type-written** explanation of the problem along with the test or assignment in question **within one week** of my returning the assignment to you. I shall re-evaluate your work and assign a “new” grade, taking into account your written explanation (which, in essence then, becomes part of the re-grade). Note, however, that this process may result in the same grade, a higher grade, or indeed a **lower grade for that assignment**. You are allowed this one appeal for each graded assignment; the re-grade will then stand. If the issue is merely a matter of an error in calculation on my part, you need not submit a type-written request for this correction, but you do need to notify me of this error within one week of receiving the graded assignment back from me. *Capisce?* Please see me if you do not understand this policy or if you have questions about it.

Class Schedule

The course syllabus presents a general plan for the course, but not all readings have yet been determined. Depending upon political events that may yet unfold, I shall determine readings for the days for which “TBA” (“to be announced”) is noted and I may also add readings that may be of particular relevance. These added readings will be related to that day’s topic, as listed below, and will be made available on the eLC course Web site. Some readings in texts other than our main textbooks are already listed below, and are marked with a “***” – these, too, will be available on the eLC course Web site. Bear in mind, however, that deviations from this schedule may well be necessary, and I shall announce these to the class and post on eLC. If you note any errors (likely) below, please let me know.

12 August: Introduction

Main Readings:

Paul, Richard, and Linda Elder. “Critical Thinking: Concepts and Tools.” (Dillon Beach, CA: The Foundation for Critical Thinking, 2006).

15 August – 19 August: Introduction to Part I – Governing the International Environment

Main Readings:

- AVD – Chapter 1 (8/15)
- Sooros – “Global Institutions and the Environment” ** (8/17)
- Harbin – “The Tragedy of the Commons,” Harbin ** (8/19)

22 August – 26 August: Global Institutions and the Environment & Compliance

Main Readings:

AVD – Chapter 3 (8/22)

AVD – Chapter 5 (8/24)

Dai, Xinyaun, “Why Comply? The Domestic Constituency Mechanism,” *International Organisation*, no. 59, Spring 2005: 363-398. **** (Read ONLY pages 363-366 and 374-389; skip the formal modeling stuff [unless you’re a glutton for mathematics].) ****

29 August: International Migration: Global Environmental Policy: Governance through Regimes

DUE: Data Coding Project Sign-Up

Main Readings:

AVD – Chapter 4 (8/29)

31 August & 2 September: NO CLASS! APSA CONFERENCE

Research: What are the environmental policies of the US presidential candidates?

5 September: NO CLASS! LABOR DAY!

7 September – 9 September: Impacts and Effectiveness of Environmental Treaty Regimes

Discuss: Environmental policies of US presidential candidates (9/7)

Mitchell, Ronald B., “Regime Design Matters: International Oil Pollution and Treaty Compliance,” *International Organisation*, Vol. 48, No. 3, Summer (1994): 425-458. ******
(9/9)

TBA ******

12 September – 16 September: Environmental NGOs in International Regimes

Main Readings:

AVD – Chapter 2 (9/12)

TBA ****** (9/14)

19 September- 23 September: International Climate Change Policy

Main Readings:

AVD – Chapter 10

International Committee on Climate Change (TBA) ******

26 September – 30 September: International Climate Change Policy

In Class:

Film: “An Inconvenient Truth” (9/26-9/28)

Film Discussion (9/30)

3 October – 7 October: Economics, Security, and Environmental Resources

DUE: Data Coding (10/7)

Main Readings:

AVD – Chapter 14 (10/3)

Khagram, Sanjeev and Saleem Ali. "Environment and Security." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* no. 31 (2006): 395-411. ** (10/5)

10 October – 14 October: Introduction to Comparative Environmental Politics & State-Society Relations

Main Readings:

MR – Chapters 1 & 2 (10/12 & 10/14)

17 October – 21 October: Political Processes and Organizations

Main Readings:

MR – Chapter 3 (10/17)

(TBA) **

In Class:

Film: TBA

18 October: WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE

24 October – 26 October: Political Institutions and the Environment

DUE: Film Essay (10/24)

Main Readings:

MR – Chapter 4 (10/24)

TBA ** (10/26)

28 October: NO CLASS! FALL BREAK!

31 October – 4 November: National Capacity to Protect the Environment

Main Readings:

MR – Chapter 5 (10/31)

Climate-Induced Migration (TBA) ** (11/2)

7 November – 11 November: Migrant Citizenship & Integration

In Class:

Revisit US Presidential candidates' environmental policies (11/7)

MR – Chapters 6 & 7 (11/9 & 11/11)

8 November: ELECTION DAY! US Citizens get out and exercise your civic duty to vote!

14 November – 18 November: GROUP PRESENTATIONS!

In Class:

Group Environmental Issue Presentations

21 November – 25 November: NO CLASS! THANKSGIVING BREAK

28 November – 2 December: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE DEBATES!

In Class:

Group Environmental Issue Debates

5 December: LAST DAY OF CLASS!

DUE: Individual Environmental Issue Area Reports

Wrap-Up and Review

12 December: FINAL EXAM

Final Exam – 3:30 – 6:30 PM