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PSCI 332.01: Global Environmental Politics

Eric H. Hines

University of Montana - Missoula, eric.hines@umontana.edu

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Global Environmental Politics

“The good Earth — we could have saved it, but we were too damn cheap and lazy.”

— KURT VONNEGUT, FROM THE BOOK *A MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY*

Instructor: Eric H. Hines

Office: LA 354

Office Hours: MWF 10-11 a.m. or Appt.

Email: eric.hines@umontana.edu

Phone: 406.359.1660 (Cell/Voicemail)

Course Number: PSCI 332

Class Location: Liberal Arts 337

Meeting Time: MWF 9:10-10:00 a.m.

Website: Moodle (<http://umonline.umt.edu>)

CRN (Add/Drop): 75238

You may schedule an appointment with me online at <http://tungle.me/erichines>

Course Description

Since the late 1970s, humanity’s **ecological footprint** — *the amount of nature it takes to sustain the human population* — has increasingly exceeded the Earth’s biological capacity to regenerate. By 2007, humanity’s “ecological overshoot” meant we are consuming the equivalent of 1.5 Earths annually.¹ This global footprint disguises the huge disparities between the ecological footprints of individual nations and peoples. If everyone on the planet consumed the same resources per capita as Americans, we would need 4.4 Earths. Deciding how to respond to this situation, including the choice to do nothing, is the essence of **environmental politics** — *authoritative decision-making about who gets what, when, and how from the natural environment*.

This course examines the relationship between global politics and environmental change. It focuses on the unique set of collective action problems faced by global actors in the governance of the global environment and the **institutions** — *structures and mechanisms of social order and cooperation governing the behavior of a set of individuals* — they use to overcome those problems. It draws heavily on institutionalism, a set of theoretical approaches in international relations whose basic assumptions are summarized in the table at right.

Five Principles of Politics

1. Politics is collective action.
2. Collective action is problematic.
3. Institutions help fix these problems.
4. Ideas matter.
5. History matters

Prerequisites. There are no prerequisites for this course, but completion of PSCI 230 (Introduction to International Relations) is strongly encouraged and recommended.

PSCI 400. Political science majors can use this course with PSCI 400 to complete their major writing requirements. Please speak with the instructor if interested.

¹ World Wide Fund for Nature, *Living Planet Report 2010* (Gland, Switzerland: World Wide Fund for Nature, October 2010), 34, <http://assets.panda.org/downloads/lpr2010.pdf> (accessed January 3, 2011).

Course Philosophy

Learning is more than memorizing facts and answering exam questions. It is using information to gain an understanding of how things work and how to improve them.

In this course, learning will be defined as the process of enhancing your ability to:

- Ask the right questions and frame good problems.
- Acquire information and evaluate sources of information.
- Critically investigate and solve problems.
- Make choices among different alternatives.
- Explain abstract ideas to others both orally and in writing.
- Generalize to new situations.

Course Learning Outcomes and Assessments

Based on the five principles of politics listed above, students will know or be able to do the following after completing this course:

Learning Outcomes		Assessment
1	Explain the competing values and interests that define global environmental politics as a form of collective action.	Policy Memos 1-5 Simulation Debriefing Papers
2	Explain the historical, ideational, and institutional barriers to collective action that exist in global environmental politics .	Policy Memos 1-5 Simulation Debriefing Papers
3	Evaluate the effectiveness of alternative institutions at overcoming these barriers and select the best using proscribed criteria.	Policy Memos 1-5 Simulation Debriefing Papers
4	Compare and contrast competing ideas about the environment and the structure of global environmental governance.	Policy Memos 1-5 Simulation Debriefing Papers
5	Debate the role historical patterns of economic and political development affect the current state of environmental politics .	Policy Memos 1-5 Simulation Debriefing Papers
6	Assess the reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, and point of view or bias of information on environmental politics .	Library Research Assignment Policy Memos 1-5 Simulation Debriefing Papers

Student Responsibilities

Students have the responsibility to:

1. Attend class regularly and complete all assigned readings before coming to class.

2. Participate actively in class activities including class discussions.
3. Complete all assignments by the deadline given by the instructor.
4. Complete course requirements by the end of the semester.
5. Review all feedback from the instructor, including feedback posted online.
6. Ask the instructor for clarification if instructions or feedback are not fully understood.
7. Inform the instructor beforehand if they cannot fulfill these responsibilities.

Academic Misconduct Policy

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code, which is available online at <http://ordway.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/name/StudentConductCode>.

Statement for Students with Disabilities

I strongly encourage students with documented disabilities to discuss appropriate accommodations with me. Because I am not qualified to make an assessment of your needs, you will need to present me the appropriate documentation from Disability Services for Students (DSS), Lommasson Center 154 (243-2243).

Course Requirements (% of Final Grade)

Materials. These two *required* books are for sale at the UC bookstore or online:

Axelrod, Regina S., Stacy D. VanDeveer, and David Leonard Downie, eds. 2010. *The Global environment: Institutions, Law, and Policy*. 3rd ed. Washington DC: CQ Press. ISBN: 978-0872899667.

Carter, Neil. 2007. *The Politics of the Environment: Ideas, Activism, Policy*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 978-0521868020

There is one *recommended* textbook available online or on hold at the Mansfield library:

Kutting, Gabriela, ed. 2010. *Global Environmental Politics: Concepts, Theories and Case Studies*. New York: Routledge. ISBN: 978-0415777940

Participation and Attendance (15%). A portion of the course is devoted to the analysis of case studies through class and small-group discussion. Students will be evaluated on participation and attendance. Attendance represents 70% of the participation and attendance grade. The remaining 30% is based on instructor and peer evaluations.

Policy Memos (50%). Each student will write five 2-page policy memos over the course of the semester in response to prompts provided by the instructor at the start of each unit of the course. The guidelines for the policy memos are available on Moodle.

Policy Memo and Library Research Assignments (5%). On Oct. 12, the class will meet at the Mansfield Library to complete an assignment modeled on the research practices needed when writing policy memos. The worksheet is available on Moodle.

Simulations (30%). Students will complete two simulations of global environmental politics requiring individual participation and role-playing. After each simulation, students will write a 2-page debriefing paper. Complete details are available on Moodle.

Grading and Assignment Due Dates

I will calculate grades by adding your scores for participation, the library assignment, policy memos, and simulation participation and debriefing. The distribution of points between assignments and assignment due dates are listed in the table below:

Assignments/Assessments	Points Possible	Due Date	Submit via
Library Research Assignment	50	Sep 14, 2011	Moodle
Participation (First-Third)	50	Sep 30, 2011	N/A
Policy Memo #1	50	Oct 3, 2011	Moodle
Policy Memo #2	100	Oct 19, 2011	Moodle
Climate Change Simulation Participation	50	Oct 21, 2011	Class
Climate Change Simulation Debriefing	75	Oct 24, 2011	Moodle
Participation (Middle-Third)	50	Nov 2, 2011	N/A
Policy Memo #3	100	Nov 14, 2011	Moodle
Water Trade Simulation Participation	75	Nov 21, 2011	Class
Water Trade Debriefing Paper	100	Nov 28, 2011	Moodle
Participation (Final Third)	50	Dec 9, 2011	N/A
Policy Memo #4	125	Dec 14, 2011	Moodle
Policy Memo #5	125	Dec 14, 2011	Moodle

Grading Scale. A = 1000-930, A- = 929-900, B+ = 870-899, B = 830-869, B- = 800-829, C+ = 770-799, C = 730-769, C- = 700-729, D+ = 670-699, D = 630-669, D- = 600-639, F = <600.

To prevent grade inflation, which can occur when group work and participation are a high proportion of a course grade, I reserve the right to adjust this scale so that no more than 30% of the class earns an "A" and no more than 40% earns a "B."

Course Schedule

I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule if necessary.

Aug 29 Syllabus; Tragedy of the Commons Simulation

Aug 31 Brief Introduction to International Relations Kütting, Ch. 1

Sep 2 Simulation, continued; Simulation Debriefing

Introduction

Sep 7 Environmental Politics: An Introduction Carter, *Introduction*

Sep 9 Policy Memos; Practice Problem: Masai Overgrazing "Policy Memo Handout"

Sep 12 Library Research Session — Meet in Student Learning Center, Mansfield Library

Sep 14 Practice Problem: Masai Overgrazing (Group Memo) **Library Assignment Due**

Problem 1: Ecotopia

Sep 16 Environmental Philosophy Carter, Ch. 2

Sep 19 Green Political Thought Carter, Ch. 3

Sep 21 The Environment as a Policy Problem Problem Carter, Ch. 7

Sep 23 Ecological Modernization vs. Sustainable Development Carter, Ch. 8

Sep 26 Greening Government Carter, Ch. 11

Sep 28 Domestic Policy Instruments and Implementation Carter, Ch. 12

Sep 30 *Class Discussion*: The Challenges of a Green Society

Problem 2: The Case of Climate Change and Global Environmental Governance

Oct 3 International Environmental Institutions Axelrod et. al, Chs. 1 & 2
Policy Memo #1 Due

Oct 5 International Law and the Environment Axelrod et. al, Ch. 3

Oct 7 International Regimes and the Environment Axelrod et. al, Ch. 4

Oct 10 International Regimes and Non-state Actors Carter, Ch. 6
Axelrod et. al, Ch. 5

Oct 12 International Regimes and the Problem of Compliance Axelrod et. al, Ch. 9

Oct 14 International Climate Change Policy Axelrod et. al, Ch. 6

Problem 3: International Water Trade

Oct 24 Environmental Security Kütting, Ch. 4
Debriefing Due

Oct 26 *Case Study*: The Problem of Hazardous Wastes Axelrod et. al, Ch. 7

Date	Topic or Activity	Readings/Assignments
Oct 28	Economic Integration and the Environment, Part I	Axelrod et. al, Ch. 8
Oct 31	Economic Integration and the Environment, Part II	Axelrod et. al, Ch. 15
Nov 2	Environmental Policy Making in the European Union	Axelrod et. al, Chs. 11
Nov 4	North vs. South: Inequality and the Environment	Axelrod et. al, Chs. 12
Nov 7	<i>Water Trade Simulation: PrepCom</i>	
Nov 9	<i>Case Study: The Unilateral United States</i>	Axelrod et. al, Ch. 10
Nov 11	<i>Case Study: China and the Environment</i>	Axelrod et. al, Ch. 13
Nov 14	Simulation: Portland Plenary Session #1	Policy Memo #3 Due
Nov 16	Simulation: Portland Plenary Session #2	
Nov 18	Simulation: Portland Plenary Session #3	
Nov 21	Simulation: Plenary Session #4 (if needed); Debriefing	
Thanksgiving Break: No Class November 23-26		
Problems 4 & 5: Global Environmental Challenges		
Nov 28	<i>Case Study: Democracy and Nuclear Power</i>	Axelrod et. al, Ch. 14 Debriefing Due
Nov 30	<i>Case Study: Marine Pollution</i>	Kütting, Ch. 8
Dec 2	<i>Case Study: International Forest Politics</i>	Kütting, Ch. 9
Dec 5	<i>Case Study: Biodiversity</i>	Kütting, Ch. 10
Dec 7	<i>Case Study: Agriculture and the Environment</i>	Kütting, Ch. 11
Dec 9	Instructor Evaluations; <i>Class Discussion: Optimistic or Pessimistic About the Future of the Global Environment?</i>	
Dec 14		Memos #4 and #5 Due