PSCI 332.01: Global Environmental Politics

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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

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.

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.

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:

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

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:


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


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:

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


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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aug 29</th>
<th>Syllabus; Tragedy of the Commons Simulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 31</td>
<td>Brief Introduction to International Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kütting, Ch. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 2</td>
<td>Simulation, continued; Simulation Debriefing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Introduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sep 7</th>
<th>Environmental Politics: An Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 9</td>
<td>Policy Memos; Practice Problem: Masai Overgrazing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Policy Memo Handout”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 12</td>
<td>Library Research Session — Meet in Student Learning Center, Mansfield Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 14</td>
<td>Practice Problem: Masai Overgrazing (Group Memo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Library Assignment Due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Problem 1: Ecotopia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sep 16</th>
<th>Environmental Philosophy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 19</td>
<td>Green Political Thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 21</td>
<td>The Environment as a Policy Problem Problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 23</td>
<td>Ecological Modernization vs. Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 26</td>
<td>Greening Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 28</td>
<td>Domestic Policy Instruments and Implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 30</td>
<td>Class Discussion: The Challenges of a Green Society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oct 3</th>
<th>International Environmental Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct 5</td>
<td>International Law and the Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 7</td>
<td>International Regimes and the Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 10</td>
<td>International Regimes and Non-state Actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>International Regimes and the Problem of Compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 14</td>
<td>International Climate Change Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Axelrod et. al. Chs. 1 &amp; 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Policy Memo #1 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Axelrod et. al. Ch. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Axelrod et. al. Ch. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Axelrod et. al. Ch. 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Axelrod et. al. Ch. 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Axelrod et. al. Ch. 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Problem 3: International Water Trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oct 24</th>
<th>Environmental Security</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct 26</td>
<td>Case Study: The Problem of Hazardous Wastes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Oct 26 | Axelrod et. al. Ch. 7                              |

| Oct 28 | Axelrod et. al. Ch. 11                             |

| Oct 30 | Case Study: The Problem of Hazardous Wastes        |

| Oct 31 | Axelrod et. al. Ch. 7                              |

| Oct 24 | Axelrod et. al. Ch. 11                             |

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