

**Political Science 559**  
**International Environmental Politics**  
**Course Syllabus**  
**Spring 2009**

Professor Alexander Thompson  
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Office Hours: Wednesday 3:30–5:00

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Course Description

Many of today's environment and resources problems are transnational in nature and cannot be solved by governments acting in isolation of each other. International solutions are required. And yet we find again and again that politics get in the way of successful action at the international level. The goal of this course is to explore the political underpinnings of global environmental problems and to both summarize and evaluate existing efforts to solve them. In sum, this course offers a history and analysis of environmental politics from the perspective of international relations.

The first part of the course establishes basic theoretical tools and concepts for understanding international environmental politics and policy. We begin by discussing general theories of collective action and approaches to commons management. We then turn to theories of international cooperation and regimes and cover basic concepts in international environmental law. We then outline the various actors and institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, involved in international environmental politics. The first part of the course ends with a discussion of sustainable development in the context of economic globalization.

The second part of the course takes up two issues that are of particular importance in today's world: living marine resources and global climate change. These two issues are explored using the conceptual tools covered in the first part of the course. Student presentations will play a key role in educating the class about particular cases of political conflict and policy debates in these areas.

Required Books

The following required books are available at SBX:

- Pamela S. Chasek, David L. Downie and Janet Welsh Brown. 2006. *Global Environmental Politics*, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Westview Press. (hereafter: Chasek et al.)
- Lakshman Guruswamy. 2007. *International Environmental Law in a Nutshell*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Thomson West. (hereafter: Guruswamy)

Readings that are not from these books are either available on Carmen or available online, as noted below. Readings should be completed by the day they are listed on the syllabus.

## Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend every class session and to keep themselves updated on current events involving global environmental politics (we will begin every Wednesday session with a discussion of current events). Graded assignments include: a midterm exam and a final exam, one five-page paper, and one presentation to the class (details outlined below). The exams will test course readings as well as information covered during class sessions, including our discussions of current events and student presentations. Note that class lectures and discussion will often cover material that is not covered in the course texts, so receiving a good grade in this course requires that you attend class *and* do the readings.

The final grade will be determined as follows:

Midterm exam (April 27)	30%
Final exam (June 11)	30%
Paper or Presentation 1 (May 11)	20%
Paper or Presentation 2 (June 1)	20%

## Papers and Presentations

Students must write one paper and make one presentation to the class on the topics below, and may choose which topic they prefer for their presentation and which they prefer for their paper. For example, if you choose Topic #1 for your paper, you will simply hand in a paper by May 11; then, for Topic #2, you must be prepared for a presentation by June 1 (but will not need to write a paper for that topic).

Presentations should be done using PowerPoint (or similar software), though other props and methods can be used to complement your presentation. For your presentation, you may work with one or two other students or you may work alone. You should bring the presentation with you on a flash drive and it is your responsibility to make sure the presentation is loaded properly and in time. If the presentation is collaborative, each student must play a role in the presentation and must participate in discussion.

Papers should be no more than six pages, double-spaced, with one-inch margins and 12-point font. They should *not* be collaborative. They should be grounded in research and all sources must be properly cited.

You must inform the TA or me by two weeks before the due date what you will do for each topic in terms of the specific subject, the format (paper or presentation), and any collaboration.

### **Topic #1 (due May 11)**

Choose a living marine resource to study that has been the subject of management difficulties or political conflict. This could be a particular fishery, a particular fish stock, a marine mammal, and/or a region where such resources are at issue. Describe the state of the resource (i.e., how scarce or plentiful it is), the key actors and political issues involved in its management, and the policies and institutions that have been used to manage the resource. Is the resource being managed effectively? What political factors have led to this success or failure?

### **Topic #2 (due June 1)**

You are writing a memo or making a presentation to President Obama recommending an international climate change policy. Explain what goals need to be achieved and what problems exist with existing policy in light of these goals. Then propose a new approach and describe why it will achieve the stated goals more effectively than the existing approach. You should also alert the President to the likely political opponents, both domestic and international, to your proposed plan. Feel free to be creative. You may choose to offer a comprehensive policy or you may focus on a particular aspect of climate policy. Also, you may focus on U.S. policy specifically or international agreements/institutions more generally.

## **Academic Misconduct**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info\\_for\\_students/csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp)).

## **Disability Services**

**Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.**

## **PART 1. THEORIES AND POLICY TOOLS**

### **March 30. Introduction to the course**

#### **April 1. Collective Action and the Commons**

Readings:

- Garrett Hardin. "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science* 162 (1968): 1243-48. (Carmen)
- Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, Chapter 1. (Carmen)

#### **April 6. Policy Responses: Markets, Governments, Self-Regulation**

Readings:

- Thomas Dietz, Elinor Ostrom & Paul Stern, "The Struggle to Govern the Commons," *Science* (December 2003): pp. 1907-12. (Carmen)
- Fred Krupp and Miriam Horn, *Earth: The Sequel: The Race to Reinvent Energy and Stop Global Warming*, Chapter 1. (Carmen)

#### **April 8. International Cooperation and Institutions**

Readings:

- Chasek et al., Chapter 1

#### **April 13. International Law and the Environment**

Readings:

- Guruswamy, Chapters 1 & 2

#### **April 15. Actors in International Environmental Politics**

Readings:

- Chasek et al., Chapter 2
- Paul Wapner, "Politics beyond the State: Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics," *World Politics* (April 1995): 311-40. (Carmen)

#### **April 20. Sustainable Development**

Readings:

- World Commission on Environment and Development, "Towards Sustainable Development," *Our Common Future* (1987) <http://www.un-documents.net/ocf-02.htm>
- Guruswamy, Chapter 4

#### **April 22. Sustainability under Globalization**

Readings:

- Chasek et al., Chapter 5
- Daniel C. Esty, "Environment and the Trading System: Picking up the Post-Seattle Pieces." In Schott, ed., *The WTO After Seattle* (2000), Chapter 15. (Carmen)

#### **April 27. Midterm exam**

#### **April 29. No Class**

## PART II. SUBSTANTIVE APPLICATIONS: OCEANS AND CLIMATE

### May 4. Marine Resource: Fisheries and Whales

Readings:

- Chasek et al., pp. 143-51, 167-75
- Fen Montaigne, “Still Waters, The Global Fish Crisis,” *National Geographic Magazine* (April 2007).  
<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2007/04/global-fisheries-crisis/montaigne-text>.
- Tim Zimmerman, “If World War III Comes, Blame Fish,” *U.S. News & World Report* (October 21, 1996).  
[http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/961021/archive\\_034792\\_print.htm](http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/961021/archive_034792_print.htm)

### May 6. International Cooperation and the Law of the Sea

Readings:

- Guruswamy, Chapter 13
- Thompson, “Canadian Foreign Policy and Straddling Stocks: Sustainability in an Interdependent World.” *Policy Studies Journal* 28(2000): 219-35. (Carmen)

### May 11. Student Presentations of Case Studies

### May 13. Student Presentations of Case Studies

### May 18. The Problem and Politics of Global Climate Change

Readings:

- Chasek et al., pp. 115-28
- IPCC, *Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report. Summary for Policymakers*.  
[http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4\\_syr\\_spm.pdf](http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4_syr_spm.pdf)

### May 20. The Evolution of International Climate Institutions

Readings:

- Guruswamy, Chapter 6

### May 25. No Class—Memorial Day

### May 27. The Directions of Climate Policy

Readings:

- Daniel Bodansky, “U.S. Climate Policy after Kyoto: Elements for Success,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Policy Brief #15 (2002)  
<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/Policybrief15.pdf>
- Eileen Claussen and Elliot Diringer, “A New Climate Treaty: U.S. Leadership After Kyoto,” *Harvard International Review* (spring 2007). <http://hir.harvard.edu/articles/1594/>

### June 1. Student Presentations

### June 3. Student Presentations

### June 11. Final Exam, 11:30-1:18