POLS 675 Comparative Environmental Politics
Spring 2015

Mondays 6:30-9:00 PM (MG207A)

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Email: dg-ogbaharya@wiu.edu                     Office Hours: MWF 1:30 am – 3:30pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Why do countries respond differently to environmental problems? Why, for example, has the European Union managed to put in place a comprehensive carbon-emissions trading system, while the US has yet to do so? Why does the US lag behind its EU counterparts in various environmental governance indicators? How do the environmental problems of the industrialized world differ from that of the developing world? These are some of the core questions that this course will explore. Students will examine the domestic political factors that cause countries to adopt different environmental policies. The focus will be on institutional and political analysis of how environmental policies differ across national boundaries.

The course also deals with what the Indian environmentalist and scholar-activist, Ramachandra Guha, has labeled “environmentalism of the poor.” Having explored the different environmental policies in place in the industrialized world, here we will examine how the environmental problems of developing countries differ from those we face in the industrialized world. We also examine how the underlying principle of private ownership implicit in globalization threatens communal ownership of land and water. Loss of communal rights to land and water tend to also induce ethnic conflict as different communities – for example farmers and cattle herders – compete over increasingly precarious rural assets. In light of these concerns regarding the social and environmental repercussions of financial and agricultural investments, we will revisit the notion of environmental sustainability and its applicability in developing countries. Does sustainability in the developing world means dealing with extreme rural and urban poverty? Does it mean empowering local communities in the management of their local resources and in resolving disputes over the use of natural resources? Does it mean resisting or at least rethinking patent rights especially those dealing with plants and animals?

COURSE OBJECTIVES
1. Analyze the domestic political factors that lead to different environmental responses and outcomes.
2. Understand the role of science, ideologies and political culture in environmental decision-making.
3. Describe and classify the different roles and functions of environmental groups and “green” political parties.
4. Examine the different causes of environmental conflicts and the various approaches to resolving them.
5. Appreciate in what ways the environmental problems of developing countries differ from those we face in the industrialized world.
REQUIRED BOOKS
The following book serves as the main text for the course.

Paul Steinberg and Stacy VanDeveer (Ed.) (2012). *Comparative Environmental Politics: Theory, Practice, and Prospects*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

NOTE: Additional articles and chapters marked by * are listed in the course schedule below. Many of these materials are directly accessible on the web and the links are provided. They will also be posted on Western Online. Other readings will be distributed in class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Attendance and participation (30 pts.):** Attendance of all classes is a key requirement of the course. It is therefore extremely important that you attend and participate actively in class discussions. Obviously, you should be present to participate. High quality participation is one in which you refer to the main ideas raised in the readings as well as offer your insight and interpretations. You are free to express your opinions and ideas, but they have to be relevant to the readings and the topic at hand. It is one of the objectives of this course to help you develop skills in intelligent argument and polite debate. Thus, impolite and unprofessional language, attitude, and behavior will not be tolerated. Too many absences will affect your final grade. If you have more than two unexcused absences, a grade of “A” is out of your reach.

2. **6 Think Pieces (10 each, 60 pts.):** You will write 6 Think Pieces (at least 3 double-spaced pages in Times New Roman) on weekly readings. In each Think Piece, you will analyze the key ideas and arguments of ALL required readings for the week. It is not enough to summarize each reading. You have to make connections between the readings, shed light on the overarching theme, and provide your own insights and interpretations. Think Pieces are due on Sun. before class by midnight. You will email them to me.

3. **Discussion Leader (20 pts.):** You will lead a class meeting for about 30 minutes. You will make a presentation on the readings for that week and provide a list of questions for discussion. You will meet with me to prepare for the presentation.

4. **Research Paper (50 pts.) and Research Proposal (20 pts.):** Each student will write a Research Paper of 20 double-spaced pages excluding works cited page. The paper should address an environmental issue/policy program in a country of your choice other than the US. You can compare your case study to the US, but you have to pick another country as the main case study. This is an excellent assignment for those of you who will do the “Paper Option.” Please speak with me if you are doing the paper option. Your paper should have a literature review and an empirical component in which you will provide evidence in support of your thesis or argument. An “A” paper is one that has a clear research question and a well-formulated thesis. Before you begin your research, I will have to approve a three-page research proposal including an outline and a sample bibliography. The research proposal is due on February 16. The research proposal is worth 20 pts.

5. **Late assignments and papers:** All late assignments and papers will incur point deduction, 2 points for each day past the deadline. Assignments and papers overdue for
more than a week will not be accepted and will receive zero. Although late assignments and papers submitted within a week after the deadline will be graded, I will not necessarily provide timely grade or feedback. If you don’t submit your work on time, you will not receive grade or feedback on time. If you can’t make the deadline for medical reasons and/or officially recognized duty or travel, please notify me prior to the deadline. You will also have to provide appropriate and legitimate documents to support your absence or why you will not be able to turn in your work on time.

**NOTE ON PLAGIARISM:** Your papers should adhere to WIU’s standards and policy on academic honesty, which you should access and read here: http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php

All assignments and papers that fail to meet the test of plagiarism will receive 0 points. A singular act of plagiarism could also result in the grade of “F” for the course.

**Grading**

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>20 pts.</td>
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<td>6 Think Pieces @ 15 pts</td>
<td>90 pts.</td>
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<td>Discussion Leader</td>
<td>20 pts.</td>
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<td>Research Proposal</td>
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<td>Final Research Paper</td>
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TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1 (01/26): Introduction, Syllabus and Course Overview


Week 2 (2/2): A Comparative Approach to Environmental Politics
Steinberg & VanDeveer, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, pp. 1-29


Week 3 (2/9): The Many Faces of Environmentalism

Dunlap & York, Chapter 4 in Steinberg & VanDeveer, pp. 89-112


T. Knudson. “Shifting the pain: World’s Resources feed California’s Growing Appetite.” In k. Conca and G. Dabelko (Eds.) Green Planet Blues: Four Decades of Global Environmental Politics


Week 4 (2/16): Environmental Politics in Liberal Democracies vs. Social Democracies

O’Neill, Chapter 7 in Steinberg & VanDeveer, pp. 171-196

Hochstetler, Ch. 8 in Steinberg & VanDeveer, pp. 197-230

Week 5 (2/23): Environmental Politics in Authoritarian and Democratizing States

O’Neill, Ch.5 in Steinberg & VanDeveer, pp. 113-142
Sowers, Ch.9 in in Steinberg & VanDeveer, pp. 231-254


**Recommended**


**Week 6 (3/2): Environmental Policy Making: Science, Ideology and Non-governmental organizations**


**Recommended**

VIDEO God is Green: [http://vimeo.com/8200014](http://vimeo.com/8200014)
Week 7 (3/9): Environmental Policy Making: Social Movements and Transnational Advocacy Networks

Gallagher & Weinthal, Ch. 6 in Steinberg & VanDeveer, pp. 115-142


March 16-20, Mon.-Fri. -- Spring Break -- No Classes

Week 9 (3/23): Week (3/2): Capitalism and Environmentalism

Meyer, J. (2011). We have never been liberal: the environmentalist turn to liberalism and the possibilities for social criticism. Environmental Politics 20(3).


Week 10 (3/30): Ecology and Socialism

J. Kovel, “Ecosocialism” in Dryzek & Scholsberg (2007). Debating Earth: The Environmental Politics Reader

**Week 11 (4/6): Environmentalism of Developing Countries**


**Recommended:**

**Week 12 (4/13): Coercive Conservation**


Conservation and Displacement: An Overview. Conservation and Society UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples


**Week 13 (4/20): Ecological Justice: Genetic Engineering, Biopiracy and Eco-Feminism**


http://vandanashiva.com/?p=105


Week 14 (4/27): Environmental Conflicts


Week 15 (5/4): The ‘Green Peace’ Hypothesis


Recommended:


Week 16 (5/11): Final Research Paper Due