Course overview:

Citizens around the world are demanding a cleaner and healthier world as well as more just access to, and benefits from, the environment, in what some call the greening of international environmental politics. Problems such as air pollution, deforestation, famine, access to clean water, and loss of biodiversity pose numerous problems for states and policymakers, including, but not limited to, the increased potential for conflict. Unfortunately, creating effective governance regimes and negotiating such policies is difficult given the disparity between the political and economic power of various national and international actors, access to information, large number of diverse stakeholders, and disparate national priorities. Some multi-national corporations, small businesses and consumers are also actively involved in international environmental issues through the decisions they make in production and consumption of consumer items. While some critics argue that such activity is merely greenwashing, other supporters argue that business can and should play a more active role in global environmental sustainability. This course examines many of these problems central to the challenges of global environmental politics and enables students to identify and analyze his/her own values regarding these problems.

Grades and Policies

**Evaluation:** 100 – 94 A, 93-90 A-, 89-87 B+, 86-84 B, 83-80 B-, 79-77 C+, 76-74 C, 73-70 C-, 69-67 D+, 66-64 D, 63-60 D-, 59 (and below) F

Assignments  30%
Blog & Presentation  30%
Exams  40%

**Grades:** It is a violation of FIRPA to discuss grades via email. As a result, UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE WILL I DISCUSS GRADES OTHER THAN BY APPOINTMENT. All emails asking about grades will be referred to this syllabus.

***Please note: Your grades are your responsibility, not mine. If you are doing poorly I am always available to help you outside of class. It is your responsibility, however, to seek help as soon as you know your grades are not as good as you would like. DO NOT wait until the end of the semester to ask how you can improve your grade. By that point there will be little you or I can do to help improve the situation.***

**Extra credit:** I periodically offer extra credit, though this is NOT guaranteed. If you are concerned about your grade you should take these opportunities if offered. Under no circumstance will I offer extra credit at the end of the semester just for you because you are unhappy with your grade. All requests for extra credit will be referred to this syllabus.

**Make-up Policy:** I do not give make-up exams, quizzes, or assignments unless you have a verified absence by the Dean of Students. In such cases it is your responsibility to contact me to arrange a time to make-up the missed assignment. At my discretion make-up assignments, quizzes, and/or exams may be different than that given in class, but will be of equal difficulty level.
Special Needs: If you are an individual with a disability and require accommodations for this class, please notify the instructor immediately.

**STRUCTURE OF COURSE**

Course Material/Readings: All readings will be available on the Blackboard system.

**Student requirements:**

1. There will be four exams. There will be no mid-term or final.
2. There will be several assignments during the semester. These assignments are designed to build on knowledge learned in the classroom by applying it to current issues. Although all assignments are listed on the syllabus, I reserve the right to add any additional assignments as necessary even if they are not located on the syllabus. If you are absent from class it is your responsibility to find out if you missed any assignments.
3. Students will keep a video or written blog documenting either (1) How they are reducing their carbon and water footprint or (2) Developments in an issue area regarding the global environment. Specific instructions for this presentation will be provided during the course of the semester.
4. You are expected to follow the Purdue University Class Attendance and Absence Reporting Policy, meaning that you are required to attend all lectures and events. **Absences will be excused only for documented physical or mental illness, accident, or emergency as determined by the Dean of Students.** (See above regarding make-up policy for excused absences.)

*For all work, the Purdue University Student Code of Conduct is in effect. Every assignment, quiz, and exam must be your own work. Students who cheat or copy will fail the course and be turned into the Dean of Students.*

Class Format: I will post PowerPoint slides for each lecture. The slides will outline the important points of that day’s reading. These slides are posted to help guide you through each reading. It is to your benefit to look over the slides before and during reading the assigned material. These slides are in no way meant to replace the reading, but to help you understand it.

Student Contributions: Students are encouraged to send me links to articles, videos, etc. they find related to an environmental issue or something that brings up an issue we discussed in class. I will incorporate it when appropriate to further keep the class engaged in material which is relevant and of interest.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

***Each class meeting listed on the following Course Schedule is broken into sections separated by a solid black line. The reading listed in that section is the reading we will discuss that day. For example, on January 14 we will discuss the articles by Garrett Hardin and Armatya Sen. Therefore, you should complete this reading before coming to class that day.***

12 Jan  Introduction

*Goals: To understand the structure of the course, readings, and class requirements.*

14 Jan  Tragedy of the Commons: Theory

*Goals: To understand what a “tragedy of the commons” problem is, and to be able to recognize this phenomena in environmental politics in areas of conservation, pollution, and national parks.*
Questions: Why does Hardin believe that the population problem has “no technical solution”? What does he mean when he says that “the most rapidly growing populations on earth are...the most miserable?” In what ways is an open pasture a tragedy of the commons? If overgrazing is a problem, why don’t the herdsmen stop adding animals? What are potential solutions to this problem? Should temperance be our goal? Is coercion effective? Is abandoning the “freedom to breed” good advice? Is China’s one-child policy a good or bad example of Hardin’s approach applied to real life? What are the basic assumptions of the Tragedy of the Commons?

Malthus was wrong; should we not worry, then? What is the override view in terms of compulsory birth control? How is it different from the collaborative approach? According to Sen, is development the most reliable contraceptive? How have data on food production altered the argument? In what ways is Kerala a success? Does the article from The Economist strengthen or weaken Sen’s point? What does the number 2.1 symbolize? Do higher standards of living reduce fertility? Is Sen’s solution an “ideas”, “interests”, or “institutions” approach to solving the population problem?


NOTE: You have a homework assignment due on January 28 which will require that you start on it this weekend! Make sure to read the requirements for the homework assignment as you will not be able to complete it if you wait until the last minute!

19 Jan No Class – Martin Luther King Holiday

26 Jan Population Control Policies

Goals: To understand population control policies of the UN and Countries around the world.

Questions: What is the purpose of World Population Day? Why are Americans opposed to population control? What are some examples of population control measures that are being implemented around the globe? Why are reproductive services pushed primarily in the Third World? According to public documents released by organizations represented at the Copenhagen Conference, what is the cheapest way to reduce carbon emissions? What is the carbon offset initiative? What is the Optimum Population Trust? What is the “stop at two” pledge? What was so shocking about the UN Population Division policy brief? What would it take to accelerate fertility decline in the least developed countries? What are some of the critiques about the notion that population control can solve climate change?


**HOMEWORK: List the top ten most populated countries in the world. Pick the two most populated countries as well as two other countries of your own choosing and research what, if any, population control policies have been implemented in each country. List each country on a sheet of paper and bullet point each policy they are pursuing to reduce their populations. If no policies are in place provide an explanation as to why none exist. You should be thorough in your research!**

---

**28 Jan**

Tragedy of the Commons: Consumption

*Goals:* To understand the debates and solutions regarding consumption

*Questions:* What is causing the asymmetrical pattern of development in India? What are the consequences of this process? What are the three key ways to enhance the social power of ecological refugees and ecosystem people? What is necessary to improve the lives of everyone? What is the “frontier attitude”? What solutions does the German Green Party propose to ensure our planet’s ecological health? What is Gandhi’s Code of Voluntary Simplicity? How has India’s process of industrialization differed from England and the US? What is the fallacy of the romantic economist? What is the fallacy of the romantic environmentalist?


**HOMEWORK: Create a chart listing all of the trash produced in the prior week. Also, calculate your overall general carbon and water footprint.**

---

**2 Feb**

Water Scarcity and Conflict

*Goals:* To understand how scarcity of specific issue areas, such as water, can lead to conflict

*Questions:* How many people lack access to safe drinking water? By 2030 how many people will be living in areas of high water stress? What are contributing factors to water scarcity? How is water scarcity defined? What are some examples of water wars? What are three ways to deal with the pressure of water scarcity?


**HOMEWORK: Look up the country that uses the most water per capita as well as two developing countries and compare your annual water footprint with the footprint of individuals in that country. Write a summary explaining why the water footprint is so small or large in each country and compare each country with your own footprint. Are you surprised with the results? Also, what policies is each country pursuing, if any, to manage water resources?**

---

**4 Feb**

Water Scarcity and Conflict

*Goals:* To understand how scarcity of specific issue areas, such as water, can lead to conflict

*Questions:* Why could a water shortage in China result in a world food shortage? Why would the NIC be concerned with China’s water shortage? How is China’s development adding to its water scarcity issues? What three factors are causing China’s irrigation supply to deplete? Out of China’s 617 largest cities, how many face a water shortage? From an economic standpoint why is it rational to divert water from
agriculture? From a political standpoint why is it rational to divert water from agriculture? What percent of China’s rivers no longer support fish? Why are companies relocating upstream on the Yellow River? What are the consequences of this mass relocation? What is water pricing and how does it work? What are some suggestions for helping China stretch its water supply?


9 Feb
Water Scarcity and Privatization

Goals: To understand how privatization could impact water scarcity issues

Questions: None.

Readings: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1a3tjqQiBI

HOMEWORK: See Assignment on Blackboard.

11 Feb
Exam 1

16 Feb
Food Scarcity and the Myth About Food Scarcity

Goals: To learn about the problem of food scarcity and the counterargument to food scarcity

Questions: What does Lester Brown say is the hidden driver of politics? What is one of the factors feeding the unrest in the Arab World, North Africa and the Middle East? What has made it difficult to keep up with the demand for food? How is grain becoming a geopolitical leverage for states?

What are some of the contributing factors of hunger? What is the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa? What reasons does Goodman give for questioning the motives of the Alliance? What causes food shortages? Is food a right? According to the IAASTD what will end hunger? From how many did the number of hungry people in the world grow after the food crisis in 2008 to 2010? What factors are boosting the demand for food? According to Gimenez, how many people can sustainable agriculture potentially feed? According to Gimenez, why are people going hungry today? What is the “massive hoarding of food commodity derivatives” and how does it work?


HOMEWORK: Find one example of when food scarcity occurred as a result of the market, but not as a result of a lack of food. Write a brief summary describing the events that led to the market-induced food scarcity.
Resource Scarcity – The Middle East, Northern Africa & Oil and Conflict

**Goals:** To understand how issues of water scarcity and oil impact the Middle East and Northern Africa.

**Questions:** How many developing countries suffer from water scarcity? Why is water such a vital and contentious resource? Where will potential conflict over scarce resources be most volatile? Why? What is supply-induced scarcity? What is demand-induced scarcity? What is structural scarcity? What is resource capture? What is ecological marginalization? What is relative deprivation? What are the four causes of water scarcity in the Middle East and Northern Africa? How many cubic meters of water does each person need per year for personal needs? How much of that is used for agricultural production? Does the Middle East have enough water to sustain its needs? What is virtual water? How does oil prevent water wars? How does free trade impact agricultural practices? How does free trade impact water resources in the Middle East and North Africa?

Has the number of conflicts around the world increased or decreased? What about for countries that produce oil? What is the oil curse? How can oil wealth trigger conflict? Does oil alone create conflict? How did the international community reduce the number of conflicts occurring over diamonds? Why is stopping conflicts over oil not as easy as stopping conflict over diamonds? What does Ross propose to stop the oil curse?


Global Fossil Fuel Reduction Policies

**Goals:** To learn what countries are doing to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels.

**Questions:** Why is it that other countries can convert from fossil based energy which is destroying the atmosphere and producing global warming to renewables in a relatively short time while the US is lagging way behind? What is the difference between the US and Sweden’s approach to their energy sector? What is the key element in Sweden’s energy policy? How does the US compare to Sweden in terms of its use of fossil fuels? What is Germany’s secret to switching to renewable energy? What is driving Denmark’s transition to a new energy strategy?


**HOMEWORK:** Research two countries (other than the US, Sweden, Germany, or Denmark) and write a thorough description of the policies they are pursuing to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels.

Exam 2

Global Warming – Overview

**Goals:** To understand the debate regarding global warming
Questions: According to the author why is the environmental movement failing? Why did the Copenhagen climate conference in 2009 fail? What is significant about the number 2 degrees Celsius? By how much has the temperature of the planet risen? What are some of the consequences of this increase? How much carbon dioxide can be emitted into the atmosphere if the temperature is to stay below 2 degrees Celsius? How many years will it take to reach that carbon dioxide limit? How much oil, gas, and coal do companies have on reserve and ready to burn? Why is this significant? Why have fossil-fuel companies fought to prevent the regulation of carbon dioxide? How much is the market value of 2795 gigatons of carbon emissions based on current reserves of fossil-fuel companies? Why have successful climate change policies been so unsuccessful? What are the pros and cons of putting a price on carbon? What strategy does the author suggest would be most effective to combat climate change?

Readings: McKibben, Bill. 2012. “Global Warming’s Terrifying New Math: Three simple numbers that add up to a global catastrophe – and that make clear who the real enemy is.” Rolling Stone Magazine. (July).

HOMEWORK: Research one major fossil fuel company that operates in the US and 1) list how much fossil fuel reserves the company owns; 2) list how much money the company gives to political campaigns each year and to whom the company donates; 3) list what lobbying efforts the company has pursued and/or what policies the company has had a direct role in creating; and 4) list the renewable energy investments in which the company has engaged. This should include the portion of money designated for research of renewables as well as the total investment in renewable energy.

4 March  Global Warming – The 11th Hour

Goals: To understand the debate regarding global warming

Readings: http://vimeo.com/35853153


Goals: To understand the counter-debate regarding global warming

Questions: None

Readings: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52Mx0_8YEtg

***SEE ASSIGNMENT ON BLACKBOARD

11 March  Goals: To understand the counter-debate regarding global warming and CO2

Questions: What is the relationship between modern society and hydrocarbon energy? How much is world energy consumption expected to grow by 2035? What percentage of the world’s energy comes from biofuels and waste? Has it increased or decreased since 1973? Are wind and solar energy efficient and capable of meeting the world’s energy demands? What are three problems with wind and solar energy? What is dilute energy? What is energy density? Why are biofuels neither good economics nor good environmental policy? What are some disadvantages to electric cars? What is “peak oil”? What is fracking?

16 March   No Class – Spring Break

18 March   No Class – Spring Break

NOTE: ON April 6 this is an assignment that will require you take a field trip to a farmer’s market or other local food producer/seller. Make sure to read the assignment as you will not have time to complete it if you wait until the last minute!

23 March   International Regimes and Environmental Policy and The Kyoto Protocol & Climate Change

Goals: To see how norms, rules, procedures, and institutions created by nations influence international environmental policy.

Questions: What is an international regime? How do we define norms, principles, rules, and procedures? What are some regimes in hazardous waste and climate change? What are the obstacles to cooperation that states face in the international system? What does a country need to cooperate and agree to international treaties?

Why did Bush reject the Kyoto protocol treaty? How did the Bush decision help the Europeans overcome internal disagreements? What is the “precautionary principle” embraced by Europe? What is the “no regrets” policy of the US? Why couldn’t the Clinton-Gore presidency close the gap with Europe? Why was the EU skeptical of emissions trading? How does Schreurs explain the failure of environmental groups in the US?


THERE WILL BE AN IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENT TODAY REQUIRING THAT YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH BOTH ARTICLES!

25 March   Exam 3

30 March   Food Systems and the Environment

Goals: To understand how our current food system impacts the environment

Questions: None.


HOMEWORK: See the assignment on Blackboard.
1 April

Food Systems and the Environment – *Food, Inc.*

**Goals:** To understand how our current food system impacts the environment

**Questions:** From where have most people obtained their food? How much food is shipped on the global market? How far does food travel in the US? Why are we moving more food around the planet? What are the problems with shipping so much food around the world? What is the Wal-Mart effect? What are the benefits of rebuilding local food systems?


**HOMEWORK:** Visit a farmer’s market or a local grocery store or restaurant. Speak to the manager or owner and interview him/her about the benefits of buying local. Write a brief summary of what you found out and how it relates to this class.

6 April

Sustainable Development and Sustainability and the Economy

**Goals:** To understand the history of sustainable development and its impact on the environmental movement

**Questions:** What is the definition of sustainable development? How does development contribute to the characterization of needs? What is wrong with letting societies decide for themselves what it takes to be sustainable? What is critical natural capital and how does it relate to sustainable development? What is the implication of massive consumer trends on sustainable development? Why is it difficult to reconcile development with sustainability? How are corporations embracing “Green Capitalism”? What is ecological modernization? What are some of the criticisms of corporate greening? What does the author mean when he says “political rhetoric has often replaced the discussion of environmental issues”?

According to the report, how does renewable energy provide economic benefits? What is the difference between direct employment and indirect jobs? Will transferring to renewable energy hurt jobs? Explain your answer. How will supporting the renewable energy industry benefit sectors of the economy and states that currently suffer from high unemployment? Why are jobs in extractive industries and utilities on the decline? What are some other externalities generated by the fossil fuel industry besides declining jobs? What policy measures would maximize the net positive economic and employment benefits that the renewable energy industry offers?


8 April

Sustainable Development and government structures – A Comparison

**Goals:** To understand the success of the German renewable energy through a comparison of its government structure to that of the United States.

**Questions:** What three factors are behind Germany’s renewable energy success? Why has renewable energy been more successful on the political front in Germany than in the US? What is Germany’s feed-in tariff and how does it work? How do Germany and the US’s tax subsidies for renewable energy differ? What is decentralized electricity?
15 April  

**Sustainability and the Economy**

*Goals:* To challenge typical “individualizing” ways of responding to environmental problems.

*Questions:* In what way does the ending of *The Lorax* exemplify the American response to the environmental crisis? What is the problem with this approach – that is, why aren’t simple living and militant recycling sufficient? What does IPAT stand for, and how does IWAC differ from it? What is the consumption problem to which he refers?


*HOMEWORK:* Make a list of the different ways you can help to “save the world” that coincide with the argument Maniates makes regarding what needs to be done to help resolve our current environmental issues.

17 April  

**Greenwashing**

*Goals:* To understand how consumption leads to greenwashing

*Questions:* Is greenwashing a recent phenomenon? How many products made green claims in 2009? By how much have green claims increased? Of those products making green claims, how many engaged in greenwashing? Is environmental advertising in the United States tightly regulated? What are the Green Guides? What is the problem with products labeled as “biodegradable”? Name and define each of the sins of greenwashing. Who has stepped into the vacuum for monitoring consumer products left by the government? How does the author propose we make green claims work?


*HOMEWORK:* Bring to class two products that have been greenwashed as well as a short written description of how it was greenwashed and which sin of greenwashing was committed.

22 April  

**The Industrial Cycle vs. The Natural Cycle and the Future of the Environmental Movement**

*Goals:* To understand a new approach to the industrial design process.

*Questions:* How does the industrial revolution resemble the Titanic? Was a binding agreement reached at the 1992 Earth Summit? What is eco-efficiency? What was the main point of *Our Common Purpose,* Why is eco-efficiency not a long term strategy? What is downcycling? What are some of the problems with recycling? What is the cradle to grave manufacturing line? What is eco-effectiveness? What is the difference between biological and technical nutrients and how do they fit into the manufacturing process? What does regulation on industry look like in the “Next Industrial Revolution”? What are the basic principles of the “Next Industrial Revolution”? Describe what an industrial system looks like in the “New Industrial Revolution.”
What does Steffen blame for the failure of the environmental movement? What does Steffen say Americans think about when they think of the environmental movement? What does Steffen mean when he states, “Politics is a war of persuasion?” What strategies does Steffen suggest to strengthen the movement?


Also, find an example of at least two of Steffen’s suggestions and bring a brief description of each to class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27 April</td>
<td>Poster/Video Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 April</td>
<td>Poster/Video Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 May</td>
<td>Poster/Video Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 May</td>
<td>Exam 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This syllabus is a living, organic creation, and it may change over the course of the semester in response to changing classroom and campus conditions. More specifically, in the event of a major campus emergency course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. Though all changes will be announced, you should also refer to the Blackboard Learn web page to keep track of the most recent version of the syllabus.