Course Description

This is an advanced graduate seminar, which will focus on the politics of the environment. The course is designed to give students an in-depth overview of the field, with a focus on research topics that have attracted attention in recent years, such as sustainable development and climate change.

Course Overview

Many of contemporary environmental challenges are global in scope: issues, such as climate change, air pollution, biodiversity loss, water shortages, ozone layer depletion, overfishing and deforestation, transcend borders. Addressing these environmental threats requires international cooperation. Yet, many efforts to coordinate global environmental policies remain unsuccessful. We will start by considering the nature of environmental problems and understanding differences between countries in their domestic politics of the environment. We will then focus on studies highlighting cross-national characteristics of environmental problems and their implications for global action. We will discuss how domestic political and economic conditions facilitate or impede international environmental cooperation. We will explore how ideas, interests, interactions, and institutions shape national and international environmental politics.

Course Requirements

Grades in the course will be based on the following (% of total grade):

- **Discussion leading (20%)**
  Students will choose a topic/week to lead discussion. Discussion leading will consist of no more than a 10-minute summary of the core theme and questions from that week and then facilitation of discussion throughout the seminar. Each student will perform this task twice.

- **Short papers (40%)**
  Students are required to submit 4 short papers (2-3 pages each). The papers should
focus on 2-3 assigned readings from a week (chosen by students) and must go beyond summary. Instead, the papers should read like a short book or article review, highlighting the key themes of the chosen readings and pointing out their strengths and weaknesses. Possible directions for students’ critique may include a discussion of questions raised but unanswered by the readings; comparison of the readings; disagreements with the readings; alternative research approaches that that readings could have employed.

- **Research paper and presentation OR midterm and final exams (40%)**

Students can choose one of two options. Those who are interested in conducting research in the area of environmental politics can choose the first option – i.e., a research paper. These students will be expected to develop an original theoretical argument, formulate a hypothesis, ground it in appropriate literature, illustrate an argument or puzzle using qualitative evidence, and test the hypothesis using quantitative evidence. A one-page research proposal will be due via email by 5pm on February 25. A draft will be due in class on March 26. Students will give short presentations on April 16 and submit revised drafts on the same day. The final version of the research paper will be emailed to the instructor by 5pm on May 14.

The second option – i.e., midterm and final exams – will assess students’ mastery of the theoretical and empirical literature covered in the course. Both exams will be take-home essays. Midterm exams will be due by 5pm on March 15. Final exams will be due by 5pm on May 14. I will provide more detailed information before each exam.

**Course Policies**

- **Attendance:**
  I will not take attendance. However, I expect you to make every effort to attend class and be fully prepared to participate in discussion.

- **Late Submissions:**
  Late submissions will be penalized: one grade point for every day past the due date. If you cannot submit an assignment on time due to a documented medical emergency that you could not foresee, contact me as soon as possible to determine an acceptable timeline for submitting the assignment.

- **Accessibility Resources:**
  If you require accommodations due to a disability, please contact Accessibility Resources, located at 25 Capen Hall. AR can be reached by phone at (716) 645-2608 or by email at stu-accessibility@buffalo.edu. Please inform me as soon as possible about your needs so that we can coordinate your accommodations. For more information, visit [http://www.student-affairs.buffalo.edu/ods/](http://www.student-affairs.buffalo.edu/ods/)
Course Materials Copyright:
This syllabus and any handouts used in this course are copyrighted. By “handouts,” I mean all materials generated for this class, which include but are not limited to quizzes, exams and review sheets. Because these are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts, unless I expressly grant permission.

Academic Integrity:
Cheating, plagiarism, or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in an automatic grade of “F” for the course and possibly further punitive action.

Grade Disclosure:
All personal information concerning students’ performance in this course is governed by federal privacy legislation, known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). Grades will be posted on UBlearns.

Grading Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93–100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90–92.9%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87–89.9%</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>83–86.9%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80–82.9%</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77–79.9%</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>63–66.9%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–62.9%</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
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Course Schedule

Week 1 (Jan 28–Feb 1) – Overview

Required:


Week 2 (Feb 4–8) – Characteristics of Environmental Problems

Required:


**Recommended:**


**Week 3 (Feb 11–15) – Problem Definition; Role of Science**

**Required:**


• Tranter, Bruce, and Kate Booth. 2015. “Scepticism in a changing climate: A cross-national study.” *Global Environmental Change* 33:154–164.
Recommended:


Week 4 (Feb 18–22) – Demand for Environmental Protection

Required:


Recommended:


**Week 5 (Feb 25–Mar 1) – Government Responses**

**2/25 One-page research proposal due (5pm)**

*Required:*


*Recommended:*


**Week 6 (Mar 4–8) – Private Sector Responses**

*Required:*

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**Recommended:**


**Week 7 (Mar 11–15) – Community and NGO Responses**

**3/15 Midterm exam due (5pm)**

*Required:*


Recommended:


Spring recess (Mar 18–22)

Week 8 (Mar 25–29) – Environment and Domestic Institutions

3/26 Research paper draft due (in class)

Required:


**Recommended:**


**Week 9 (Apr 1–5) – Environment and International Institutions**

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


**Week 10 (Apr 8-12) – Trade and Environment**

*Required:*


*Recommended:*


Week 11 (Apr 15–19) – Investment and Environment

4/16 Students’ research presentations; revised draft due (in class)

Required:


Recommended:


Week 12 (Apr 22–26) – Climate Change

Required:


**Recommended:**


**Week 13 (Apr 29–May 3) – Sustainable Development**

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


**Week 14 (May 6–10) – Environment and Security**

*Required:*


*Recommended:*


*5/14 Final exams/papers due (5pm)*