

# INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

INTA4040 /INTA8803BL

Fall 2010

Instructor: Barbara Lynch  
Instructional Center 117

T,Th. 1:35-2:55 p.m.

## OVERVIEW

International environmental policymaking is hard. It requires complex, trans-scalar interactions among different institutional actors: state and non-state, formal or informal, international and local. These actors bring to debates widely divergent values and perspectives. Environmental activists and policy makers in the north may emphasize climate change; activists in the global south care about access to water, natural disasters and exposure to risks associated with mining, industrial and real estate development, air pollution, and the environmental impacts of war. As they haggle in international arenas, activists, scientists, government officials and diplomats define problems, decide what constitutes risk, assign blame, and negotiate remediation strategies. In the process, landscapes are transformed—not always in foreseeable ways. In this seminar course, we read and critique literature from the fields of geography, anthropology, political science, development sociology, and planning to learn

- How environmental issues are perceived, framed, contested and/or reshaped in international arenas;
- How international and national agencies, scientific communities, NGOs, and social movement organizations use alternative frames to construct agendas for environmental action;
- How institutional agendas are translated into environmental programs and policies in Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Asia.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course, for undergraduates and graduate students in policy related fields, seeks to acquaint students with key international environmental policy debates, to develop their capacity to analyze social settings, and to write cogently, succinctly, and convincingly about complex issues. The reading load is substantial, and some knowledge of current environmental debates is assumed. Class meetings will be largely devoted to open discussion of the topics listed in the syllabus. Students are expected to show evidence of thoughtful and critical reading of assigned texts; they are also encouraged to bring their own experiences, their knowledge of current events, and relevant information from other course work to bear on our discussions. Grades will be based (1) attendance and the quality participation in class discussions, (2) performance on quizzes and midterm exam, (3) written assignments, and (4) oral presentations. Full conformity with academic integrity standards is expected. Plagiarism in any form will result in a failing grade in the course.

## Assigned Readings

The texts listed below are required and should be purchased.

Jennifer Clapp. *Toxic Exports*

Ken Conca and Geoffrey Dabelko. *Green Planet Blues* (Fourth Edition)

Gary M. Kroll and Righard H. Robbins. *World in Motion: The Globalization and the Environment Reader*

Giddens, Anthony. *The Politics of Climate Change*

Other required readings can be downloaded from the T-Square website for this course or accessed directly from the web.

### **Class participation (40 percent of grade)**

Regular attendance is required, as is informed discussion of the issues raised in readings. You are also expected to track and discuss current environmental debates and problems. From time to time, class may begin with a quiz or written assignment. The purpose of these short in-class exercises is twofold: to learn how well you have grasped the main points of assigned reading and to facilitate class discussion. Responses will be included in your discussion grade. Laptops and cell phones may not be used in class.

Graduate students taking the course for a letter grade will be required to prepare one lecture during the course of the semester on one of the assigned topics.

### **Mid-term exams (30 percent of grade)**

The two scheduled mid-term exams will contain both essay and short answer questions on material covered in the assigned readings and in lectures. One or essay questions may take the form of open book assignments to be completed in advance of the exam. All students taking the course for credit are expected to take the two mid-term exams.

Midterm 1: In class exam

Midterm 2: Take home assignment on the Gulf Oil Spill

### **Final assignment—International Institutional Performance Evaluation (30 percent of grade).**

This assignment will consist of an oral presentation and a 10-page paper on the way in which international institutions, singly or in groups, have responded to a perceived environmental crisis. Presentations and papers should focus on a single environmental problem (e.g., transboundary air pollution, electronic waste reduction, deforestation, biodiversity protection, whaling, carbon sequestration, fresh water governance), and it should answer ALL of the

following questions:

1. Which international agencies have a stake in addressing this problem?
2. How does each of the agencies noted above define the problem?
3. Has this definition been contested? If so, by whom? What is the nature of the critique?
4. Overall, would you say that the agencies have helped us manage the problem in a way that improves the environment?
5. What do you see as the obstacles to arriving at a clear and cohesive strategy for addressing the problem at hand?
6. Which countries, regions, economic sectors, and social groups would be favored by the policies and actions of the institutions that you have been studying? Which would be disadvantaged as a result of these policies and actions?

All students are required to participate actively in the symposium, either as panelists or discussants. Students taking the course for a letter grade are expected to prepare an oral panel presentation, an annotated bibliography, and a written paper (10 double-spaced pages, 1-inch margins, with reference list and citations in text) for this assignment. Others will participate as discussants. All students are expected to abide by Georgia Tech standards of academic integrity. All work submitted in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. Assignments that do not comply with these standards will receive a failing grade.

#### COURSE CALENDAR AND READINGS

VARIETIES OF ENVIRONMENTALISM	
<p>UNDERSTANDING GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS: PERSPECTIVES, THEORIES, DEBATES AND INSTITUTIONS</p> <p>Aug 24</p>	<p>No assigned readings</p>
<p>MALTHUSIAN PERSPECTIVES: OVERPOPULATION AND THE LIMITS OF GROWTH</p> <p>Aug 26, 31</p>	<p>Conca, Chapters 3,4</p> <p>Ostrom, Elinor. <i>Governing the Commons</i>. Chapter 1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p>Conca, Chapter 1</p> <p>Daly, Herman. <i>Beyond Growth</i>. Ch. 1.</p>
<p>CONSERVATION AND THE NGOS</p> <p>Sept 2, 7</p>	<p>Conca, Chapter 28</p> <p>Dowie, Mark. 2009. <i>Conservation Refugees</i>. Ch. 4</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p>Mac Chapin. A Challenge to Conservationists.</p> <p>Keck, Margaret and Katherine Sikkink, <i>Activists Beyond Borders</i>. Ch. 1</p>
<p>ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY</p> <p>Sept 9, 14,16</p>	<p>Conca, Chapters 21, 22, 25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p>Conca, Chapters 23, 24</p>
<p>SUSTAINABILITY AND ECOLOGICAL MODERNIZATION</p> <p>Sept 16, 21</p>	<p>Sonnenfeld, D. A. and A. P.J. Mol. Globalization and the transformation of environmental governance. <i>American Behavioral Scientist</i> 45 (9): 1318-1339</p> <p>WCED <i>Our Common Future</i>. Overview, pp. 1-23</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p>Conca, Chapters 17, 18, 29</p>
<p>ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE</p> <p>Sept 23, 28, 30</p> <p>September 28: Organize working groups for final assignment</p>	<p>Conca, ch. 7, 8, 9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p>Conca, Chapters 26, 27, 39</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p>Kroll and Robbins, ch 2, 13</p>

<p><b>MIDTERM EXAM</b></p> <p>Oct 5</p> <p><b>WORKING GROUP MEETINGS</b></p> <p>Oct 7</p>	<p>No assigned readings</p>
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CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

<p>WATER</p> <p>Oct 12,14</p>	<p>Kroll and Robbins, Chapters 3, 5</p> <p>UNDP. Human Development Report 2006. Chap. 4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p>Swyngedouw. Power, Nature and the City</p>
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	Haglund, Cristina. 2008. A river turns black. In J. Shultz and M.C. Draper, <i>Dignity and Defiance</i> .
CONSUMING LANDSCAPES: EXTRACTION, SPRAWL, POLLUTION  Oct 21	Kroll and Robbins, Chapters 1, 4  Bury, Jeffrey. 2005. Mining mountains: neoliberalism, land tenure, livelihoods and the new Peruvian mining industry in Cajamarca. <i>Environment and Planning A 37</i> : 221-239  * * *  Hardoy, Jorge, Diana Mitlin and David Satterthwaite. 2001. <i>Environmental Problems in an Urbanizing World</i> . Ch. 3  Kroll and Robbins, Chapter 14
PILED HIGHER AND DEEPER: THE POLITICAL ECOLOGY OF GARBAGE  Oct 26-28	Clapp, Jennifer. 2002. Toxic Exports: The Transfer of Hazardous Wastes from Rich to Poor Countries.  * * *  Kroll and Robbins, Chapter 9
NORMAL ACCIDENTS Nov 2,4  Nov 4: Gulf Oil Spill essays due in class. Formal debate in class.	Beck, Ulrich. Risk Society. Ch. 1. On the logic of wealth distribution and risk distribution.  Rajan, Ravi. 2001. Toward a metaphysics of environmental violence: the case of the Bhopal diaster. In N. Peluso and M Watts, eds., <i>Violent Environments</i> . Ch. 16  * * *  Perrow, Charles. 1999. <i>Normal Accidents</i> . C. 3  Gulf spill reading packet
CLIMATE CHANGE AND CARBON FUNDAMENTALISM Nov 9,11	Giddens, Anthony. The Politics of Climate Change. Chapters 1-5  * * *  Giddens, Chapters 6-9
THE PRICE OF CHEAP FOOD Nov 16,18	Wright, Angus. The Death of Ramon Gonzalez, Chapter 2: The Road to Culiacan

	<p>Oxfam, UK. 2009. Fair Miles: Recharting the Food Miles Map</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p>The World According to Monsanto  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hErvV5YEHkE">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hErvV5YEHkE</a>          food.inc. Part 7, 8, 9</p> <p>Kroll and Robbins, Chapter 8</p>
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GOVERNING THE ENVIRONMENT

<p>INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE ENVIRONMENT</p> <p>Nov 23, 30, Dec 2</p>	<p>Conca, Part 3</p>
<p>ORAL PRESENTATIONS: ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE</p> <p>December 7, 9</p>	