GREEN ECONOMY
ENVST–UA 450 002 | MON/WED 2PM–3:15PM | CLASSROOM: ONLINE
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To address environmental change, we need to rethink our economy. The environment is often portrayed as hostile to economic development and business interests. The promise of Greening the Economy upends this perspective. It shifts environment from an elitist subject about conservation to one about jobs, investments, profits, and economic opportunities. This course is a way to understand the historic emergence of the concept, how it is shaping up in practice, and what role institutions – governments, corporations, and NGOs – play in driving institutional changes. Our objective is to identify the key factors important to strengthening the Green Economy and the limits to this project.

We approach the Green Economy through a variety of case studies on carbon markets, payments for ecosystem services, green taxes, environmental subsidies, green supply chains, and conservation finance. We ask: What kinds of narratives and policy instruments are mobilized in balancing the economy and the environment? What are and should be the core principles in organizing the Green Economy? Who is setting the rules of this new economic system and who should be included in this charge? How are issues of fairness and justice considered in reshaping our economy? What are the key roadblocks in galvanizing change, in particular how do these new ideas confront long standing political and economic lock-ins that prevent major institutional shifts? What is the role for institutions of science and knowledge production in these transformations? Similarly, what role can civil society actors and social and cultural institutions play in redefining what we mean by a green economy?

This course is oriented toward providing students the critical and analytical skills to understand and contribute to this evolving dialogue. The course presumes familiarity with concepts in Environmental Studies. Background in economics and political science will help but major concepts will be introduced through the course.

Course Requirements and Grading

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1. PARTICIPATION (20%)

Participation in the course comprises of attendance and active engagement in in-class discussions. Attendance for all classes is compulsory. Expectations for participation go far beyond responding to questions when asked. You should actively ask and solicit questions not only from the instructor but also your classmates. The class is structured to foster discussion. The meetings will be far more valuable if everyone participates actively.

Active participation requires reading and thinking about course materials in advance and coming to class prepared to ask questions. Regularly, you will be asked to write a short response to a pre-circulated prompt or do an in-class writing exercise. Reading expectations vary from week to week, but something around 50 pages per week will be the norm.

The participation includes a presentation on a news media piece. Every student must find a recent media piece that relates to the subject matter of the course and present a short (<5min) presentation of the topic for the class on an assigned date. Dates will be assigned in the 2 week of the semester. The purpose of the exercise is to: a) enhance your public speaking and presentation skills and b) develop a curiosity toward ongoing Green Economy discussions. The instructor will offer some examples of potential news articles in the first half of the course.

*Given the online format, we need to double down on our commitment to attendance and participation. If for a reason, say time zone or internet access, you are not able to attend class on a particular occasion, meeting recordings will be made available. However, non-attendance is permitted through permission only.*

2. CRITICAL COMMENTARY (20%)

You will be expected to write five 750–1000 word critical commentaries on the readings and class discussions. I will offer prompts to guide your response. In your commentary, you will be expected to involve the texts directly and draw out broader themes. The exercise serves three objectives. First, this is a way to have you read specific materials more deeply. Second, putting your ideas down on paper forces you to articulate your ideas in a clear way. Lastly, this is a way for me to hear your reactions to the articles.

In order to encourage you to write freely, a submission will guarantee you the full four points for the assignment. You will not be evaluated on “correctness”. Having said that, I expect you to write clearly and carefully. Organizing your thoughts before penning them will help me understand where you are coming from. Aim to demonstrate independent, reflexive engagement with ideas.

Six prompts will be provided and you need only write on five. This is meant to offer you flexibility.
Note, we not be covering all readings in extensive detail during the class meetings but you are expected to read everything carefully. The combination of self-readings, lectures, in-class discussions, and writing assignments complement each other to support your learning.

3. EXAMS (30%)
The course has one mid-term and one final. The exams are meant to force a review function, i.e. the exams are not meant to trick you. For the most part, the exams will comprise a combination of short essay-styled (4–6 sentences) questions and a medium-length reflective essay. Questions will draw directly from readings, lectures, and discussions but independent critical thinking will be needed. Prior to the exams, we will organize a review session where you can pose questions to me about the exam, course themes, and specific materials.

*Both exams will be conducted online. Exams will be one hour long and you will have a 48 hour window where you can take the exams at your own time of convenience.*

4. POLICY REPORT AND PRESENTATION (30%)
Working in small groups of 3–4, students will present a written policy report and make an oral presentation to the class. The report should engage analytically with a specific example of using business logics to address an environmental issue and key factors important for its success. In selecting your case, you may draw on empirical materials presented in class but the primary subject matter must be beyond the readings. Detailed specifications of the assignment will be provided as the course progresses, including staggered submissions.

You will be expected to present your report orally to the class during the last two weeks of the semester. All students are required to attend the present, ask questions, and offer feedback. Final reports are to be submitted by 11:59 pm Dec 12th (Date subject to change). Groups must meet with me at least once during the semester to discuss their policy report idea.

Course Policies
This is a ‘living document’, which means I will regularly update the document and upload the most recent version on NYU Classes. You will also find additional documents on NYU Classes laying out specifics of all the assignments and the discussion sessions. Assignments are to be submitted directly through NYU Classes.

COMMUNICATION
This syllabus contains most of the information you will need about class logistics, readings, deliverables, deadlines etc. As a general policy, first look to the syllabus for answers to your question. If not in the syllabus, check NYU Classes. If you do not find an answer to your question here or online, you should definitely write to me. I will be available during office hours, by appointment, and on–email. You are also invited to stop by my office for a chat –
casual or formal. It would be most productive for you and me to ensure that our interactions are toward substantive themes rather than about logistics.

**SUBMISSION AND DEADLINE POLICY**

All assignments must be submitted electronically (MS-word compatible formats only) through NYU Classes. More information about the actual submission process will be outlined closer to the deadlines.

Assignments turned in after the deadline will face late penalties at my discretion. It is important to respect the deadline for our own self-discipline and in fairness to the trade-offs made by others to submit on time. Under limited conditions, a deadline extension may be granted. Conditions include documented emergencies (illness, family emergencies etc.) or circumstances cleared with the instructor (e.g. religious holidays). Extension requests will not be considered if the request is based on poor preparation or negligence.

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**LAPTOP AND SCREEN POLICIES**

*The nature of online teaching means we are all on our computers during the entire class. I want us all to be mindful of the potential adverse impact of laptops and phones on the quality of the learning experience for you and your peers. The distractions of the internet are real but we must stay focused and nurture our individual techniques for focusing. I encourage students to exercise common sense and respect for your peers. For example: please do not shop or check social media during meetings. You are encouraged to check terms and words online as long as it does not significantly distract you from the meeting. Zoom offers an attention score, which may be utilized for accountability.*

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students are encouraged to work and study together within the bounds of NYU’s academic integrity policy. Sharing questions, ideas, and consulting with other students is important for learning. However, this permissible cooperation should never involve a student possessing a copy of all or part of work done by another student, in the form of an e-mail, an e-mail attachment file, a flash drive, diskette, cloud storage, or a hard copy. Should copying occur, both the student who copied work and the student who gave material to be copied would automatically receive a zero for the assignment. Penalty for violation of this Code can also be extended to include failure of the course and University disciplinary action.
Every student in the course must abide by New York University’s Policy of Academic Integrity (https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/academic-integrity-for-students-at-nyu.html). As the policy states, “NYU expects and requires its students to adhere to the highest standards of scholarship, research and academic conduct. Essential to the process of teaching and learning is the periodic assessment of students’ academic progress through measures such as papers, examinations, presentations, and other projects. Academic dishonesty compromises the validity of these assessments as well as the relationship of trust within the community. Students who engage in such behavior will be subject to review and the possible imposition of penalties in accordance with the standards, practices, and procedures of NYU and its colleges and schools. Violations may result in failure on a particular assignment, failure in a course, suspension or expulsion from the University, or other penalties.”

I encourage you to be mindful of the different kinds of academic integrity violations as detailed on the website. Always make sure in this class and elsewhere that the work you submit or present is entirely your own and any references to the work of others is clearly reported.

STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES
If you find yourself facing some personal challenge, I am available to discuss modifications to course expectations. If you have a disability, I encourage you to consult with the Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities. In general, accommodations to students who have a documented disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, or systemic) will follow university protocol.

*The current pandemic underscores the importance of open communication and sharing. Your challenges are likely shared and others can help. Personal difficulties can be easier to overcome through consultation with peers, family members, and experts. If facing personal challenges, reach out to as many people as you can, including me.

Course Schedule

MODULE 1: FRAMING THE ENVIRONMENT AS AN ECONOMIC ISSUE

Feb 1: Introductions

Feb 3: Tragedy of the Commons

Feb 8: Environmentalism then and now
- Lomborg, B 2012, 'Environmental Alarmism, Then and Now', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 91, no. 4, pp. 24–40, viewed 21 January 2019
- Discuss Ehrlich V Simon Debate

**Feb 10: Emergence of Ecological Economics**
- Discuss Kuznets Curve

**FEB 12TH 11:55PM CRITICAL COMMENTARY 1 DUE**
Prompt: Draft an essay that summarizes Hardin’s core arguments. Provide your assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of his two proposed remedies to the problem of open access commons.

**Feb 15: NO CLASSES (PRESIDENT’S DAY – MONDAY REPLACED BY FOLLOWING THURSDAY)**

**Feb 17: Neo–conservation**

**Feb 18: The Economic Valuation Imperative (THUR MEETING ON ACCOUNT OF NYU LEGISLATIVE DAY)**
- How much Nature do we have? [VIDEO](#)
- Put a Value on Nature. [VIDEO](#)
- Policy Memo Discussion

**Feb 22: Critique of Ecosystem Services**

**Feb 24: Critique of Ecosystem Services Cont. – Marxist critique**

  - The movie is available on multiple online streaming platforms including NYU Library. I also have a DVD copy if anyone wanted to borrow. Both the feature length and short (~55 minutes) version of the movie will be acceptable.
  - Please watch the movie before writing your commentary.

**FEB 26TH 11:55PM CRITICAL COMMENTARY 2 DUE**

Prompt: Draft an essay summarizing the key debates related to the concept of ecosystem services. Situate the emergence of the concept in environmental science, history, and politics. In your opinion, what are the pros and cons of framing environmental governance through the concept of ecosystem services.

**Mar 1: Are markets the solution (?)**

**Mar 3: Market cases: SO2, Carbon**
- CARBON READING TBD
- We set aside time in the class to work in groups

**MAR 5TH 11:55PM POLICY REPORT TOPIC AND RESEARCH PLAN DUE**

**Mar 8: Payments for Ecosystem Services**
- Group activity: We will assign case studies to each group and you are expected to work together to summarize the case study for the class. Use Wunder’s definition of PES to identify the main ecosystem service, the buyer, the seller, and the conditionality/payment structure. Explain why your case aligns or fails to align with
Wunder's market model. What lessons can we take away from the case for the larger institution building agenda? Presentations should be no more than 10 minutes.

1. Vittel – the “perfect” PES
2. Cost Rica – the “original” PES
3. Mexico – the “hybrid” PES
4. Cambodia – the “community” PES
5. Indonesia – the “pro-poor” PES

Mar 10: Are markets helping? Political Economic and Moral Critique


Mar 15: Are markets helping? Pragmatic Critique


Mar 17: Green Economy: Synthesizing ideas


MAR 18TH 11:55PM CRITICAL COMMENTARY 3 DUE
Prompt: What are the key arguments in support of and against using market-based solutions for addressing environmental problems? As the narrative of market-based solutions gains momentum, what in your view is the role of the state?

Mar 22: Cross-cutting Issue: Technology

- Breakthrough Institute, EcoModernist Manifesto. Find it here.
Assignment: Identify a technological innovation meant to address environmental problems.

1. What is the problem the technology is meant to solve?
2. What are key uncertainties and potential risks associated with the technology?
3. What are the institutional conditions needed for the technology to deliver outcomes?
4. How can we think about issues of power in the use of this technology? Does it have the potential to challenge entrenched interests?

(Bring your written responses to class and we breakup in pairs for a discussion.)

Mar 24: PRELIM REVIEW
- No readings

MAR 25–27: MID TERM EXAM WINDOW

MODULE 2: ROLE OF BUSINESSES

Mar 29: Intro to Module 2
- We will set aside class time to work in groups

Mar 31: Corporate social responsibility

Assignment: Select a large private firm that services consumer needs (as opposed to a “business to business” firm). This could be a manufacturer like Coca Cola or P&G or a retailer like Walmart or Amazon. Bring a written or printed note to the class with your responses to the following:

1. Do some background work on the company. Here is a non-exhaustive list of background information to consider:
   - a. What is its main business – e.g. selling clothes?
   - b. What is it’s total value? E.g. market capital?
   - c. How many people does the company employ?
   - d. Where is it HQed? How many countries does the company work for?
2. What kinds of environmental harms are caused by the company?
3. What are the 2–3 main sustainability commitments made by the company?
4. In a para, provide a reasoning for why the company is taking these sustainability initiatives?

**APR 2\textsuperscript{ND} 11:55 POLICY REPORT WORK UPDATE DUE**

**Apr 5: Social License to Operate**

**Assignment:** Using the firm you selected earlier, respond to the following:
- How does the company followed through on its sustainability pledges?
- What are the checks and balances in place? E.g. 3rd party auditors, certification etc.
- What might be some ways to ensure pledges translate into real changes? (We will discuss this in greater detail in class)

**Apr 7: Green Washing**

**APR 9 11:55PM CRITICAL COMMENTARY 4 DUE**

**Prompt:** Draft an essay that reflects your view of the power and capacity of consumers as the mechanism to leverage sustainable production. What role do you see for the government in supporting the role of the consumer in advancing sustainability? Defend your arguments with reference to one or more real-life examples of your choosing.

**Apr 12: Environmental Labeling and certification**
- TBD

**Apr 14: Green Bonds/Finance**

**Apr 19: NO CLASSES (SPRING BREAK DAY)**
Apr 21: Performativity in the Green Economy

Apr 26: What is the alternative: Steady State, Green Growth, or perhaps De–growth?

Apr 28: TBD

**APR 30TH 11:55PM CRITICAL COMMENTARY 5 DUE**
Prompt: What are the opportunities and limits of ESG investment, Green Bonds and similar financial initiatives? In your view, are existing structures of accountability adequate to oversee green finance? Explain your answer.

May 3: Presentations (Details to follow)

May 5: Presentations (Details to follow)

May 9: FINAL POLICY REPORTS DUE (SUBMIT ONE PER GROUP)

May 10: Last Day of Classes (Wrap Up)

May 12–15TH 11:55PM FINAL EXAM WINDOW