GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS
ENVST–UA 445 | TUE/THU 12:30AM–1:45PM | CLASSROOM: TISC Room LC13
Instructor : Ritwick Ghosh | Office : 285 Mercer Street, Room 906
Email : ritwick.ghosh@nyu.edu | Office Hours : TUE 4:30–5:30PM

INTRODUCTION
Environmental problems are increasingly taking on a trans–national and global dimension. At the global scale, however, there is no single centralized authority to manage and regulate the environment. Instead, global environmental governance is organized through a patchwork of international treaties, multilateral institutions, non–governmental organizations, and multi–national corporations. This course traces the history and emergence of global environmental cooperation and lack thereof. We examine the actors, institutions, debates, and historic moments that explain the current state of global environmental politics. We consider the success and failures, and the forces that explain them. We discuss how the geographies of finance, resource access, and culture shape global cooperation. We deliberate the rise of big–NGOs and multi–national corporations, and the power they wield in contemporary global debates. Finally, we look ahead at the biggest challenges facing global environmental politics in the 21st century. This includes discussions on environmental science and expertise, climate refugees, and the rise of populism. Students should expect to develop an overview of key issues in global environmental politics and think critically about what works and what needs work.

The course comprises of four modules.

- **Module 1**: We review how the environment is framed as a topic of concern at a global concern. We identify key environmental problems and discuss what makes an environmental problem an issue of global relevance.
- **Module 2**: We will explore the relevance of the nation–state as the foundational organizing unit in global governance. Using the concept of ‘international regimes” and working through a set of examples such as acid rain and climate change management, we will map the interactions and power dynamics that shape multi–lateral institutions like the UN Environment Program.
- **Module 3**: We examine the rise of non–state actors in global governance. Non–state actors include both environmental–NGOs like WWF and Greenpeace and private corporations such as Walmart and Patagonia. We explore the changing role of non–state actors, and how their unique cross–boundary position allows them to transfer ideas, norms, and technologies in a way that states cannot.
- **Module 4**: In the final Module, we consider key emerging challenges and upcoming debates.
### COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

**Grading Components and Weights**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading responses</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prelim and Final</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Research Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This class has no textbook. All readings will be provided through NYU classroom.*

1. **PARTICIPATION (20%)**

Participation in the course comprises of attendance, active engagement in in-class discussions, and one presentation of a relevant news article. Attendance for all classes is compulsory. Our weekly meetings will be far more valuable if everyone participates actively. Expectations for participation include:

   a. **Reading:** Please read course materials in advance and come to class prepared with reflections and questions (or you’ll find it hard to follow what’s going on in class, and may find yourself unprepared for in-class activities). Reading expectations will vary from week to week, but something around 50 pages per week will be the norm.

   b. **Active engagement:** You should actively ask, solicit questions, and react to the instructor and your classmates.

   c. **In-class writing exercises:** Quite regularly, you will be asked to write a response to a pre-circulated or in-class writing prompt.

   d. **News media presentation:** Once during the semester you will be asked to share and present a recent news article related to global environmental politics. The objective of the exercise is to encourage reading the news and engaging critically with contemporary geo-politics. You must select the news piece yourself from the within the past month. Students will sign up for their preferred presentation date in the second week of classes. Presentations should be not more than 5 minutes and the articles must be pre-circulated through NYU Classes.

   e. **Group Work:** At times in the semester, you will be split into groups and expect to present on a given topic to the rest of the class. Groups will be assigned randomly and you are expected to coordinate with your teammates before class.

2. **READING RESPONSES (20%)**

Students will submit five short essays (~750 words) in response to pre-circulated prompts. Essays topics will draw directly from course materials (lectures and readings). In your essay, you must respond to the specific prompt posed to you and aim to demonstrate independent, critical engagement with ideas. In your essay, consider summarizing the main argument presented by the author, why they think this argument is important, evidence/examples they represent to support their argument, and your own reflections on the soundness of their argument. In your synthesis, I encourage you to challenge the positions presented and develop your own critical
voice. In this manner, course readings, lectures, in-class discussions, and writing assignments will be complementary and integrated.

Each reading response will be graded on 4 points. In order to encourage free thinking, all submissions will receive a default grade of 4 points on submission. However, I reserve the option to give a 1 point bonus for an excellent response and a 1 point deduction for a sub-par response. An excellent response is one with highly polished writing, clear structure, and deep/critical engagement with the text. A sub-par response is one that shows lack of reading and sloppy writing. Typically, 95% of the class would receive the full 4 points for any given reading response. If you receive less than 4 on consecutive assignments, I encourage you to come see me.

All reading responses must be submitted to NYU Classes by deadline. Every day of late submission will be docked one point.

3. EXAMS (30%)
The course has a mid-term and a final. Both exams will be held in class. The exams are meant to force a review function, and encourage integration/reflection across all areas of the course. They are not meant to trick you. Questions will draw directly from readings, lectures, and discussions but independent critical thinking will be expected. The exams will include short and long answers. Prior to the exams, I will hold a review session where you may pose questions to me about the exam, course themes, and specific materials.

4. FINAL RESEARCH PAPER & PRESENTATION (30%)
You will be required to write a <5,000 word research paper on a specific global environmental problem and the global level response to the problem. The paper should pose a question about environmental politics and aim to advance political analysis, not simply seek to illustrate the scale and implications of an environmental problem. First, identify an environmental issue of global relevance. Second, document all relevant historic and ongoing global policy responses to address the issue. Third, draw on course concepts to analyze the effectiveness, opportunities, and challenges in the approach followed. Lastly, draw on the case to reflect critically on themes and concepts discussed in class. To avoid leaving the paper to the end of the semester, we will follow a staggered writing process. This will allow your peers and me to offer you feedback early.

On Apr 20th and 22nd (dates may change) you will need to present your topic and research progress with your peers and use the feedback in building your paper argument. You will also be expected to offer feedback to your peers through a formal written process. Presentations help enhance public speaking skills. They also give your peers an opportunity to learn about your work. You are also expected to provide feedback in writing to a pre-circulated draft.
EXTRA CREDIT: You will receive an extra credit (+2*3) for attending environment-themed lectures and discussions on campus. If you have one in mind, please share the information with me at least one week before the event. If suitable, I will announce the event details to the rest of the class. Informing me after the fact will not qualify the event for extra credit. You can receive only one bonus point for any given week.

To receive credit, you must submit a one-page summary of the event with your critical reflections within one week of the event. In this essay, you are expected to summarize what motivated you to attend, your key take-aways from the talk, how the talk connects with course themes, and your own insights about the talk. There is a six-point limit (half a grade) on this. Events attended without prior notification to the instructor do not count for extra credit. Please submit your reaction essay through NYU Classes.

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, when you have questions, look first at the most updated syllabus for answers. If not in the syllabus, check other parts of NYU Classes. If you still do not find an answer to your question, you should write to me. Email correspondence should be limited to quick questions, mainly about logistics. Please do not expect substantive discussions about course material through email. For that, you are invited to stop by my office for a chat during office hours or by appointment. It would be most productive for you and me to ensure that our interactions are toward substantive themes.

SUBMISSION AND DEADLINE POLICY
All assignments must be submitted electronically (MS–word compatible formats only) through NYU Classes. No handwritten work will be accepted without prior consent. More information about the actual submission process will be outlined closer to the deadlines.

Assignments turned in after the deadline will be reduced at the rate of one point per day. 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. Consider the point deduction system a way to balance your own trade-offs.
Under a limited set of 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.

**LAPTOP AND SCREEN POLICIES**

I do not follow any particular laptop or phone policy (laptops banned, laptops in first or last rows, etc.). But it is important that we establish some group rules early in the semester. I want us all to be mindful of the potential impact of laptops and phones on the quality of the learning experience and those around you. Used well, computers and phones are powerful tools for learning – for note taking, for collaborative group work, and for looking up class-relevant questions and items on the fly (which I encourage you to do). However, when used poorly, they distract you and those around you. I encourage all students to exercise common sense and respect for those around you. However tempting it may be, shopping or checking social media during our meetings will be penalized.

**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.

During the prelims, you must do your own work without talking to other students or use of any notes, other computers, or any other form external help. Talking is not permitted, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any collaborative behavior during the examination will result in failure, and may lead to failure of the course and university disciplinary action.

**STUDENT DISABILITY SERVICES**

I am available to discuss, in confidence, modifications to course expectations if you find yourself facing some personal challenge. 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. Personal difficulties can be easier to overcome through consultation with peers, family members, and experts.

**SUMMARY OF DEADLINES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 7</td>
<td>Reading Response 1 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 21</td>
<td>Paper Topic/Abstract Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 27</td>
<td>Group Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 6</td>
<td>Reading Response 2 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 12</td>
<td>In-Class Prelim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 27</td>
<td>Annotated Bibliography And Research Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 3</td>
<td>Reading Response 3 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 17</td>
<td>Reading Response 4 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 21–23</td>
<td>Individual Paper Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 24</td>
<td>Draft Papers Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>Peer Review Comments Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 8</td>
<td>Reading Response 5 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>Final In–Class Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 17</td>
<td>Final Research Papers Due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Blue: In class**

**Red: Submitted through NYU Classes**
Course Schedule

Jan 28: Course Introduction and Overview

MODULE 1: GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

Jan 30: Framing Global Environmental Problems
  - **In class discussion:** What makes an environmental problem global in nature?

Feb 4: Global Commons
  - Clapp and Dauvergne, “Chapter 1: Peril or Prosperity? Mapping Worldviews of Global Environmental Change”

Feb 6: Is globalization the problem or the solution?
  - Clapp and Dauvergne– “Chapter 2: The Ecological Consequences of Globalization”
  - The Conversation – “Globalization may actually be better for the Environment” http://theconversation.com/globalization-may-actually-be-better-for-the-environment–95406

**FEB 7TH 11:55PM READING RESPONSE 1 DUE**
Drawing on Clap and Dauvergne, draft an essay summarizing the main argument and assumptions of the four different positions on global environmental change. Using a specific global environmental problem as an example, explain how the different worldviews would differ in addressing the problem.

Feb 11: Actors in Global Environmental Governance
  - O’Neill – Global Environmental Problems (Chapt 2 of The Environment and International Relations)
  - **In class discussion:** How to formulate a research question?
MODULE 2: STATE-CENTERED GOVERNANCE

Feb 13: Introduction to State-centered global governance
  - Chasek et al – Global Env Politics – CHAPT 3 – Development of Environmental Regimes

Feb 18: Regime Formation
  - Chasek et al – Global Env Politics –CHAPT 4 – Development of Environmental Regimes – resources and biodiversity
  - In preparation for the discussion on the Montreal Protocol, watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OINKJNWtSiE

Feb 20: Fragmentation in global governance

FEB 21ND 11:55PM: PAPER TOPIC/ABSTRACT DUE

Feb 25: What makes an environmental regime effective?
  - Chasek et al – Global Env Politics –CHAPT 5 – Effective Environmental Regimes Obstacles and Opportunities
    - Paper Workshopping

Feb 27: Group Presentations
  Pre-class Assignment: Working in teams of three, you must present on an International environmental treaty. You can choose the treaty from the list provided in class and visit www.un treaty.un.org for the official copy of the treaty. You are not expected to draw on any resources beyond the official text. In your 5–7 min presentation, you should touch on the following:
    1) How the treaty defines the problem
    2) Obligations placed on signatory states
    3) Institutional mechanism setup in the treaty to manage the regime, and meet obligations such as funding and technology transfer.

Mar 3: UN Environmental Program – Building Scientific Consensus

**Mar 5: Creating a new international regime**

**MARCH 6th 11:55PM READING RESPONSE 2 DUE**
Why do countries in the Global South have different position than counterparts in the Global North over global environmental issues? When are the categories of Global North and South useful, and when are they an oversimplification? Present examples to establish your claims.

**MODULE 3: NON–STATE ACTORS**

**Mar 10: Who are non–state actors and what do they do?**
- O’Neill – Non–state actors in GEG (Chapt 7 of The Environment and International Relations)
- Mid–Term Review – Please bring questions

**Mar 12: PRELIM**

**Mar 17: SPRING BREAK**

**Mar 19: SPRING BREAK**

**Mar 24: Environmental NGOs**

**Pre–class Assignment:** Come to class prepared with the following:
- Identify a major environmental NGO.
- Why you choose the particular NGO.
- What is their main purpose/stated objectives?
- What governance gap do they fill?
- Who funds the NGO and your thoughts on how the funding sources shape the NGO’s operations?

Examples of eNGOs include Greenpeace, Conservation International, WWF, IUCN etc.

**Mar 26: Do non–state actors have legitimacy?**

**MARCH 27th 11:55PM ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESEARCH PLAN**

Mar 31: Can businesses save the global environment?

Apr 2: Green Economy
- TBD

**APR 3RD 11:55PM READING RESPONSE 3 DUE**
What challenges do environmental NGOs face in establishing legitimacy and authority? What advice would you give to your selected NGO for establishing their legitimacy?

Apr 7: TBD

Apr 9: TBD

Apr 14: Hybrid Institutions

Apr 16: REDD+
Watch video before class:
- Green, J.F. – From Green to REDD – Protean Power

**APR 17TH 11:55PM READING RESPONSE 4 DUE**
What types of global environmental problems can big businesses address, and what kinds of problems are they poorly positioned to address? What roles can civil society organizations and
government play in positioning MNCs to playing a larger role in addressing environmental problems? Defend your arguments with reference to one or more real-life examples of your choosing.

MODULE 4: NEW DEBATES IN GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

Apr 21: Intro to Module 2 + Paper presentation

Presentations: Please come prepared to do a short (5 minute) presentation. Presentation order will be randomized. We cannot wrap up everyone’s presentations in the same day, so some may float into the next class.

Apr 23: Sustainable Palm Oil


Continue Presentations

APR 24TH 11:55PM DRAFT PAPERS DUE

This is a hard deadline because you must give your peers at least one week to provide feedback. The more polished your draft, the better feedback you are likely to receive.

Apr 28: Globalization of Environmental Science and Technology + Big Data


Apr 30: Rise of Populism

- TBD

MAY 1st 11:55PM PEER REVIEW COMMENTS DUE

Please read and provide feedback on your peer’s drafts. Each person will be assigned two papers. Submit written feedback through NYU Classes. Your responsibility is to help them sharpen their argumentation and not to channel your voice. Do remember that all the papers are works in progress.

May 5: Climate Refugee Debate


Exam Review + Course Evaluations

May 7: Final In-class Exam

MAY 8TH 11:55PM READING RESPONSE 5 DUE
Prompt TBD

MAY 17TH 11:55PM FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS DUE