Course Title

Environmental Social Movements

Course Number
ENVST-UA 9481D01, SOC-UA 9209D01

Spring 2020

Syllabus last updated on: 02-Dec-2019

Lecturer Contact Information
Dr. Andrzej Ancygier
aa157@nyu.edu

Course Details
Wednesdays, 10:00am to 12:45pm

Location: Rooms will be posted in Albert before your first class. Please double check whether your class takes place at the Academic Center (BLAC – Schönhauser Allee 36, 10435 Berlin) or at St. Agnes (SNTA – Alexandrinenstraße 118-121, 10969 Berlin).

Prerequisites
Students are strongly encouraged to install free version of the PreziApp on their computers or mobile devices to access the presentations from the class

Units earned
4

Course Description
This course will look into the factors leading to the creation of social movements in reaction to environmental concerns, with the main focus on climate change. It will investigate which of them make these movements effective in leading to a change, and which lead to failure. Also the roles of counter-movements fighting to keep the status quo will be investigated.

The course will consist of three parts. The first part (Sessions 1-4) will look into the origins and developments of environmental social movements and their intersections with the notion of social justice. In this part, the role of social movements in different areas will be presented and the main publications illustrating the beginnings of the environmental movements will be discussed.
The second part of the course (Sessions 6-8) aims at equipping the students with the essential information concerning climate change science, global climate negotiations and solutions to global warming. Finally, the third part (Sessions 9-13) will look at climate change narratives – from climate change denialism and ending with the idea of de-growth aimed at saving the climate.

The last session will look into the role of social environmental movements in the future. The rapidly changing world brings up new challenges but also new opportunities. We will discuss how these can be utilized to increase the welfare of the current generation without compromising the wellbeing of future generations.

Course Objective
The course will have three main goals. The first goal of the course is to familiarize students with the historical emergence and contemporary activities of groups and movements engaged in protecting nature, natural resources and the environment. We will address their strategies and goals. The second goal of the course is to introduce students to the essential information concerning climate change. This includes discussing the impacts of climate change, global climate negotiations and solutions to climate change. Finally, the third goal is to familiarize the students with the different narratives of climate change and investigating how can these narratives be shaped.

Assessment Components
a. In-class participation (15%). This covers having read all of the assigned reading requirements and participating in the discussions. Submitting written answers to the reading questions sent before each session is voluntary, but will improve the participation grade.

b. Three discussion notes (15% total, 5% each) on the reading material for a chosen session (400-700 words each). Alternatively, students may also write their reactions to the discussion which took place in class. The first discussion note is to be submitted by 19 February, the second by 18 March and the last one by 22 April.

c. “Dream Speech” (10%), based on MLK’s speech that will present the environmental action from a different perspective than the one traditionally taken by the mainstream environmental movement. Alternatively, the students may also provide a selection of “News from the Future”. Examples of both a “Dream Speech” and “News from the Future” will be provided. Either the Dream Speech or the News from the Future is due on 27 April and should be read in front of the class during the session on 29 April 2020.

d. One in-class presentation (15%). Students will be asked to give a 10 to 15-minute-long talk during which they present an idea for an environmental movement they would like to initiate at the local level: either at their campus or in the place where they live. The presentation should include a description of the problem that the movement should mitigate, the strategy and the potential competitors struggling to keep the status quo. All presentations should be sent by 2 March and be presented during session 5 on 4 March, 2020.

e. Term paper (25%). Students will write a take-home essay (2000 words +/- 10%, excluding references) in which they present a social environmental movement of their interest. The paper should describe the problem the movement is dealing with, its strategy and goals. It should also look at the competing movements. The conclusions should include at least three “lessons learned” that the student will use for the development of his or her own movement (see point “d”). An outline of the midterm essays is due 1 April. The final version on 15 April.
Final exam (20%). The final exam will be held during the session on 20 May and consist of multiple choice and short open questions. The topics will be sent two weeks before the exam.

Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

**Required Text(s)**
Electronic Resources (via NYU Classes / NYU Library)

One copy of each book is kept in the Reading Room of NYU Berlin's Academic Center, for you to read in the center but not to take out.

Please follow this link for the [NYU Berlin Library Catalogue](http://nyu.edu) or the link on NYU Berlin's website (Academics/Facilities & Services).

**Supplemental Text(s) (not required to purchase)**
Naomi Klein (2014). *This Changes Everything. Capitalism vs the Climate*.


Mark Engler & Paul Engler (2017). *This is an uprising*.

**Internet Research Guidelines**
To be discussed in class.

**Additional Required Equipment**
None.

**Session 1, Wednesday, 5 Feb 2020**

**What is a Social Movement? Theories and Concepts**
The first session will introduce students to the concept of social movements. We will discuss definitions, central elements of social movement theories, and the issues they raise about collective action, organization, cooperation, their role in politics and democracy, as well as their effectiveness.

**Readings:**


**Movies:**
Session 2, Wednesday, 12 Feb 2020

Gradual change versus disruption
During this session we will look at the two main and at first sight contradictory approaches to social mobilization: Alinsky’s gradual change through long-term organization and Piven & Cloward’s radical and sudden action. Using Englers’ more recent contribution to the discussion, we will discuss if and how these two approaches can be combined.

Readings:


Movies:

Session 3, Wednesday, 19 Feb 2020

From Romanticism to Silent Spring
Sessions three and four provide an overview of the history of the environmental social movements. We will start in session three with analyzing the perception of the environment in the 19th century. We will also look at the first great “schism” which led to the creation of two streams in the environmental movement: preservationism and conservationism. Afterwards we will move to the 1960s and investigate the impact of Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* on the perception of environment.

Readings:


Movies:
“Rachel Carson in Silver Spring” available [here](#). Duration: 45'51.

Submissions:
The 1st Discussion Note (400-700 words).

Session 4, Wednesday, 26 Feb 2020
From the Population Bomb to the Limits to Growth

The end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s was a decisive period in the history of the environmental movement. Two publications: The Population Bomb by Paul Ehrlich and The Limits to Growth by the Club of Rome have been perceived as a warning about the consequences of a continuous growth. We will also assess if these warnings had any lasting impact on the narrative of the environmental movement, and whether they made the movement more or less successful in facilitating sustainable development.

Readings:


Movies:


Session 5, Wednesday, 4 Mar 2020

Presentations
During this session, students will present their own ideas for a social movement.

Session 6, Wednesday, 11 Mar 2020

The Science of Climate Change
The familiarity with the drivers and consequences of climate change is essential for the success or failure of the climate change movement. The goal of this session is to provide the students with the necessary knowledge about the main greenhouse gases, their sources, as well as the direct and indirect consequences of climate change. This session will also introduce students to the main scientific pillar of the global climate change governance: the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Readings:


Movie:
“Six degrees could change the world”. Available here. Duration: 96’06.
Session 7, Wednesday, 18 Mar 2020

Climate change negotiations
The adoption of the Paris Agreement during the climate summit in Paris in December 2015 was a milestone on a very long path of dealing with climate change. However, it was only possible due to a number of successes and failures, like the adoption of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997 or the failure of the climate negotiations in Copenhagen in 2009. During this session we will take a quick look at the history of the global climate negotiations and the importance of the Paris Agreement in dealing with this challenge.

Readings:
Kinley, R. (2016). Climate change after Paris: from turning point to transformation. In Climate Policy, 17(1), 8 pages.

Movies:
“Paris to Pittsburgh” available here. Duration: 76’59.

Submissions:
The 2nd Discussion Note (400-700 words).

25 Mar 2020 – Semester Break – No Class

Session 8, Wednesday, 1 Apr 2020

The solutions to climate change
Apart from understanding the science of climate change and the process of the international negotiations, it is also essential for environmental movements to know how to deal with this problem while increasing co-benefits of climate action. During this session we will be looking at the most important solutions in different areas. Students will also be asked to select one out of 80 solutions presented in the framework of the Drawdown Project and describe its feasibility in class.

Readings:
Transport & Environment (2018). How to decarbonize European transport by 2050. 21 pages
Drawdown (2019). *Summary of Solutions by Overall Rank*. Online resource: [here](#).

**Movies:**
Katharina Hayhoe “The most important thing you can do to fight climate change: talk about it” available [here](#). Duration: 17’12


**Submissions:**
Outline of the Term Papers.

**Session 9, Wednesday, 8 Apr 2020**

**Climate change narratives. part 1: From denialism to stalling**
As in the case of all environmental movements, as well as in the case of combating global warming, there is an opposition to changes of the existing *status quo* by those benefitting from it. In the case of climate action, this opposition is fueled either by denying that climate change is taking place or by stressing that other things should be given priority, e.g. economic growth, before any action should be taken. During this session we will take a look at these two approaches.

**Readings:**


**Movies:**
“Climate Change: Prof Brian Cox (scientist) takes on Senator Malcolm Roberts (politician)” available [here](#). Duration: 29’05.

**Session 10, Wednesday, 15 Apr 2020**

**Climate change narratives. part 2: From evolution to revolution**
Do we need to abolish capitalism to save the climate? Or can it be adapted to help us deal with the major challenge of the 21st century? Is a warlike effort, with a corresponding increase in the role of the government, needed to radically reduce emissions? Or should we instead
invest in new technologies? Is de-growth the right answer? These are only some of the many questions discussed in the climate change movement. During this session we will look into some of them and try to come up with some answers.

Readings:


Movies:
“UpFront - Is capitalism driving climate change?” Available [here](#). Duration: 25’05.

"Climate Change movement has failed | Assaad Razzouk” available [here](#). Duration: 14’26

Submission
Final version of the Term Papers

Session 11, Wednesday, 22 Apr 2020

Media and Social Movements
Access to media is decisive for the success or failure of a social movement. At the same time, the media landscape is changing due to the massive spread of social media in recent years. How do the strategies of social environmental movements have to change in response to the decreasing role of mass media and the increasing individualization of the means of public communication?

Readings:
Doi:10.1080/09644016.2015.992600


Movies:
“Activism 2.0 – Rebirth of the Environmental Movement: Emily Hunter at TEDxUTSC”, available here. Duration: 16’37

“Let's design social media that drives real change | Wael Ghonim” Available here. Duration: 13’33.

Submissions:
The 3rd Discussion Note (400-700 words).

Session 12, Wednesday, 29 Apr 2020

Changing the narrative
Influencing the mainstream perception on an issue is one of the major tasks of social movements. During this session we will assess some strategies and their efficacy. We will discuss how environmental issues should be framed to mobilize action, especially in the area of climate change. Students will also present their “Dream Speeches” or “News from the Future”.

Readings:


Movies
“Before the Flood” available here. Duration: 95’33

Global Climate Summit – Presentation by Johan Rockström & Christiana Figueres. Available here. Between 41’52 and 56’52.

Submission:
“Dream Speech” or “News from the Future” to be sent by 27 April and read out in front of the class on 29 April. I suggest watching this video when preparing the speech.

Session 13, Wednesday, 6 May 2020

Changing the habits
Climate change and numerous other environmental issues are the result of individual actions which often contradict individual convictions. Why is it the case? How can social movements instigate behavioral change without creating a social backlash against climate action? To find an answer to these questions we will look at numerous suggestions, among others from the winners of the Nobel Prize.

Readings:


**Movies**

“How to motivate yourself to change your behavior | Tali Sharot | TEDxCambridge” available [here](#). Duration: 16’48.

**Session 14, Wednesday, 13 May 2020**

**Social Environmental Movements in a Rapidly Changing World**

In 1980, Alvin Toffler had already written about the Third Wave of civilization’s development, characterized by individualism and the dominance of knowledge. Due to the de-massification of media and decreasing role of nation states, the political system will evolve towards a “mosaic democracy”. Was Toffler correct in his predictions? What impact will radical changes have on the role of social environmental movements? How will they have to change their strategies to deal with the new challenges?

**Readings:**


**Movies:**

“Big Thinkers - Alvin Toffler [Futurist]” Available [here](#). Duration: 22’25

**Session 15, Wednesday, 20 May 2020**

Wrap-up session. In-class exam.

**Classroom Etiquette**

No laptops during the class.

**Suggested Co-Curricular Activities**

To be discussed during the class.

**Your Lecturer**

Dr. Andrzej Ancygier has been teaching various courses dealing with environmental protection, European integration and global challenges from political and sociological perspectives. His main focus is on the impact of the energy sector on climate change and analysis of the factors leading to the global transformation towards renewable sources of energy.
Dr. Ancygier has been teaching at NYU since 2011. In addition, he is teaching a course dealing with European environmental policy and politics at the Freie Universität in Berlin. Since 2015 Ancygier has been working as an energy expert and Deputy Head of the Climate Policy Team at Climate Analytics, a think tank analyzing the impact of climate change on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Andrzej’s focus has been on the assessment of the European energy and climate policies.
Academic Policies

Assessment Expectations

**Grade A:** The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well-structured arguments in their work. The student writes comprehensive essays / answers to exam questions and their work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.

**Grade B:** The candidate shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy.

**Grade C:** The work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and is in need of improvement.

**Grade D:** The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, poor research.

**Grade F:** The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness and the research is clearly negligible.

Grade Conversion

Your lecturer may use one of the following scales of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

- A = 94-100 or 4.0
- A- = 90-93 or 3.7
- B+ = 87-89 or 3.3
- B = 84-86 or 3.0
- B- = 80-83 or 2.7
- C+ = 77-79 or 2.3
- C = 74-76 or 2.0
- C- = 70-73 or 1.7
- D+ = 67-69 or 1.3
- D = 65-66 or 1.0
- F = below 65 or 0

Attendance Policy

Participation in all classes is essential for your academic success, especially in courses that meet only once per week. Your attendance in both content and language courses is required and will be checked at each class meeting. As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor by e-mail immediately (i.e. before the start of your class). Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, Moses Center accommodations, religious observance or emergencies. Your professor or NYU Berlin's administration may ask you to present a doctor's note or an exceptional permission from NYU Berlin's Director or Wellness Counselor as proof. Emergencies or other exceptional circumstances must be presented to the Director. Doctor's notes need to be submitted to the Academics Office, who will inform your professors. Doctor's notes need to be from a local doctor and carry a signature and a stamp. If you want the reasons for your absence to be treated confidentially, please approach NYU Berlin's Director or Wellness Counselor.
Unexcused absences affect students’ grades: In content courses each unexcused absence (equaling one week’s worth of classes) leads to a deduction of 2% of the overall grade and may negatively affect your class participation grade. In German Language classes two or three (consecutive or non-consecutive) unexcused absences (equaling one week’s worth of classes) lead to a 2% deduction of the overall grade. Three unexcused absences in one content course and five unexcused absences in your German language course may lead to a Fail in that course. Being more than 15 minutes late counts as an unexcused absence. Furthermore, your professor is entitled to deduct points for frequent late arrival or late arrival back from in-class breaks. Please note that for classes involving a field trip, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive in time at the announced meeting point.

Exams, tests and quizzes, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness always require a doctor’s note as documentation. It is the student's responsibility to produce this doctor's note and submit it to the Academics Office; until this doctor’s note is produced the missed assessment is graded with an F and no make-up assessment is scheduled. In content classes, an F in one assignment may lead to failure of the entire class.

Regardless of whether an absence is excused or not, it is the student's responsibility to catch up with the work that was missed.

**Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays**
Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer AND NYU Berlin's Academics Office in writing via e-mail one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics Office will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also [University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#).

**Late Submission of Work**

1. Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.

2. Late work should be submitted in person to the lecturer or to the Academics Office, who will write on the essay or other work the date and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative staff may also personally accept the work and will write the date and time of submission on the work, as above.

3. Work submitted late receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100 point scale for each day it is late (excluding weekends and public or religious holidays), unless an extension has been approved (with a doctor's note or by approval of NYU Berlin's administration), in which case the 2 points per day deductions start counting from the day the extended deadline has passed.

4. Without an approved extension, written work submitted more than 5 days (excluding weekends and public or religious holidays) following the submission date receives an F.

5. End of semester essays must be submitted on time.
(6) Students who are late for a written exam have no automatic right to take extra time or to write the exam on another day.

(7) Please remember that university computers do not keep your essays - you must save them elsewhere. Having lost parts of your essay on the university computer is no excuse for a late submission.

Provisions for Students with Disabilities
Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see their website for further information.

Plagiarism Policy
The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. Proper referencing of your sources avoids plagiarism (see as one possible help the NYU library guide to referencing styles.

NYU Berlin takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form.

Note that some assignments in the course may be checked for plagiarism by using TurnItIn or other another software designed to detect offences against academic integrity.

It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you MUST inform your professor.

For a summary please follow the link to NYU Global's academic policies.