

Global Environmental Politics

Spring 2020 | Classroom 211 | Mondays 8:30 – 11 am

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Office hours: Mondays 1-3 & 8-10 pm in Shanghai (China Standard Time), or 0-2 & 7-9 am (till March 2) 1-3 & 8-10 am (from March 9) in New York City (EST). Reservation via

<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/selfsched?sstoken=UU5Xa1lwQTVhTnF0fGRIZmF1bHR8NDU1ZjBkNDU0MmjiMzQyZmjiZGEwOWQ2ZDVjNjNmYmY>. Meeting on google hangouts.

This syllabus is subject to adjustment, as the University continues to respond to the coronavirus situation.

Overview

This course examines the ethics, law, politics, and policy of global environmental issues. It provides a broad overview of the key concepts, debates, actors, and issues in global environmental politics. The course reviews the development of global environmental regimes in areas such as climate change and wildlife conservation. It equips you with conceptual depth and empirical breadth to critically examine the state of the global environment.

We aim to accomplish a number of learning goals over the course of the semester. **First**, we review the most pressing set of global environmental problems, ranging from species extinction to food crisis. It is important for us to recognize the inter-connectedness of different global environmental problems, as well as the trans-boundary nature of these challenges. **Second**, and based on the first, we delve into the most canonical theoretical framework for understanding human-environment relations, that of “the tragedy of the commons.” Since the mid-twentieth century, this framework has been developed into a rich body of scholarly work, which has significantly advanced our understanding of environmental governance in this complex world. **Third**, we consider four major issues in global environmental politics. These issues have been the subject of much scholarly debate over the last few decades, and continue to figure prominently in the practice of global environmental governance. **Finally**, we apply the theoretical and conceptual tools to critically examine specific global environmental regimes that tackle issues such ozone depletion and species extinction.

Curriculum Information

There is no prerequisite. However, it is highly recommended that you complete Environment and Society (SOCS-SHU 135, ENVST-UA 101, or equivalent) prior to enrolling in this course.

If you are an NYU Shanghai student, this course satisfies the upper-level focus course requirement for the Social Science major, as well as the Science, Technology and Society (STS) core curriculum requirement. If you are an NYU Washington Square student, this is a pre-approved equivalent to ENVST-UA 445, thus counting toward the requirement for the Environmental Studies major or minor. All other students should consult their home-campus academic advisors regarding the transferability of this course.

Paper Formatting Guidelines

All written work you submit to this course should follow the formatting guidelines below, unless otherwise specified. Failure to follow them will result in grade penalty at the TA's discretion.

- Format on A4/letter-sized paper and double-space your text.
- Papers are graded anonymously. Help us achieve that by only using your "N number" to identify yourself on the papers and in the file names, e.g. N31415926RR1.docx.
- Submit each paper to the designated folder on NYU Classes on or before the due date.
- Attach a list of works cited only if you cite sources other than the ones on the syllabus.

Course Requirements

- **Reading Reflections** *100*4=400 pts (40%)*
You are required to turn in four reading reflections. There are six opportunities. You may freely choose any four of the six weeks from weeks 1 to 6 to send in your reflections. Each reading reflection should be roughly four pages in length, and will be marked against the following rubric. Note that you are expected to reflect on the readings before, not after, they are discussed in class.

Expectation	Mark
The essay provides a concise summary of major arguments and findings in all the readings for the week in which the essay is due, and articulates them with your own words.	___/40
The essay identifies a common theme to which all focal readings contribution, and clarifies each reading's contribution to said theme.	___/40
The essay relates one major issue raised by the author(s) to your personal observations and/or experiences, and critically engages with the author(s).	___/20

- **Exams** *200+100=300 pts (30%)*
The two exams will consist of identification and short answer questions. They are non-cumulative. Exam questions are based on lectures, class discussions, and readings.
- **Earth Day Journal** *100 pts (10%)*
Did you know that April 22 of this year will be the fiftieth Earth Day? Readings for this week are about the history of Earth Day. Join an Earth Day event near you, observe what happens at the event, and turn in a reflective journal.
- **White Papers** *100*2=200pts (20%)*
White papers are often issued by non-governmental organizations and independent research institutes, with the purposes of educating decision makers on key policy issues, and of helping them better understand both the nature of the problem and the range of potential options. You are required to turn in white papers on the environmental regimes of ozone protection and endangered species, respectively. Each white paper should be roughly four pages in length, and will be marked against the rubric below. Suppose you were to distribute your white paper to participants at the next COP of your focal regime.

Expectation	Mark
Review. The white paper provides a synthesis of course readings about the focal environmental regime. It presents an overview of the readings in terms of their consensus and/or debates.	___/40
Recommendations. The policy recommendations take into consideration the existing issues from the literature, and outlines specific policy options that are aligned with the interests of the international community.	___/40
Readability. The white paper introduces the problem in an engaging and accessible manner. It is informative yet concise, thoughtful yet actionable. It is clearly rendered in print and/or coherently presented in class.	___/20

Attendance and Preparation

Because of the coronavirus situation, members of this class are scattered in multiple time zones. We therefore will coordinate instruction and participation mostly in an asynchronous fashion with the help of technological tools on NYU Classes. We expect to use this online model for at least the first few weeks of the semester. If the Shanghai campus reopens, we will reevaluate the situation then and possibly transition to in-person class meetings.

Under these exceptionally challenging circumstances, I ask that you approach this course with maximum initiative. Read all assigned texts before each Monday. Conduct the class activities as required each Monday. Turn in written work before the corresponding deadlines. If you have trouble with any aspect of this course, please do not hesitate to get in touch via email. While I am committed to being as flexible as reasonably possible, I am not in a position to overlook tardiness or substandard performance. It is my obligation to hold you to the highest academic standards.

Grading Scale

A=95% or higher	A-=90-94.9%	B+=85-89.9%	B=80-84.9%
C=70-79.9%	D=60-69.9%	F=59.9% or lower	

Academic Honesty

All work that you submit to this course must be your own. All sources and assistance used in preparing your work must be precisely and explicitly acknowledged. It is NOT acceptable to copy, paraphrase, translate, or otherwise draw from other sources without acknowledging them. This includes your own work previously submitted to a different course. Cheating on the exam and/or writings will not be tolerated. Students caught cheating and/or plagiarizing will receive an immediate F for the course, in addition to being referred to Academic Affairs for disciplinary action. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with NYU Shanghai rules regarding integrity.

Readings

As an upper-level social science class, this course contains a standard reading load of roughly 60 to 80 pages per week. Instead of dumbed-down, textbook-ish readings that often characterize introductory-level courses, you are expected to approach authentic academic texts in this course. The vast majority of texts are authored by acclaimed academics, based on rigorous empirical evidence, and published in respected peer-reviewed outlets. It is expected of you to set aside a block of undistracted reading time each week to carefully go over and fully digest the readings.

It is extremely important for you to keep up with the required readings for each class meeting, in the order by which they appear in the syllabus. I lecture with the assumption that you have read all pieces before class. I normally do not lecture from the readings, but try to build on them. In order for you to benefit from the lectures, it is in your best interest to read the assignments in advance.

Lateness

If you submit your work after its due date, your mark will be penalized by 10% of the assignment's total mark for each day of lateness. The date and time of your submission are determined by the timestamp on NYU Classes. This syllabus renders due dates in both Shanghai (China Standard) and New York (EST) times. If you are located in a different time zone, make sure you convert the due dates appropriately to avoid missing them. Take note when daylight saving time begins in your location.

Make-up Exam

A make-up exam will be given only if you provide in writing an acceptable excuse endorsed by an accredited professional regarding the situation. You should submit the written notice before the day of the exam. Last minute requests will not be accommodated. The make-up exam will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for all students who miss the exam, but no later than a week from the original exam date.

Mid-term Grades

Mid-term grades are only posted for students whose cumulative performance by the end of the seventh week is at or below letter grade C, i.e. 79.9% or lower. They help you and your academic advisor make informed decisions about course load adjustments before the add/drop deadline.

Communications

Course-related information will be communicated to you via email messages through NYU Classes. Make sure you check your nyu.edu emails on a regular basis. You are welcome to communicate with me via emails. If you email the TA, make sure you copy me in by adding my email to the “cc” field of your email. If you prefer to meet in private, please use the office hours sign up link on the top of page one to schedule a meeting on google hangouts.

Classroom Etiquettes

One of my responsibilities is to ensure that the environment in the classroom is conducive to learning. If you are late, you should find a seat in the back of the classroom. If you need to leave early, please let me know in advance and sit in a location where it will be easy to quietly leave the room. Turn your phones to silent mode before class begins. Please hold side-conversations and discussions until after class.

Accommodation

I wish to include fully any students with special needs. Please let me know (the earlier the better) if you need special accommodation in the curriculum, instruction, or evaluation procedures in order for you to fully participate. The Moses Center on Washington Square verifies and certifies all requests from students across the Global Network. The Academic Resource Center (ARC) in Shanghai can help you obtain necessary documentation.

Resources

The Library runs many workshops. Some introduce you to the resources available through the NYU Libraries. Others teach you how to use different tools for citation, statistical analysis, mapping, and so on. Relatedly, the ARC provides writing and speaking consultations. The fellows can give you helpful feedback on draft papers, so you can revise and improve before submitting them for course credit. Take advantage of these resources to improve your academic skills.

The syllabus continues on the next page.

Weekly Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Week 1: State of the Global Environment

February 17

We begin our journey with an overview of the global environment. This is necessarily a selective overview; in the time we have in this class, we can only examine the most pressing set of environmental challenges. They nevertheless provide the foundational rationale for a social scientific inquiry into the global environment. As we will see, the sweeping scale and unprecedented intensity of environmental change call for more effective political and social actions. We cannot afford to shrug the environment off as merely a natural science matter.

Readings:

- Kolbert, E. (2014). *The sixth extinction: An unnatural history*. Bloomsbury, pp. 4-19, & 265-269.
- Klein, N. (2014). *This changes everything: Capitalism vs. the climate*. Simon & Schuster, pp. 1-28.
- Pretty, J. (2011). Agriculture and food systems: Our current challenge. In C. Rosin, P. Stock, & H. Campbell (Eds.), *Food systems failure: The global food crisis and the future of agriculture* (pp. 17–29). Routledge.
- Gardiner, S. M. (2006). A perfect moral storm: climate change, intergenerational ethics and the problem of moral corruption. *Environmental Values*, 397-413.

Reading Reflection #1:

- You are required to turn in four reading reflections. Choose any four from weeks 1 to 6. If you choose to submit one based on this week's readings, it is due by 8 am on Monday February 17 in Shanghai, or 7 pm on Sunday February 16 in New York.

Week 2: Tragedy of the Commons?

February 24

It should be clear to you by now that phrases like “natural resource management” or “ecosystem management” are misleading. What we can aspire to manage are not natural resources, but human actions. The problems that we examined last week boil down to the problem of governance. We now turn to a useful point of departure for studying human-environment relations, namely “the tragedy of the commons” framework. The tragedy is a product of actions of human users of common-pool resources, such as fish and forests. What can we do to avoid such a tragedy?

Readings:

- Hardin, G. (1968). The tragedy of the commons. *Science*, 162, 3859, 1243-1248.
- Ostrom, E., Burger, J., Field, C. B., Norgaard, R. B., & Policansky, D. (1999). Revisiting the commons: local lessons, global challenges. *Science*, 284, 5412, 278-282.
- Petrzalka, P., & Bell, M. (2000). Rationality and Solidarities: The Social Organization of Common Property Resources in the Imdrhas Valley of Morocco. *Human Organization*, 59, 3, 343-352.
- Dietz, T., Ostrom, E., & Stern, P. C. (2003). The struggle to govern the commons. *Science*, 302, 5652, 1907-1912.
- Young, O. R. (2017). *Governing complex systems: Social capital for the Anthropocene*. MIT Press, pp. 93-117.

Reading Reflection #2:

- You are required to turn in four reading reflections. Choose any four from weeks 1 to 6. If you choose to submit one based on this week's readings, it is due by 8 am on Monday February 24 in Shanghai, or 7 pm on Sunday February 23 in New York.

Week 3: Issue #1 Scale

March 2

The tragedy of the commons represents an idealized theoretical model. The real world of global environmental politics is fraught with additional complexities and nuances. In this and the next three weeks, we examine major issues in global environmental politics, all of which complicate efforts to govern the global commons. Our first issue concerns the scale of global environmental governance. Traditionally, the nation-state has been the "default" unit in thinking about global issues. However, environmental challenges are not bound by political boundaries. As such, the nation-state has to wrestle with supra-national structures (e.g. UN and EU), inter-national commitments (e.g. agreements and treaties), and sub-national governmental units (e.g. cities and regions). How do these different scales work together? What opportunities and challenges does this multi-scalar, poly-centric system present?

Readings:

- Clapp, J., & Dauvergne, P. (2011). *Paths to a green world: The political economy of the global environment*. MIT Press, pp. 47-86.
- Ostrom, E. (2010). Polycentric systems for coping with collective action and global environmental change. *Global Environmental Change*, 20(4), 550-557.
- Hüesker, F., & Moss, T. (2015). The politics of multi-scalar action in river basin management: Implementing the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD). *Land Use Policy*, 42, 38-47.
- Baldwin, E., McCord, P., Dell'Angelo, J., & Evans, T. (2018). Collective action in a polycentric water governance system. *Environmental Policy and Governance*, 28(4), 212-222.

Reading Reflection #3:

- You are required to turn in four reading reflections. Choose any four from weeks 1 to 6. If you choose to submit one based on this week's readings, it is due by 8 am on Monday March 2 in Shanghai, or 7 pm on Sunday March 1 in New York.

Week 4: Issue #2 Information

March 9

We now turn to the issue of environmental information. Perhaps more so than most other policy areas, the environmental realm is characterized by an overwhelming amount of information, gathered through all sorts of monitors, system performance records, general national barometers, and even population censuses. Through this week's readings, we explore ways to foster transparency and accountability with that information, but also caution against the unconditional faith in the use of environmental information and knowledge.

Readings:

- Mol, A. P. J. (2008). *Environmental reform in the information age: The contours of informational governance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-26.

- Ciple, D., Adams, K. M., Weikmans, R., & Roberts, J. T. (2018). The transformative capability of transparency in global environmental governance. *Global Environmental Politics*, 18(3), 130–150.
- Goldman, M. (2005). *Imperial nature: The World Bank and struggles for social justice in the age of globalization*. Yale University Press, pp. 101-122.
- Bailey, M., Bush, S. R., Miller, A., & Kochen, M. (2016). The role of traceability in transforming seafood governance in the global South. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 18, 25–32.

Reading Reflection #4:

- You are required to turn in four reading reflections. Choose any four from weeks 1 to 6. If you choose to submit one based on this week’s readings, it is due by 8 am on Monday March 9 in Shanghai, or 8 pm on Sunday March 8 in New York.

Week 5: Issue #3 Market

March 16

Next, we ask big questions about liberal capitalism, the role of the market and private corporations, and how they impact the ecological environment. Our discussion is situated in the context of omnipresent public-private partnerships in today’s global environmental governance – dubbed as “private authority” or “hybrid authority.” In fact, the role of private market mechanisms in promoting public social welfare is one of the longest lasting issues in the social sciences. We begin our week with a taste of the theoretical depth of this issue by reading an excerpt from Karl Polanyi, one of the most influential social thinkers in modern times.

Readings:

- Polanyi, K. (1944). *The great transformation: The political and economic origins of our time*. Rinehart and Company, pp. 136-140.
- Hawken, P., Lovins, A. B., & Lovins, L. H. (2013). *Natural capitalism: The next industrial revolution*. Routledge, pp. 260-284.
- Carton, W. (2014). Environmental protection as market pathology?: carbon trading and the dialectics of the ‘double movement’. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 32(6), 1002-1018.
- Stuart, D., Gunderson, R., & Petersen, B. (2017). Climate change and the Polyanian counter-movement: Carbon markets or degrowth?. *New Political Economy*, 1-14.

Reading Reflection #5:

- You are required to turn in four reading reflections. Choose any four from weeks 1 to 6. If you choose to submit one based on this week’s readings, it is due by 8 am on Monday March 16 in Shanghai, or 8 pm on Sunday March 15 in New York.

Week 6: Issue #4 Justice

March 23

The fourth and final issue concerns justice. Even as different parts of the world become more interdependent than ever, they also seem increasingly far apart from each other in terms their socioeconomic prosperity, political liberty,

and – most relevant to our discussion – environmental wellbeing. This week, we interrogate the perpetuation of environmental injustice and reimagine ways to restore justice.

Readings:

- Walker, G. (2009). Globalizing Environmental Justice: The Geography and Politics of Frame Contextualization and Evolution. *Global Social Policy*, 9(3), 355–382.
- Pellow, D. (2011). Politics by other greens: the importance of transnational environmental justice movement networks. In Carmin, J., & Agyeman, J. eds. *Environmental inequalities beyond borders: local perspectives on global injustices*. MIT Press, pp. 247-265.
- Lora-Wainwright, A. (2017). *Resigned activism: Living with pollution in rural China*. MIT Press, pp. 59-88.

Reading Reflection #6:

- You are required to turn in four reading reflections. Choose any four from weeks 1 to 6. If you choose to submit one based on this week's readings, it is due by 8 am on Monday March 23 in Shanghai, or 8 pm on Sunday March 22 in New York.

Week 7: Mid-term Exam

March 30

Details TBA.

Week 8: Regime #1 Ozone Depletion

April 6

We now turn to two concrete global environmental regimes. The first is set up to deal with the issue of ozone depletion. You probably have heard about the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, which is broadly recognized as the most significant success story in global environmental politics. Some even would say that it is the only case of success. It is therefore imperative that we understand the specific features of this regime that undergird its claim to fame.

Background Reference Information (you can skim them):

- Mitchell, R. B., Andonova, L. B., Axelrod, M., Balsiger, J., Bernauer, T., Green, J. F., Hollway, J., Kim, R. E., & Morin, J.-F. (2020). What We Know (and Could Know) About International Environmental Agreements. *Global Environmental Politics*, 20(1), 103–121.
- https://iea.uoregon.edu/base-agreement-list-lineage?field_lineage_value=Ozone%20Protection

Readings:

- DeSombre, E. R. (2000). The Experience of the Montreal Protocol: Particularly Remarkable, and Remarkably Particular. *UCLA Journal of Environmental Law and Policy*, 19(1), 49–82.
- Falkner, R. (2005). The business of ozone layer protection: Corporate power in regime evolution. In D. L. Levy & P. J. Newell (Eds.), *The business of global environmental governance* (pp. 105–134). MIT Press.

- Gareau, B. J. (2008). Dangerous Holes in Global Environmental Governance: The Roles of Neoliberal Discourse, Science, and California Agriculture in the Montreal Protocol. *Antipode*, 40(1), 102–130.

White Paper #1:

- Your white paper about the global environmental politics of ozone depletion control is due by midnight on Friday April 10 in Shanghai, or 12 pm (noon) on Friday April 10 in New York.

Week 9: Regime #2 Endangered Species (I) – CITES

April 13

We will be spending quite a bit of time on this second global environmental regime. Our class time in weeks 9, 11, and 12 will be all about it – the regime on the protection of endangered plants and animals. The focus is placed on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES, pronounced sahy-tees). When I taught this course in the past, I only dedicated one week to this regime. Why the “hype” this year then? Find out more in week 11.

Background Reference Information: https://ica.uoregon.edu/base-agreement-list-lineage?field_lineage_value=CITES

Readings:

- Nuwer, R. L. (2018). *Poached: Inside the dark world of wildlife trafficking*. Da Capo Press, pp. 153-168.
- Gehring, T., & Ruffing, E. (2008). When Arguments Prevail Over Power: The CITES Procedure for the Listing of Endangered Species. *Global Environmental Politics*, 8(2), 123–148.
- Duffy, R. (2013). Global Environmental Governance and North—South Dynamics: The Case of the CITES. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 31(2), 222–239.
- Challender, D. W. S., & MacMillan, D. C. (2014). Poaching is more than an Enforcement Problem. *Conservation Letters*, 7(5), 484–494.

Week 10: Celebrating the Fiftieth Earth Day

April 20

Readings:

- Nelson, G. (2002). *Beyond Earth Day: Fulfilling the Promise*. University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 3-14.
- Rome, A. (2010). The Genius of Earth Day. *Environmental History*, 15(2), 194–205.
- Worster, D. (1994). *Nature’s Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas*. Second Edition. Cambridge University Press, pp. 339-387.

Earth Day Journal:

- Your Earth Day journal is due by noon on Friday April 24 in Shanghai, or midnight on Thursday April 23 in New York. In it, describe your observations at

the Earth Day event you participated in, and reflect on the readings assigned for this week. As you write, try to answer: What has the Earth Day accomplished?

Week 11: Regime #2 Endangered Species (II) – Wildlife

April 27

Readings:

- Diamond, J. M. (1997). *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. W.W. Norton, pp. 195-214.
- Chomel, B. B., Belotto, A., & Meslin, F.-X. (2007). Wildlife, Exotic Pets, and Emerging Zoonoses. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, 13(1), 6–11.
- Leach, M., & Scoones, I. (2013). The social and political lives of zoonotic disease models: Narratives, science and policy. *Social Science & Medicine*, 88, 10–17.
- Hathaway, M. J. (2014). Transnational Matsutake Governance: Endangered Species, Contamination, and the Reemergence of Global Commodity Chains. In E. T. Yeh & C. Coggins (Eds.), *Mapping Shangrila: Contested Landscapes in the Sino-Tibetan Borderlands* (pp. 153–173). University of Washington Press.

White Paper #2:

- Your white paper about the global environmental politics of endangered species is due by midnight on Friday May 1 in Shanghai, or 12 pm (noon) on Friday May 1 in New York.

Week 12: Regime #2 Endangered Species (III) – Solutions?

May 4

Suppose you were invited to present your white paper at the next CITES COP. The world is recovering from the coronavirus crisis, struggling to explore a new global mechanism for the prevention of zoonotic diseases. CITES seems to have real potential. The Secretariat has allotted five good minutes for your much-anticipated speech. How would you “sell” your solution package to top conservation officials from all over the world? Prepare a five-minute speech, and be ready for Q&A after the speech.

Week 13: Final Exam

May 11

Details TBA.