

POLS 362 Global Environmental Politics

Fall 2022

TTh 9:30–10:45 AM

Scott Bioengineering 231

Instructor: Dr. Iasmin Goes (she/her)

Email: iasmin.goes@colostate.edu

Office: Clark C338B

Office Hours: TTh 2:30–4:00 PM

Course Description and Objectives

Among scientists, there is an overwhelming consensus that human activity has a negative impact on the environment: global warming, soil erosion, biodiversity loss, poor air quality, and undrinkable water are all human-induced problems. So why are these problems politicized, and why is it so difficult to tackle them at the global level? In this course, we will discuss how state and non-state actors negotiate multilateral agreements, regimes, or other forms of cooperation to protect the environment. We will examine the competing interests of the Global North and the Global South; the potential trade-off between environmental protection and economic development; the challenge of taking climate action in democracies, which rely on deliberation and compromise; and the extent to which individual consumption choices can help mitigate environmental problems.

There isn't always a single correct answer to the questions we will discuss. The goal of the course is to develop analytical tools that help you think like a social scientist: together, we will evaluate the validity of competing answers and discuss what evidence we would need to see in order to gain confidence in one answer and reject others. You are welcome — even encouraged — to disagree with the answers proposed by the assigned readings. If this is the case, you should be able to formulate an evidence-based counter-argument that convinces your colleagues to reject alternative explanations. This analytical exercise will help you prepare for a career in settings where there are no clear-cut answers, such as consulting, research, finance, public policy, or law.

Readings

Our main references will be the following textbooks:

- Pamela S. Chasek and David L. Downie. 2020. *Global Environmental Politics*. 8th edition. Taylor & Francis.
- Regina S. Axelrod and Stacy D. VanDeveer. 2019. *The Global Environment: Institutions, Law, and Policy*. 5th edition. Sage Publishing.

Several other readings will come from the following handbook, which is available for free at the library:

- Paul G. Harris (ed). 2022. *Routledge Handbook of Global Environmental Politics*. New York: Routledge.

Additional readings will consist of articles in scientific journals, all available on Canvas.

Optional: If you need a general IR theory refresher, the following textbook is a good companion to our main textbooks:

- John Baylis, Patricia Owens, and Steve Smith. 2014. *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*. 8th edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Assignments

Participation (10%) Preparing for the classes and engaging in discussion is a requirement for this course, which is why this grade evaluates the *frequency* and *quality* of contributions. I will not take attendance; if you miss class, I trust that you have legitimate reasons to do so. However, frequent absences might reduce your ability to engage in class discussion, which in turn will affect your participation grade.

Quizzes (20%) Ahead of several classes, a short online multiple choice quiz will gauge your comprehension of the readings. Quizzes are forward-looking: they cover the readings assigned for the *next* class session and are due at the beginning of said class (9:30 am). Late quizzes will be accepted up until September 15. Students who join the course late should go back and complete missed quizzes in order to receive credit. There will be a total of 17 quizzes and I will drop the 3 lowest scores. Since I am dropping the 3 lowest scores, *there will be no make-up quizzes*.

Group project (40%) Teams of 3 students will be formed at the beginning of the semester. You will work together on the three following assignments, which represent major documents that are part of the research or policymaking process.

- **Op-ed (15%)** Suppose you are an expert who has strong opinions about a topic in environmental politics. Pick a newspaper that would be a good outlet for your op-ed. Write 1–2 paragraphs justifying your choice of newspaper (e.g. this newspaper might have run similar op-eds in the past, your topic might be of interest to the readers, etc). Then, write an op-ed that is about 750–800 words long; you can use the [Washington Post Op-Ed Guide](#) as a reference. The op-ed is due on **September 22** and will be followed by a 10-minute in-class presentation.
- **Policy brief (15%)** Suppose you are a lobbyist. One of the non-state actors discussed in Part 2 has hired you to advocate for their interests in Congress. For example, Pacific Gas and Electric has hired you to defend a cap-and-trade system for carbon emissions, or maybe ExxonMobil has hired you to oppose carbon regulation. Write a 2–3 page policy brief addressed to a Member of Congress on behalf of this non-state actor. You can check out real cases of lobbying on [Open Data Secrets](#) or just come up with a case of your own. The policy brief is due on **October 18** and will be followed by a 10-minute in-class presentation.
- **Press release (10%)** Suppose you work for an international organization that is releasing the results of an in-depth study addressing an environmental issue (which may or may not be related to the issues discussed in Part 3 of this course). How would you summarize the findings to the press in 800 words or less? You can use press releases from the [OECD](#) or the [World Bank](#) as a reference. The press release is due on **November 17** and will be followed by a 10-minute in-class presentation.

For each assignment, please include an annex with the sources you used. All team members are expected to deliver equal contributions and will receive the same grade.

Take-Home Final Exam (30%) The final exam will be assigned on the last class day (December 8) at 10:45 am and will cover material from all the readings, lectures, and class discussions. The exam will consist of 10 essay questions. It can be completed at your own pace and can be submitted anytime up until the end of the assigned final period (December 15 at 9 pm). Please submit it on Canvas as a PDF or Word document. To help you prepare for the exam, there will be a review session on December 6.

Course Policies

Communication The most reliable way to get in touch with me is via email. You should expect a response within 48 business hours.

Beyond Class While not required, I encourage you to keep up with current events in economics and politics by reading reputable newspapers and magazines (e.g. New York Times, Washington Post, Financial Times, The Economist, The Guardian, etc). Please check your emails regularly, as I may share pertinent articles with the class every week. I also encourage you to share news with your colleagues using the Canvas discussion board.

Academic Honesty and Integrity This course will adhere to the CSU Academic Integrity Policy as found on the Student' Responsibilities page of the [CSU General Catalog](#) and in the [Student Conduct Code](#). At a minimum, violations will result in a grading penalty in this course and a report to the Office of Student Resolution Center.

Accommodations Your experience in this class is important to me. If you require any accommodation, let me know ahead of time what would be helpful so that we can plan together for you to succeed. You do not need to share private information with me, but you must provide verifiable documentation to the [Office of Student Case Management](#) or [Student Disability Center](#). For religious accommodations, please complete the [Religious Accommodation Request Form](#). Please provide verifiable documentation *to them* (not to me!) ahead of time and ensure that they forward me this information *at least one week* prior to the assignment for which accommodations are required. I cannot make adjustments after the fact.

Late Assignments I will accept no late assignments. Exceptions are granted only if the [Office of Student Case Management](#) is able to provide documentation of a health emergency or other life emergency. If you experience an emergency, please contact Student Case Management, which will then contact me.

Grievances If you are unhappy with your grade on an assignment, please wait 48 hours after the assignment is returned before contacting me. This provides the opportunity to let the initial emotions subside and think more clearly about the issue at hand. After 48 hours, you can contact me with a written explanation of why you feel your grade should be different. "I worked hard" is not a good explanation; I can only grade the quality of the work that you give to me! Based on this petition, I will decide whether to re-grade your assignment. However, be advised that your grade may move upwards or downwards.

Grading Policy

| Grade | Range |
|-------|-------------------|
| A+ | 100% to 96.67% |
| A | <96.67% to 93.33% |
| A- | <93.33% to 90.0% |
| B+ | <90.0% to 86.67% |
| B | <86.67% to 83.33% |
| B- | <83.33% to 80.0% |
| C+ | <80.0% to 76.67% |
| C | <76.67% to 70.0% |
| D | <70.0% to 60.0% |
| F | <60.0% to 0.0% |

Additional Resources and Policies

Check out this link or QR code for policies relevant to your courses and resources to help with various challenges you may encounter: <https://col.st/2FA2g> This includes information about technical support, universal design for learning/accommodation of needs, undocumented student support, etc.



Course Outline

Aug 23: What Do We Know About the Global Environment?

- **Recommended:** Jamie Druckman, Toby Bolsen, and Fay Lomax Cook. 2015. “Citizens’, Scientists’, and Policy Advisors’ Beliefs about Global Warming.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 658: 271-295.
- **Recommended:** Climate Change Debate, Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (watch [here](#)).

Aug 25: IR Theories and the Environment

- Stephen M. Walt. 1998. “One World, Many Theories.” *Foreign Policy*.

Quiz 1 due

Aug 30: The Emergence of Environmental Politics

- Chasek and Downie, Chapter 1 – The Emergence of Global Environmental Politics (pp. 1-43).

Quiz 2 due

Sep 1: Economic Development and the Environment

- Chasek and Downie, Chapter 6 – Environmental Politics and Sustainable Development (pp. 257-290).

Sep 6: Democracy and the Environment

- Cameron Abadi. 2022. “What if Democracy and Climate Mitigation Are Incompatible?” *Foreign Policy*.

Part 1: Big Players

Sep 8: The US

- Chasek and Downie, Chapter 2 – Actors in the Environmental Arena (only pp. 45-51, “Nation-State Actors: Roles and Interests”).
- Axelrod and VanDeveer, Chapter 6 – Domestic Sources of US Unilateralism (pp. 163-190).

Quiz 3 due

Sep 13: The EU

- Axelrod and VanDeveer, Chapter 7 – Promoting Environmental Protection in the European Union (pp. 191-219).

Quiz 4 due

Sep 15: China

- Axelrod and VanDeveer, Chapter 8 – How China’s Domestic Energy and Environmental Challenges Shape Its Global Engagement (pp. 220-244).

Quiz 5 due

Sep 20: The Global South

- Axelrod and VanDeveer, Chapter 9 – The View from the South: Developing Countries in Global Environmental Politics (pp. 245-268).
- **Recommended:** Abrahm Lustgarten. 2022. “The Barbados Rebellion: An Island Nation’s Fight for Climate Justice.” *New York Times*.

Quiz 6 due

Sep 22: Presentations

Academic report due; groups present their reports in class

Part 2: Non-State Actors

Sep 27: International Organizations

- Chasek and Downie, Chapter 2 – Actors in the Environmental Arena (pp. 51-71, from “Intergovernmental Organizations” until “Regional and Other Multilateral Organizations”).
- Axelrod and VanDeveer, Chapter 2 – Architects, Agitators, and Entrepreneurs: International and Non-governmental Organizations in Global Environmental Politics (pp. 35-47, “International Governmental Organizations and the Global Environment”).

Quiz 7 due

Sep 29: Do We Need a World Environmental Organization?

- Frank Biermann. 2001. “The Emerging Debate on the Need for a World Environment Organization: A Commentary.” *Global Environmental Politics* 1(1): 45–55.
- Check out the [Wikipedia article](#) about the creation of a potential United Nations Environment Organization.

Oct 4: International Law

- Axelrod and VanDeveer, Chapter 3 – International Law and the Protection of the Global Environment, pp. 68-100.

Quiz 8 due

Oct 6: Nongovernmental Organizations and Civil Society

- Chasek and Downie, Chapter 2 – Actors in the Environmental Arena (pp. 71-76, “Nongovernmental and Civil Society Organizations”).
- Axelrod and VanDeveer, Chapter 2 – Architects, Agitators, and Entrepreneurs: International and Nongovernmental Organizations in Global Environmental Politics (pp. 48-67, from “Nongovernmental Organizations and the Global Environment” until the end).

Quiz 9 due

Oct 11: Business and Industry

- Chasek and Downie, Chapter 2 – Actors in the Environmental Arena (pp. 76-86, from “Business and Industry” until the end).

Quiz 10 due

Oct 13: When Actors Work Together: The Montreal Protocol

- Chasek and Downie, Chapter 3 – The Development of Environmental Regimes (pp. 87-102, until the end of “Stratospheric Ozone Depletion”).
- **Recommended:** PBS documentary *Ozone Hole: How We Saved the Planet* (watch [here](#)).

Oct 18: Presentations

Policy brief due; groups present their briefs in class

Part 3: Cases, Issues, and Policies

Oct 20: Fossil Fuels and Energy Policy

- Hugh C. Dyer. 2022. Energy: Political–Economic Strategies. In *Routledge Handbook of Global Environmental Politics*, edited by Paul G. Harris. Routledge, pp. 445-458.
- Kate J. Neville. 2020. “Shadows of Divestment: The Complications of Diverting Fossil Fuel Finance.” *Global Environmental Politics* 20(2): 3-11.
- Ruth Maclean and Dionne Searcey. 2022. “Congo to Auction Land to Oil Companies: ‘Our Priority Is Not to Save the Planet.’” *New York Times*.

Quiz 11 due

Oct 25: Transport and Infrastructure

- Helene Dyrhaug. 2022. “Transport and Infrastructure: Toward Sustainable Mobility.” In *Routledge Handbook of Global Environmental Politics*, edited by Paul G. Harris. Routledge, pp. 459-470.

Quiz 12 due

Oct 27: Free Trade

- Axelrod and VanDeveer, Chapter 14 – Free Trade and Environmental Protection (pp. 389-411).

Quiz 13 due

Nov 1: Waste

- Axelrod and VanDeveer, Chapter 11 – Global Politics and Policy on Hazardous Substances (pp. 305-331).
- Chasek and Downie, Chapter 3 – The Development of Environmental Regimes (pp. 115-125, until the end of “Hazardous Waste”).

Quiz 14 due

Nov 3: Consumption

- Axelrod and VanDeveer, Chapter 15 – Consumption, Commodity Chains, and Global and Local Environments (pp. 412-437).
- Zahra Hirji. 2022. “How to Think About Your Carbon Footprint.” *Bloomberg*.

Quiz 15 due

Nov 8: Is Population Growth Bad for the Environment?

- Trevor Hedberg. 2020. *The Environmental Impact of Overpopulation: The Ethics of Procreation*. Routledge, pp. 14-23.
- Sarah Kaplan. 2021. “It’s Wrong to Blame ‘Overpopulation’ for Climate Change.” *Washington Post*.

Nov 10: Climate Change and Conflict

- Vally Koubi. 2019. "Climate Change and Conflict." *Annual Review of Political Science* 22:343–60.

Quiz 16 due

Nov 15: Biodiversity

- Axelrod and VanDeveer, Chapter 12 – Global Biodiversity Governance: Genetic Resources, Species, and Ecosystems (pp. 332-358).

Quiz 17 due

Nov 17: Presentations

Press release due; groups present their releases in class

Nov 22 & 24: No Class

Part 4: The Future of Global Environmental Politics

Nov 29: Uncertainty, Risk, and Technology

- Jennifer Yarnold, Ray Maher, Karen Hussey, and Stephen Dovers. 2022. "Uncertainty: Risk, Technology and the Future." In *Routledge Handbook of Global Environmental Politics*, edited by Paul G. Harris. Routledge, pp. 253-268.

Dec 1: Looking Ahead

- Chasek and Downie, Chapter 7 – The Future of Global Environmental Politics (pp. 291-310).

Dec 6: Review Session

Bring questions!

Dec 8: Take-Home Exam Distributed on Canvas

Due Thursday, Dec 15 at 9 pm