



Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department of Political Science

POLS 4933 – ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

FALL 2022

Section 102, TR 11:00 am – 12:20 pm

Instructor: Dr. Juheon Lee

Office: O'Donohoe Hall 203

Office Hours: Tuesday 2 pm – 4 pm / Wednesday 9 am – 12 pm / Thursday 9am – 11am

E-mail: juheon.lee@msutexas.edu

Homepage: juheon.weebly.com

Course Description

Why did Canada send garbage to the Philippines? How have China-funded dams on the Mekong River created conflicts in Southeast Asia? Is global climate change an environmental conflict multiplier or process for triggering cooperation? When and how well national governments cooperate to address shared environmental problems? What sorts of domestic political factors in the United States shape the country's domestic and foreign environmental policy? These are important problems of political, scientific, and social complexity. This course tackles such problems using various analytical tools of political science. Each class offers students opportunity to think critically and to search for the factors that make the problems complex and difficult to solve. We will begin with global/international environmental problems and governance – its shape, history, performance, and evolution. Understanding the dynamics offers critical insights into the opportunities for, and barriers to meeting, the challenges state are faced with. We then delve into some urgent environmental conflicts in the United States – such as conflicts over water resources, trash trades, air quality, and nuclear site fights – and discuss the nature of the problems and possible solutions, if any. Classes will include discussions, debates, and student presentations, which will help students stay up to date on current environmental issues and gain better understanding of the variety and the evolution of political arrangements regarding international and domestic environmental problems.

Course Objectives

By the completion of this course, students are expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes:

- Develop a broad understanding of environmental politics in the context of social and governmental institutions.
- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of theoretical arguments through the logical examination of evidence.
- Understand and think critically about environmental problems locally, nationally, and globally, and be able to actively engage in the debate of environmental problems

Course Requirements

Completing ALL the readings and regular attendance will be required of all students. Active participation in class discussions is critical for students to succeed in this course.

Assignment	Weight	Notes
Final exam	20%	Short essay questions (via D2L)
Midterm exam	20%	Short essay questions (via D2L)
Policy Paper presentation	15%	Case studies + discussion leading
Policy Paper	20%	A written report (>2500 words)
Reading response (2)	10%	5 points for each paper (>300 words)
Attendance and Participation	15%	Attendance (5%), class participation (5%)

1. **Exams (Midterm 20 points / Final 20 points):** Each exam will consist of 2-3 essays. They will test your understanding of the key concepts and the main arguments of the assigned articles. The exams will also ask you to apply a theoretical framework to the real-world examples. A study guide will be provided before the exams, and make-up exams will be granted only in case of dire and documented personal emergencies.
2. **Policy Paper (20 points):** All students are required to complete an analytical paper on a current environmental issue/problem that causes international/domestic political conflicts. A good paper successfully explains the nature of the problem/conflict using the concepts and theories discussed in class, compares pros and cons of different policies, and provide policy implications for dealing with the environmental problem. Students may use academic articles, local/national news sources, or their own knowledge and experiences to identify the issue they wish to focus on. Students must use a critical thinking approach and not simply summarize the information that they find.
3. **Policy Paper Presentation (15 points):** All students are required to sign up for an individual slide presentation in the first week. The presentation (20-25 minutes) should include in-depth case studies on the policy paper topic. Students are encouraged to discuss with the instructor regarding their presentation topic by the end of the first week. An effective and interactive presentation will earn extra credits.
4. **Reading Response (10 points):** Each student will be expected to submit their responses to the assigned reading (of their choice) before the class for which the reading is assigned starts. Every student is required to submit 2 reading responses (>300 words) over the course of the semester.
5. **Attendance and participation (10 points):** Attendance is vital to learning the material presented in this course. You will be expected to come to class prepared to engage thoughtfully, listen attentively, and interact with your peers respectfully. Over the course of the semester, 4 excused absences will be allowed for all students. More than 4 absences and unexcused absences will lower your final grade.

Your final grade will be based on the quality of assignments listed above. It will be determined using the following percentage scale:

A = 100 – 90 B = 89 – 80 C = 79 – 70 D = 69 – 60 F < 60

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

I will use D2L for posting syllabus, course communication, course schedule, attendance, and gradebook, as well as for course materials and testing. Therefore, each student is expected to be familiar with this platform. You should regularly check D2L, and the email hosted via D2L for important course information. If you experience any difficulties, please contact the IT technicians immediately and let me know your problems.

For your midterm and final examinations, I may utilize the Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor. In order to install these programs, you will need the following:

- **A desktop computer or laptop** other than a Chromebook. Chromebooks are NOT compatible with the Respondus Lockdown Browser and Monitor. Apple iPads may be used for quizzes and exams, but these are not advised for any assignment with a written component. Mobile phones and similar devices are not compatible with the required programs.
- **A working webcam on the computing device** used for the exam.
- **Microsoft Office or a compatible program** for written assignments. Access to Microsoft Office 365 is available through the Office 365 for Students on the Microsoft website.

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individuals to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the [Office of Student Conduct](#).

Student Disability Services

Any student having an education disability plan on file with the university needs to inform me within the first week of the class, so I make the appropriate arrangements to accommodate your situation. In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to Disability Support Services.

Textbooks [Recommended]

- Kate O'Neill, *The Environment and International Relations* (2nd Edition)
- Rosenbaum, *Environmental Politics and Policy* (12th edition)
- [All readings will be posted on D2L](#)

Course Schedule

Part I Global Environmental Politics

Week 1 – Global Environmental Issues

Discussion Questions: How would you identify and evaluate different sources of information about the state of the global environment or specific environmental problems? What distinguishes a reliable information source from one that is not?

August 23 & August 25

- Introduction to the course
- Robinson, *The 13 Biggest Environmental Problems of 2022*
- NY Times, *The World solved the Ozone Problem*
- Shellenberger, *Apocalypse Never* Chapter 1

Week 2 – Identifying International Environmental Problems

Discussion Questions: What do you consider the main global environmental problems, and what are their causes? Particularly, what are the political and socioeconomic factors that have contributed to them? How do we distinguish between global commons, transboundary and local-cumulative environmental problem? When is such a distinction helpful, and when does it oversimplify?

August 30 & September 1

- Gates, *How to Avoid a Climate Disaster* Chapter 3 & 11
- O’Neil, Chapter 1 & 2

Week 3 – Global Environmental Governance and Regime

Discussion Questions: What are the arguments for and against incorporating more punishment or enforcement mechanisms into international environmental regimes? Many countries fail to meet their international obligations because they lack the capacity to meet them. What is capacity in this context?

September 6 & September 8

- Chasek and Downie, “Global Environmental Politics,” Chapter 3
- O’Neil, Chapter 5
- **Student Presentation 1**

Week 4 – Security and the Environment

Discussion Questions: What is security? What is “non-traditional security?” Are environmental issues security issues? How so?

September 13 & September 15

- Caballero-Anthony, “Understanding Non-Traditional Security”
- Conca & Dabelko, Part 5
- **Student Presentation 2**

Week 5 – Water, Air & Politics

Discussion Questions: Do nations go to war over fresh water? The Mekong River has been a main source of conquest, conflict, and cooperation in the Southeast Asian region. What is the role of science in solving international conflicts over air quality?

September 20 & September 22

- NY Times (2020), This is a War: Cross-Border Fight Over Water Erupts in Mexico
- NBC News (2022), Chinese Dams on Mekong River Endanger Fish Stocks, Livelihoods, Activists say.
- Financial Times (2021), The Threat of Conflict Over Water is Growing.
- Aljazeera (2021), The 100 most polluted cities in the world
- Grid (2022), From 'Airpocalypse' to Olympic blue: China's air quality transformation
- **Student Presentation 3**
- **Movie Watching, "Don't Look Up" (Netflix)**

Week 6 – Climate Change & Migration

Discussion Questions: People who are forced to move due to climate change currently have no adequate recognition in international law. Experts say that India-Bangladesh barrier is to prevent the possible refuge of 20 million Bangladeshis who may be displaced by future climate change. What do you think?

September 27 & September 29

- UNDP (2008), Human development Report
- The Guardian (2022), The century of climate migration
- Brookings (2019), The climate crisis, migration, and refugees
- **Student Presentation 4**

Week 7 – Global Environmental Justice

Discussion Questions: Why did Canada send garbage to the Philippines and what made Canada decide to take the it back? Do you agree with the idea that importing waste is an economic transaction which can benefit countries with little to offer the global economy?

October 4 & October 6

- CNN (2019), Duterte Threatens war against Canada over trash shipped to Philippines.
- UN OHCHR , The relationship between climate change and human rights
- **Student Presentation 5**

Module 8 – Midterm

October 11

- Review for midterm

October 13

- **Midterm exam**

Part II Environmental Politics in the U.S.

Week 9 – The Evolution of US Environmentalism

Discussion Questions: How have the administrations in the US responded to the environmental problems? Since when, have we seen the rise of environmentalism in the US?

October 18 & October 20

- Rosenbaum, *After Earth Day* (Chapter 1)
- Student Presentation 6
- Student Presentation 7

Week 10 – Environmental Policy Process

Discussion Questions: How has the environmental policy been made and implemented in the US? How has the public responded to the government policies? Which governmental institutions, private interests, and political forces have been engaged in environmental policymaking?

October 25 & October 27

- Rosenbaum, *Making Policy* (Chapter 2 & 3)
- Student Presentation 8
- Student Presentation 9

Week 11 – Regulations and Environmental Justice

Discussion Questions: What are the common challenges in the process of environmental policymaking? What choices should policymakers make? Are there social groups economically disadvantaged or disproportionately exposed to environmental risks?

November 1 & November 3

- Rosenbaum, *Common Policy Challenges & More Choice* (Chapter 4 & 5)

Week 12 – Water, Air, and Toxic and Hazardous Substances

Discussion Questions: Why aren't there truly impressive results from so massive a national investment? What are some policies on hazardous substances, and how have they evolved? What are the main public health concerns regarding toxic chemicals?

November 8 & November 10

- Rosenbaum, *Command and Control in Action & Regulatory Thicket* (Chapter 6 & 7)

Week 13 – Energy and Land Politics

Discussion Questions: How has energy policy become environmental policy? What is the impact of energy policy on the American environmental quality and governance?

November 15

- Rosenbaum, *Energy & 635 million Acres of Politics* (Chapter 8 & 9)
- **Final Paper Due**

November 17

- **No class (Conference Attendance)**

Week 14 –Site Fights and Politics

Discussion Questions: The ‘NIMBY’ (Not in My Back Yard) concept is commonly used to explain public opposition to new developments near homes and communities. Despite its common use, the concept has been extensively critiqued by social scientists. Why is that? Do you agree?

November 22

- Aldrich, D. P., & Crook, K. (2013). Taking the high ground: FEMA trailer siting after Hurricane Katrina. *Public Administration Review*, 73(4), 613-622.
- Devine-Wright, P. (2009). Rethinking NIMBYism: The role of place attachment and place identity in explaining place-protective action. *Journal of community & applied social psychology*, 19(6), 426-441.
- Guo, Y., Ru, P., Su, J., & Anadon, L. D. (2015). Not in my backyard, but not far away from me: Local acceptance of wind power in China. *Energy*, 82, 722-733.
- Kemp, R. (1990). Why not in my backyard? A radical interpretation of public opposition to the deep disposal of radioactive waste in the United Kingdom. *Environment and planning A*, 22(9), 1239-1258.

November 24

- **Thanksgiving Holidays**

Week 15 – Social Networks and Disaster Resilience

Discussion Questions: What are the roles of social networks in the face of disaster? What makes communities resilient against natural events?

November 29

- Aldrich (2013), Building Resilience.

December 1

- Final Exam Review

Module 16 – Final Exam (Online, December 6)