Public Affairs 866: Global Environmental Governance

Spring, 2015
University of Wisconsin
La Follette School of Public Affairs
EnvSt-866, PolSci-866, PubAff-866
3 credits

Seminar
Room: Van Hise 155
Tuesday: 3:30–5:25 PM
Webpage: Learn@UW

INSTRUCTOR
Professor Greg Nemet
La Follette School of Public Affairs and Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies
Room 209 Observatory Hill Office Bldg.
nemet@wisc.edu
Office Hours: (with some variation—will post 1 week ahead)
Monday 9–10a
Tuesday 2–3p

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES
As the magnitudes of environmental problems have increased—and as globalization has integrated human activities—many of the most severe environmental problems have become truly global issues. Hundreds of international agreements have been signed, but their effectiveness has been inconsistent.

Heightened concern about environmental quality has increased demand analysts who can navigate the political, economic, scientific, and technological dimensions of these issues to inform critical policy decisions in a multinational context. This class is designed to introduce students to the main concepts, frameworks, and actors involved in addressing environmental problems of global scale. The perspective taken here is that of a policy maker confronting decisions about the formation of international environmental policy and the management of it. A central theme of the course involves the challenges of addressing global problems while accommodating cross-national differences in interpretations of scientific risk and uncertainty.

Students will become familiar with the breadth of environmental problems at stake and the history of attempts to solve them. After covering the basic frameworks, institutions and actors, the second half of the course will examine the details of policy design using case studies. We will spend four weeks studying a prominent contemporary international environmental issue, climate change. While no scientific background is needed for the class, each topic will include a review of the basic physical processes involved, taking the perspective that these characteristics affect the appropriateness of policy responses.
Requirements

This class will be taught as a seminar. The reading load for this class is not intended to be heavy; students are expected to read the required texts before class and participate actively in class discussions. A typical class meeting will include a short lecture, with most of the time allotted for class discussion.

- A set of “thought questions” will be posted a week in advance of each class. For 4 classes of their choice, students will write a 300-500 word critique of that week’s readings to be turned in at the beginning of class. Each week, two students will be responsible for initiating the group discussion with a focus on highlighting important points from the readings and posing questions for discussion.
- A final paper can be written either as a research paper or as a policy memo, in groups of two students each. Each group will present a brief summary of their paper in the final class meeting. One-page proposals for the papers are due in class on March 10 and the final paper is due on May 8. Details will be distributed early in the semester.

Both exercises require proper acknowledgment of sources as detailed on course website. In summary:

1. If you use an author’s specific word or words, you must place those words within quotation marks and you must credit the source,
2. Even if you use your own words, if you obtained the information or ideas you are presenting from a source, you must document the source.

People with disabilities will be fully included in this course. Please inform me if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments of this course to enable you to participate fully. Confidentiality of the shared information will be strictly maintained. Certain accommodations may require the assistance of the UW-Madison’s McBurney Disability Office - http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/.

Evaluation

15% Class participation.
40% Four critical review memos (300-500 words).
15% Discussion facilitation.
30% Final paper (2500 words/student) and brief presentation.

Readings

There is one required book for this course, which is available at the UW Bookstore:


All other readings listed in this syllabus will be available on the Learn@UW website.
Instructor’s Bio

Gregory Nemet is an associate professor at the University of Wisconsin in the La Follette School of Public Affairs and the Nelson Institute Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment (SAGE). He is also chair of the Energy Analysis and Policy (EAP) certificate program. His research and teaching focus on improving analysis of the environmental, social, economic, and technical dynamics of the global energy system. This work is motivated by a general interest in understanding how to expand access to energy services while reducing environmental impacts. He teaches courses in energy systems analysis, governance of global energy problems, and international environmental policy. His research analyzes the process of technological change in energy and its interactions with public policy. He has been an author for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Global Energy Assessment (GEA). He received his doctorate in energy and resources from the University of California, Berkeley. His A.B. is in geography and economics from Dartmouth College.

Class Schedule and Reading List

Unit 1: Global Environmental Problems and Frameworks for Addressing Them

1. January 20:

Introduction to Global Environmental Problems

• Axelrod, vanDeveer, & Downie, Ch. 1 “Governing the International Environment.”
• Speth & Hass, Ch. 2, “Global-Scale Environmental Challenges.”

recommended:


2. January 27:

Seeking International Governance, 1972–2002

• Axelrod, vanDeveer, & Downie, Ch. 2 “Global Institutions and the Environment.”

recommended:


3. February 3:

Treaties, Regimes, and Key Actors
• Axelrod, vanDeveer, & Downie, Ch. 3 “Environmental Protection in the 21st Century”
• Axelrod, vanDeveer, & Downie, Ch. 4 “Global Environmental Policy: Governance through Regimes.”
• Axelrod, vanDeveer, & Downie, Ch. 5 “The Role of Environmental NGOs in International Regimes.”

recommended:
• Speth & Hass, Ch. 5 “Key Actors, Expanding Roles.”

UNIT 2: THE CONSEQUENCES OF DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

4. February 10:

Trade and the Environment
• Axelrod, vanDeveer, & Downie, Ch. 8 “Economic Integration and Environmental Protection.”

recommended:

5. February 17:

**Interpretation of Uncertainty and Risk**


*recommended:*


6. February 24:

**Science and Governance**

*(joint class session with “Technological Hazards” seminar, Prof. Bier. Location: TBD)*


*recommended:*


7. March 3:

Taking National Perspectives into Account
- Axelrod, vanDeveer, & Downie, Ch. 10 “The U.S. and Global Environmental Politics”
- Axelrod, vanDeveer, & Downie, Ch. 11 “Environmental Policy Making in the European Union.”

recommended:

8. March 10: (proposals due)

The View from the South
- Axelrod, vanDeveer, & Downie, Ch. 12 “Developing Countries in Global Environmental Politics.”

recommended:
9. March 17:

**Climate change I: Science and Policy History**
- Axelrod, vanDeveer, & Downie, Ch. 6 “International Climate Change Policy”

**recommended:**
- Stephen Schneider’s webpage: [http://stephenschneider.stanford.edu/Climate/Climate_Science/Science.html](http://stephenschneider.stanford.edu/Climate/Climate_Science/Science.html)

10. March 24:

**Climate change II: Mitigation Costs and Technologies**

**recommended:**


March 31: Spring Break.

11. April 7:
Climate change III: Geoengineering

• Robock, A. (2008). “20 reasons why geoengineering may be a bad idea.” Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists 64(2): 14-+


recommended:


12. April 14:

Climate change IV: Designing Future Regimes


recommended:
- Skocpol (2013) ‘What It Will Take to Counter Extremism and Engage Americans in the Fight against Global Warming’

Unit 4: Lessons to Learn?

13. April 21:

Transboundary Air Pollution and Acid Rain


recommended:
14. April 28:

**Chlorofluorocarbons, Ozone Depletion, and the Montreal Protocol**


15. May 5:

**Presentations of Policy Memos and Research Papers**

7–10 minute presentations each.

May 8:

Papers due at 5pm in my mailbox at the La Follette School.
For further reading

Books


Journals


Websites

Convention on Transboundary Air Pollution http://www.unece.org/env/lrtap/
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): http://www.ipcc.ch
U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): http://unfccc.int
Center for Climate and Energy Solutions: http://www.c2es.org/
Climate Policy Observer: http://climateobserver.org/
EC Climate Action: http://ec.europa.eu/clima/index_en.htm