

# CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

**Grado en Relaciones Internacionales / Bachelor in  
International Relations BIR SEP-2023 CICH-IR.3.M.A**

Area Dispute Resolution and Legal Practice

Number of sessions: 15

Academic year: 23-24

Degree course: THIRD

Number of credits: 3.0

Semester: 1<sup>o</sup>

Category: COMPULSORY

Language: English

Professor: **FRANCISCO SEIJO MACEIRAS**

E-mail: [fseijo@faculty.ie.edu](mailto:fseijo@faculty.ie.edu)

Francisco Seijo received his PhD in political science from Columbia University. His research focuses on coupled human and natural systems theory, environmental politics, forest policy and climate change politics and, particularly, the study of the human dimension of landscape fires in Spain and globally. Dr. Seijo is currently part of a research project on climate change adaptation in forest ecosystems in Spain in conjunction with the Universidad de Alcalá de Henares, the Universidad Pablo de Olavide and the CSIC. In addition to his research activities he has worked as a development consultant for the European Commission and various international governmental and non-governmental organizations and is a member of the Board of Directors of The Association for Fire Ecology (<http://fireecology.org>).

Researchgate profile: [Francisco Seijo](#)

Google scholar profile: [Francisco Seijo](#)

[fseijo@faculty.ie.edu](mailto:fseijo@faculty.ie.edu)

## SUBJECT DESCRIPTION

Humanity's problematic relationship with its natural environment has emerged as one of the crucial political issues of our time. Though by now environmental concerns over climate change, industrial pollution, conservation of biodiversity, water management, energy production, etc. have moved to the center stage of international, national and local political agendas there exists a growing sense of perplexity about what ought to be done regarding what some have defined as a "global environmental crisis". Indeed, many of the critical environmental issues affecting the entire planet appear to be intractable and their origins and possible solutions defy every single aspect of how life is lived in humanity's contemporary globalized civilization.

This course examines some of the most salient environmental issues of our time through an interdisciplinary coupled human and natural systems approach. By examining the closely knit and complex interactions between the Earth's natural and Humanity's political, social, cultural and economic systems this course will attempt to give the students an idea of both the political and biophysical complexity of the issues at stake and the scientific methodologies that have been designed to tackle them. In fact, this will be the main goal of the course: that the students learn how to approach from an interdisciplinary perspective the scientific, political, economic, cultural, social and biophysical complexities that environmental issues generate for environmental policymaking in the world's political governance systems.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the relevance of current, state-of-the-art scientific and political knowledge on the study of environmental issues.
- Apply the basic concepts developed by common-pool resources, coupled human and natural systems and landscape ecology theories to the study of specific environmental issues.
- Gain the conceptual tools to study how the policy process works with regards to environmental issues in the United States, Europe and selected developing countries.
- Apply the analytical skills acquired regarding the former three points to study the following key (and interconnected) policy areas: climate, land use (forestry and agriculture), water and energy.

## TEACHING METHODOLOGY

IE University teaching method is defined by its collaborative, active, and applied nature. Students actively participate in the whole process to build their knowledge and sharpen their skills. Professor's main role is to lead and guide students to achieve the learning objectives of the course. This is done by engaging in a diverse range of teaching techniques and different types of learning activities such as the following:

| Learning Activity                                     | Weighting | Estimated time a student should dedicate to prepare for and participate in |
|---|-----------|--|
| Lectures  | 25.33 %   | 19.0 hours   |
| Discussions   | 0.0 %     | 0.0 hours  |
| Exercises in class, Asynchronous sessions, Field Work | 0.0 %     | 0.0 hours  |

|                     |         |            |
|---------------------|---------|------------|
| Group work          | 13.33 % | 10.0 hours |
| Individual studying | 61.33 % | 46.0 hours |
| TOTAL               | 100.0 % | 75.0 hours |

## PROGRAM

### SESSION 1 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

#### Session one: Systems theory and levels of analysis in environmental politics

##### Required readings:

- Singer. "International conflict: 3 levels of analysis".
- O'Neill. "The environment and international relations".
- Boulding. "General systems theory"

##### Recommended readings:

- Simmel. "The web of group affiliations".
- Weber. "Politics as a vocation".Waltz.
- "Man, the state and war". p. 16-26, 80-85, 159-165.

##### Recommended viewing:

- BBC documentary: "How the idea of the ecosystem was invented"

*Book Chapters: Singer. "International conflict: 3 levels of analysis". (ced)*

*Book Chapters: Kate O'Neill: The environment and international relations*

*Article: Kenneth Boulding: General systems theory; Management Science , Vol 2; no.3 (ced)*

*Article: Simmel. "The web of group affiliations". (ced)*

*Book Chapters: Weber. "Politics as a vocation" (ced)*

*Book Chapters: Waltz: "Man, the state and war". p. 16-26, 80-85, 159-165. (ced)*

*Video: How the idea of the ecosystem was invented (Vimeo)*

### SESSION 2 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

#### Session two: Common pool resource theory and environmental politics

##### Required readings:

- Garrett Hardin. "The Tragedy of the Commons".
- Elinor Ostrom. "Governing the commons".

##### Recommended readings:

- Duhigg. "Keystone habits", "The habits of societies".
- Jared Diamond. "Collapse: an introduction"
- Acemoglu and Robinson. "Theories that don't work".

*Article: Garrett Hardin: THE SOCIAL CONTRACT, Fall 2001 (ced)*

*Article: Elinor Ostrom. "Governing the commons". (ced)*

*Book Chapters: Duhigg. "Keystone habits", "The habits of societies". (ced)*

*Book Chapters: Jared Diamond. "Collapse: an introduction" (ced)*

*Book Chapters: Acemoglu and Robinson. "Theories that don't work". (ced)*

### SESSION 3 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

### **Session three: Coupled Human and Natural Systems and Landscape Ecology methodologies for the analysis of environmental issues**

Required readings:

- Liu et al. "Coupled Human and Natural Systems".
- Hobbs. "Landscape ecology".

Recommended readings:

- Erle Ellis. "Anthropogenic biomes of the world"
- Ostrom. "A general framework for analyzing sustainability of social-ecological systems"

*Article: Liu et al. "Coupled Human and Natural Systems"; Ambio Vol. 36, No. 8, December 2007 (ced)*

*Article: J. Wu, R.J. Hobbs (eds.): Key topics in landscape ecology; Landscape Ecol (2009) 24:451–452 (ced)*

*Article: Erle C. Ellis and Navin Ramankutty: Putting people in the map: anthropogenic biomes of the world ; The Ecological Society of America (ced)*

*Article: Elinor Ostrom: A general framework for analyzing sustainability in social ecological systems; SCIENCE VOL 325 24 JULY 2009 (ced)*

### **SESSION 4 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

#### **Session four: Public opinion formation and the political framing of environmental issues**

Required readings:

- Bolsen, T., J. Druckman, and F.L. Cook. "Citizens', Scientists', and Legislators' Beliefs about Global Climate Change".
- Seijo. "Who framed the forest fire?"

*Article: Bolsen, T., J. Druckman, and F.L. Cook. "Citizens', Scientists', and Legislators' Beliefs about Global Climate Change". (ced)*

*Article: Seijo: Who Framed the Forest Fire?; Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning ?Volume 11, 2009 - Issue 2 (ced)*

### **SESSION 5 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

#### **Session five: The environmental political process in the developing world**

Required readings:

- O'Neill. Chapter 7. "Non-state environmental governance".
- Agrawal et al. "Changing governance of the world's forests".

Recommended readings:

- Parker et al., "Environmental organisations in Turkey: engaging the state and capital".
- Lang et al., "Anti-incinerator campaigns and the evolution of protest politics in China".
- Zhang et al., "Recasting subjectivity through the lenses: new forms of environmental mobilisation in China"

*Book Chapters: O'Neill. Chapter 7. "Non-state environmental governance", in Vogler, J.; Imber, M. F. The Environment and International Relations; Global Environmental Change Series; Routledge: London, 1996.*

*Article: Parker et al.: Environmental organisations in Turkey: engaging the state and capital; Environmental Politics, 2013 Vol. 22, No. 5, 760–778, (ced)*

Article: Graeme Lang & Ying Xu: *Anti-incinerator campaigns and the evolution of protest politics in China*; *Environmental Politics ? Volume 22, 2013 (ced)*

Article: Joy Y. Zhang & Michael Barr: *Recasting subjectivity through the lenses: new forms of environmental mobilisation in China*; *Environmental Politics ? Volume 22, 2013 (ced)*

Article: Agrawal et al. "Changing governance of the world's forests". *SCIENCE 13 JUNE 2008 VOL 320 (ced)*

## **SESSION 6 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

### **Session six: The environmental political process in the developed world (USA and Europe)**

Required readings:

- Seijo. "American exceptionalism (the sequel): Why is there no electorally competitive green party in the United States?"
- Cronon. "The trouble with wilderness".

Recommended readings:

- Vaughn. Chapters 2, 3. "Participants in the environmental debate", "The political process".
- Carter. Chapters 3, 4. "Green parties: The rise of a new politics?", "Party politics and the environment".

*Book Chapters: Vaughn. Chapters 2, 3. "Participants in the environmental debate", "The political process"; in Vaughn, J. Environmental Politics : Domestic and Global Dimensions, 3<sup>a</sup>.; Wadsworth Cengage Learning: Boston, 2011.*

*Article: Seijo: AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM (THE SEQUEL): WHY IS THERE NO ELECTORALLY COMPETITIVE GREEN PARTY IN THE UNITED STATES? (ced)*

*Book Chapters: Carter. Chapter 3, "Green parties: The rise of a new politics?" in Young, S. C. The Politics of the Environment; Baseline Books: Manchester, 1993. (ced)*

*Book Chapters: Carter. Chapter 4. "Green parties: The rise of a new politics?" in Young, S. C. The Politics of the Environment; Baseline Books: Manchester, 1993. (ced)*

*Video: Cronon: The trouble with wilderness, In William Cronon, ed., Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature, New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1995, 69-90. (ced)*

## **SESSION 7 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

### **TAKE HOME MIDTERM EXAM**

## **SESSION 8 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

### **Session eight: Climate science and climate skepticism**

Required readings:

- IPCC. "Summary for policymakers".
- Heartland Institute. "Climate change reconsidered".

Recommended readings:

- Victor. "Embed the social sciences in climate policy".
- Haidt. "The moral foundations of politics".
- Mackay. "Sustainable energy without the hot air".

*Working Paper: PCC, 2013: Summary for Policymakers. In: Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the*

*Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*

*Article: David G. Victor : Embed the social sciences in climate policy, 2 A P R I L 2015 | VO L 520 | N A T U R E (ced)*

*Book Chapters: The moral foundations of politics, in Haidt, J. The Righteous Mind : Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion, 1st ed.; Pantheon Books: New York, 2012. (ced)*

*Book Chapters: MacKay, D. J. C. Sustainable Energy--Without the Hot Air; UIT Cambridge: Cambridge, England, 2009.*

*Multimedia Documentation: NIPCC: "Climate change reconsidered".*

## **SESSION 9 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

### **Session nine: Climate change and mitigation strategies**

Required readings:

- Kyoto Protocol
- Pryns et al., "The wrong trousers: radically rethinking climate policy".

Recommended readings:

- Ostrom. "A polycentric approach for coping with climate change".
- Seijo, et al. "Climate security: Why technology is the key".
- Klein. "Climate vs. Capitalism".

*Article: Naomi Klein: Capitalism vs. the Climate ; The Nation, November 9, 2011 (ced)*

*Working Paper: United Nations (1998): KYOTO PROTOCOL TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE*

*Working Paper: Gwyn Prins & Steve Rayner : The Wrong Trousers: Radically Rethinking Climate Policy*

*Working Paper: Ostrom. "A polycentric approach for coping with climate change". (Policy Research Working Paper 5095)*

*Article: Seijo, et al. "Climate security: Why technology is the key".*

## **SESSION 10 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

### **Session ten: Land use (The fire cycle in the Earth system)**

Required readings:

- Bowman et al., "Fire in the Earth System".
- Francisco Seijo. "Pre-industrial anthropogenic fire regimes in transition: The case of Spain"

*Article: Bowman et aal.: Fire in the Earth System; SCIENCE VOL 324 24 APRIL 2009 (ced)*

*Article: Francisco Seijo & Robert Gray: Pre-Industrial Anthropogenic Fire Regimes in Transition: The Case of Spain and its Implications for Fire Governance in Mediterranean Type Biomes; Human Ecology Review, Vol. 19, No. 1, 2012 (ced)*

## **SESSION 11 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

### **Session eleven: Land use (The fire cycle: climate change mitigation and biodiversity)**

*Article: Stephens et aal: Temperate and boreal forest mega-fires: characteristics and challenges ; Front Ecol Environ2014; 12(2): 115–122 (ced)*

*Article: Seijo et al. "Divergent fire regimes in two contrasting Mediterranean chestnut forest landscapes". Hum Ecol, 2016 (ced)*

Article: Seijo et al. "Forgetting fire: Traditional ecological knowledge". *Land Use Policy* 47 (2015) 130–144 (ced)

## SESSION 12 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

### Session twelve: Water

Article: Leroy Poff et al., "River Flows and Water Wars: Emerging Science For Environmental Decision Making". *The Ecological Society of America* (ced)

Book Chapters: Vaughn. Chapter 7. "The politics of water", in Vaughn, J. *Environmental Politics : Domestic and Global Dimensions, 3<sup>rd</sup>*.; Wadsworth Cengage Learning: Boston, 2011.

## SESSION 13 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

### Session thirteen: Energy

Book Chapters: Mackay. Chapter 1 in MacKay, D. J. C. *Sustainable Energy--Without the Hot Air*; UIT Cambridge: Cambridge, England, 2009.

Book Chapters: Vaughn. Chapter 6. "The politics of energy", in Vaughn, J. *Environmental Politics : Domestic and Global Dimensions, 3<sup>rd</sup>*.; Wadsworth Cengage Learning: Boston, 2011.

## SESSION 14 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

### GROUP PRESENTATIONS

## SESSION 15 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

### GROUP PRESENTATIONS

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

| criteria            | percentage | Learning Objectives | Comments                             |
|---------------------|------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Intermediate Tests  | 40 %       |                     | Midterm exam                         |
| Individual Work     | 30 %       |                     | Final research paper                 |
| Group Presentation  | 20 %       |                     | Group presentation on selected topic |
| Class Participation | 10 %       |                     | Participation in class debates       |

## RE-SIT / RE-TAKE POLICY

### EVALUATION DESCRIPTION

**Individual work:** 4 page double spaced research paper on an environmental issue or campaign using the theories learned in class.

**Intermediate test:** Midterm exam consisting of multiple choice questions and short answer essay covering the theoretical sessions of the course.

**Group presentation:** Group powerpoint presentation on an environmental campaign using theories learned in class as a framework for the analysis.

**Participation:** Evaluation of student's participation in class debates. The professor will particularly focus on the quality of the student's comments or questions and their contribution to the overall learning environment in the course.

#### EVALUATION METHOD GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Each student has four attempts over two consecutive academic years to pass this course. For every BIR Program mandatory class aside from the IR Unplugged and BIR Electives, students are required to obtain the minimum grade of 5 required to pass the course. Students whose grade in the Final Exam (or the largest assignment) is below 5 will fail the course. The rule applies to whichever assignment carries the greatest weight to the final grade. Dates and location of the final exam will be posted in advance and will not be changed. Students must attend at least 70% of the sessions. Students who do not comply with the 70% attendance rule will receive a 0.0 on their first and second attempts and go directly to the third one (they will need to enroll in this course again the following academic year). Students who are in the third or fourth attempt must contact the professor during the first two weeks of the course. The Bachelor's in International Relations pursues to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes for bringing transformative and sustainable change in today's world. Therefore, all the courses follow the principles of sustainability and diversity. Firstly, this course considers the agenda 2030 and builds upon the most of the Sustainable Development Goals X, Y and Z (fill yourself). Secondly, this course is committed to an inclusive learning environment and looks to be enriched and enhanced by diversity along numerous dimensions, including race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, class and religion.

**ATTENDANCE** Attendance is mandatory at IE University, as it is an essential factor of IE's learning methodology. While we do closely monitor attendance in each course, we also consider our students responsible for their own agenda and commitments, as adult university students. With that in mind, each student may miss up to 30% of the sessions within a given course and still maintain the possibility of passing that given course. This 30% "buffer" is to be used for any absences, such as: illnesses, personal emergencies, commitments, official/governmental matters, business and/or medical appointments, family situations, etc. Students should manage their various needs, and situations that may arise, within that 30% buffer. If a student is absent to more than the allowed 30% of the sessions (regardless of the reason), s/he will obtain a 0.0 grade for that course in both the ordinary and extraordinary calls of the current academic year, and s/he will have to retake the course during the following academic year. Please pay close attention to your attendance. The program strongly encourages attending 100% of the sessions as it will improve your learning outcomes, it will increase the class performance and it will benefit your participation grade. Noncompliance with deadlines for Non-Classroom Learning activities or assignments will result in an absence for the session. Extreme cases involving emergencies such as: extended hospitalizations, accidents, serious illnesses and other cases of force majeure, are to be consulted with the Program Management ([bir.madridoffice@ie.edu](mailto:bir.madridoffice@ie.edu)) for assessment of the situation and corresponding documentation, in order to support and guide each student optimally. **RETAKE POLICY** Any student whose weighted final grade is below 5 will be required to sit for the retake exam to pass the course (except those not complying with the attendance rules, whom are banned from this possibility). Grading for retakes will be subject to the following rules: •The retakes will consist of a comprehensive exam or equivalent assignment. The grade will depend only on the performance on this exam; continuous evaluation over the semester will not be taken into account. •Dates and location of the retakes will be posted in advance and will not be changed. •The exam/assignment will be designed bearing in mind that the passing grade is 5 and the maximum grade that can be attained is 8 out of 10.



**PLAGIARISM / ACADEMIC HONESTY** Plagiarism is the dishonest act of presenting another person's ideas, texts or words as your own. This includes in order of seriousness of the offense: •providing faulty sources; •copy-pasting material from your own past assignments (self-plagiarism) without the instructor's permission; •copy-pasting material from external sources even while citing them; •using verbatim translations from sources in other languages without citing them; •copy-pasting material from external sources without citing them; •and buying or commissioning essays from other parties. IEU students must contact the professor if they don't know whether the use of a document constitutes plagiarism. For help with your academic writing, contact the Writing Center ([writingcenter@faculty.ie.edu](mailto:writingcenter@faculty.ie.edu)) . The professor will also advise the student on how to present said material. All written assignments must be submitted through Turn-it-in, which produces a similarity report and detects cases of plagiarism. Professors are required to check each student's academic work in order to guarantee its originality. If the originality of the academic work is not clear, the professor will contact the student in order to clarify any doubts. Students using external tutorial support should report it to the professor and the BIR Program from the moment they began receiving this support. In the event that the meeting with the student fails to clarify the originality of the academic work, the professor will inform the Director of the Bachelor Program about the case, who will then decide whether to bring the case forward to the BIR Academic Review Panel. Very high similarity scores will be automatically flagged and forwarded to the Academic Review Panel. Plagiarism constitutes a very serious offense and may carry penalties ranging from getting a zero for the assignment to expulsion from the university depending on the severity of the case and the number of times the student has committed plagiarism in the past.

## **BEHAVIOR RULES**

Please, check the University's Code of Conduct [here](#). The Program Director may provide further indications.

**The program fully supports the professor in enforcing any rules and policies.**

- Be aware that the IE University code of conduct specifically states that, "The use of laptops during lectures must be authorized by the professor".
- It is the students' responsibility to fully read and understand the code of conduct, attendance, and ethics policies of this university.
- Students breaking these rules and policies face disciplinary action.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Please, check the University's Attendance Policy [here](#). The Program Director may provide further indications.

Please do not contact your professor about attendance apart from notifying them out of courtesy, all attendance related inquiries should be directed to the program office ( [bir.biemadrid@ie.edu](mailto:bir.biemadrid@ie.edu) ).

## **ETHICAL POLICY**

Please, check the University's Ethics Code [here](#). The Program Director may

provide further indications.

For help with academic writing contact the Writing Center at [writingcenter@faculty.ie.edu](mailto:writingcenter@faculty.ie.edu)

