

# **CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS**

**IE University**

Academic year: 20-21

Degree course: SECOND

Semester: 1º

Category: COMPULSORY

Number of credits: 3.0

Language: English

## **PREREQUISITES**

A familiarity with international relations theory is preferable but not required.

## **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.

## **OBJECTIVES AND SKILLS**

- 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.

## METHODOLOGY

The materials will be taught through lectures, in-class debates and both written and oral research exercises regarding key topics and issues.

Teaching methodology	Weighting	Estimated time a student should dedicate to prepare for and participate in
Lectures	26.67 %	20 hours
Discussions	6.67 %	5 hours
Exercises	6.67 %	5 hours
Group work	6.67 %	5 hours
Other individual studying	53.33 %	40 hours
TOTAL	100.0 %	75 hours

## PROGRAM

### SESSION 1 (FACE TO FACE)

#### Systems theory and levels of analysis in environmental politics

Required readings:

- JD Singer. "International conflict: 3 levels of analysis". 1960
- Kenneth Boulding. "General systems theory: The skeleton of science". 1956
- Adam Curtis (BBC). "All watched over by machines of loving grace part 2: How the idea of the ecosystem was invented". 2011

*B.C.: Singer reading (s-c)*

*R.A.: General systems theory the skeleton of science*

*Video: How the idea of the ecosystem was invented*

### SESSION 2 (FACE TO FACE)

#### Common pool resource theory and environmental politics

Required readings:

- Garrett Hardin. "The Tragedy of the Commons". 1968
- Elinor Ostrom. "Governing the commons". 1991

Recommended readings:

Charles Duhigg. "The Power of Habit". 2012

Jared Diamond. "Collapse". 2005

Acemoglu and Robinson. "Why Nations Fail". 2012

*R.A.: Hardin reading (s-c)*

*R.A.: Ostrom reading (s-c)*

*B.C.: Duhigg. "Keystone habits", "The habits of societies". (s-c)*

*B.C.: Jared Diamond. "Collapse: an introduction" (s-c)*

*B.C.: Acemoglu and Robinson. "Theories that don't work". (s-c)*

### **SESSION 3 (FACE TO FACE)**

**Coupled Human and Natural Systems and Landscape Ecology frameworks for the analysis of environmental issues**

Required readings:

- Jianguo Liu et al. "Complexity of Coupled Human and Natural Systems". 2007
- Hobbs. "Landscape Ecology and Conservation: Moving from Description to Science". 1994

Recommended readings:

- Erle Ellis. "Putting People in the Map: Anthropogenic biomes of the world". 2008
- Elinor Ostrom. "A general framework for analyzing sustainability of social-ecological systems". 2009

*R.A.: Liu et al reading (s-c)*

*R.A.: Hobbs reading (s-c)*

*R.A.: Ellis reading (s-c)*

*B.C.: A general framework for analyzing sustainability in social ecological systems (s-c)*

### **SESSION 4 (NON-CLASS LEARNING)**

**Unnatural Histories**

Required viewing:

BBC Documentary "Unnatural histories: The Amazon"

Professor will post discussion questions in Campus Online Discussion Board

### **SESSION 5 (FACE TO FACE)**

**Framing process in environmental policymaking**

Required readings:

- G. Lakoff. "Why it matters how we frame the environment". 2010
- F.Seijo. "Who framed the forest fire?". 2009.

*T.N.: Lakoff*

*T.N.: Seijo*

### **SESSION 6 (FACE TO FACE)**

**Framing and political opportunity structure for environmental politics in developed and developing countries**

Required readings:

- Francisco Seijo. "American exceptionalism (the sequel): Why is there no electorally competitive green party in the United States?". 2009
- William Cronon. "The trouble with wilderness". 1996

Recommended readings:

- G Lang et al., "Anti-incinerator campaigns and the evolution of protest politics in China". 2013
- JY Zhang et al., "Recasting subjectivity through the lenses: new forms of environmental mobilisation in China". 2013
- H Parker et al., "Environmental organisations in Turkey: engaging the state and capital". 2013
- Arun Agrawal et al. "Changing governance of the world's forests". 2008

*R.A.: Seijo II reading (s-c)*

*T.N.: The trouble with wilderness*

## **SESSION 7 (NON-CLASS LEARNING)**

### **MIDTERM EXAM**

## **SESSION 8 (FACE TO FACE)**

### **Climate science and climate skepticism**

Required readings:

- IPCC. "Summary for policymakers". 2013
- Heartland Institute. "Climate change reconsidered". 2013

Recommended readings:

- Victor David. "Embed the social sciences in climate policy". 2015
- Jonathan Haidt. "The righteous mind: Why good people are divided by politics and religion". 2012
- Andrew Mackay. "Sustainable energy without the hot air". 2008

*W.P.: IPCC reading (s-c)*

*R.A.: Victor reading (s-c)*

*B.C.: Haidt reading (s-c)*

*R.A.: Mackay. "Sustainable energy without the hot air". (s-c)*

*Other: Heartland Institute. "Climate change reconsidered". (web)*

## **SESSION 9 (FACE TO FACE)**

### **Climate change and mitigation strategies**

Required readings:

- Kyoto Protocol. 1992
- G Prynns et al., "The wrong trousers: radically rethinking climate policy". 2007

Recommended readings:

- Elinor Ostrom. "A polycentric approach for coping with climate change". 2009
- Francisco Seijo, et al. "Climate security: Why technology is the key". 2013
- Naomi Klein. "Climate vs. Capitalism". 2014

R.A.: Klein reading (s-c)

R.A.: Kyoto reading (s-c)

R.A.: Pryn's reading (s-c)

R.A.: Ostrom. "A polycentric approach for coping with climate change". (s-c)

R.A.: Seijo, et al. "Climate security: Why technology is the key". (s-c)

## **SESSION 10 (PRACTICE)**

### **Student Presentations**

Climate activism vs. skepticism

Watch student presentations online and provide feedback through Campus Online Feedback Fruits

## **SESSION 11 (FACE TO FACE)**

### **Land Use - Wildfires**

Required readings:

David Bowman et al., "Fire in the Earth System". 2009

Francisco Seijo. "Pre-industrial anthropogenic fire regimes in transition: The case of Spain". 2012

T.N.: Bowman

T.N.: Seijo *Preindustrial Fires*

## **SESSION 12 (FACE TO FACE)**

### **Land use - Wildfires**

Required readings:

- Scott Stephens et al. "Mega-fires in temperate ecosystems: Characteristics and challenges". 2014
- Francisco Seijo et al. "Divergent fire regimes in two contrasting Mediterranean chestnut forest landscapes". 2017

Recommended readings:

- Francisco Seijo et al. "Forgetting fire: Traditional ecological knowledge". 2015

R.A.: Stephens reading (s-c)

R.A.: Seijo et al. "Divergent fire regimes in two contrasting Mediterranean chestnut forest landscapes". (s-c)

R.A.: Seijo et al. "Forgetting fire: Traditional ecological knowledge". (s-c)

## **SESSION 13 (PRACTICE)**

### **Student Presentations**

Fire Paradox

Watch student presentations and provide feedback via Feedback Fruits

## **SESSION 14 (FACE TO FACE)**

### **Energy**

Required readings:

- Andrew Mackay. "Sustainable energy without the hot air". Chapter 1. 2008  
R.A.: Mackay reading (s-c)

## SESSION 15 (PRACTICE)

### Student Presentations

Energy Transitions

Watch student presentations and leave feedback via Feedback Fruits

## INDIVIDUAL WORK DUE

### EVALUATION CRITERIA

Criteria	Percentage	Comments
Individual Work	35 %	Final research paper
Intermediate Tests	35 %	Midterm exam
Group Presentation	20 %	Group presentation on selected topic
Class Participation	10 %	Participation in class debates

### EVALUATION DESCRIPTION

**Individual work:** 4 page double spaced research paper (1,000 words) 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.