

# SYLLABUS

## Global Environmental Politics

PS-1542

Fall 2017

Old Engineering 300 – Mo and Wed 3-4:15pm

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INSTRUCTOR : Dr. Michaël Aklin  
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OFFICE HOURS : Monday 1pm-2:30pm (or by appointment)  
TEACHING ASSISTANT : Dong Ju Lee. Office hours: Wed 1-2:30pm. Office: 4435 Posvar Hall.

### Course Objectives

This course introduces students to the study of environmental politics. Environmental degradation has consequences on our wealth, our health, and the quality of our lives. Environmental problems are not only important, but they are also particularly interesting because they require knowledge from virtually all areas of science, such as biology, climatology, political science, economics, demographic studies, or philosophy. This course will examine *what* environmental problems are, *why* they occur, and *how* we can solve them.

A note of caution: studying environmental problems is exciting, but this means you must be willing to read a fairly diverse literature, which is not easy. There are no formal requirements for this class.

If there is any issue with the class, assignments, etc., please immediately get in touch with me. Feel free to send me an email, come to my office hours, or set up an appointment at some other time. I generally respond pretty quickly.

### Requirements

The requirements for this class are the following:

**1. Participation:** 10%. Participation is based on class attendance, active involvement during class and outside of it (e.g. coming to office hours, asking questions, answering questions, etc.). Notice: you start with 5%; missing classes makes you lose points, participating actively makes you gain points. Rule of thumb: if you never intervene in class, you may expect 0%. If you attend and participate actively every class, you may expect 10%. Intervening once every two class or so would give you 5% or less, even if you attend all classes. I'll let you know after the midterm on what path you are.

**2. Midterm:** 30%. In-class test (see schedule). Closed books. You can bring one sheet of handwritten notes (both sides).

**3. Analysis paper:** 30% (total). 10% for the outline, 20% for the analysis paper itself. The final analysis paper will be about 10 pages (1.5 space, Times New Roman, regular margins). See class for details.

**4. Policy paper:** 30% (total). 10% for two homework (5% each), 20% for the policy paper itself. The final paper will be about 5 pages (1.5 space, Times New Roman, regular margins). See class for details. Homework are due in hard copy one week after they have been distributed.

Late submission policy for the papers: *minus 5% of your overall grade per day*.

Finally, I only grant incomplete grades (i.e. *G*) if you can provide evidence of an issue (e.g. long term health issues) that warrant additional time. I will *not* grant an incomplete if the reason is that you need more time to complete your paper.

To summarize:

10%	<b>Participation</b>
30%	<b>Midterm</b>
	<b>Analysis paper</b>
10%	Outline of the analysis paper
20%	Analysis paper itself
	<b>Policy paper</b>
10%	Homework
20%	Policy paper itself
<b>100%</b>	<b>Total</b>

Grade scheme:

Below 60%	F					
60-62%	D-	70-72%	C-	80-82%	B-	90-92% A-
63-66%	D	73-76%	C	83-86%	B	93% and above A
67-69%	D+	77-79%	C+	87-89%	B+	

## Textbooks & Readings

There will be no textbook per se. An environmental economics textbook such as Tietenberg and Lewis (Tom Tietenberg and Lynne Lewis. *Environmental & Natural Resources Economics*. Prentice Hall, New York, 9th edition, 2011) or Perman et al. (Roger Perman, Yue Ma, James McGilvray, and Michael Common. *Natural Resource and Environmental Economics*. Addison-Wesley, Harlow, 3rd edition, 2003) might be useful, but by no means mandatory.

All readings will be uploaded online on courseweb.

## GER (General Education Requirements)

*GLO: Three Foreign Culture / International Courses*

Each student must complete three foreign culture/international courses chosen from at least two of the categories in the regional, comparative, or global classifications used for these courses. Regional courses can address a single culture or society in a particular country or focus on cultures or societies in any region of the world other than the United States; comparative courses utilize a comparative perspective in examining problems, issues, or topics that crosscut regional or national boundaries; and global courses focus on global processes by examining worldwide issues or topics comprehensively.

This class qualifies toward this requirement.

## **Misc.**

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both the professor and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union (412-648-7890), as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity, from the February 1974 Senate Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom reported to the Senate Council, will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process as initiated by the instructor. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the quiz or exam will be imposed.

View the complete policy at [www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/02/02-03-02.html](http://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/02/02-03-02.html).

# Class Schedule

## PART I: THE NATURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

### 1. Overview (Aug 28)

No reading.

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### 2. Sustainability and Efficiency (Sep 6, 11)

- Donella Meadows, Jorgen Randers, and Dennis Meadows. *The Limits to Growth: The 30-Years Update*. Earthscan, London, 2004
  - Robert M. Solow. Sustainability: An economist's perspective. 18th J. Seward Johnson Lecture at Woods Hole, June 1991
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## PART II: WHERE DO ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS COME FROM?

### 3. Collective Action Failures I (Sep 13, 18)

- G.J. Hardin. The tragedy of the commons. *Science*, 162:1243–1248, 1968
  - Chapter 1 and 2 (w/o the appendix), Glenn G. Stevenson. *Common Property Economics*. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1991
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### 4. Public Opinion and Psychology (Sep 20, 25)

- Elke U. Weber. Experienced-based and description-based perceptions of long-term risks: Why global warming does not scare us (yet). *Climatic Change*, 77:103–120, 2006
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### 5. Population Growth (Sep 27, Oct 2)

- D. Gale Johnson. Population, food, and knowledge. *American Economic Review*, 90(1):1–14, 2000
  - Partha Dasgupta. The population problem: Theory and evidence. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 33(4): 1879–1902, 1995
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## 6. Collective Action Failures II (Oct 4, 10)

- Chapter 1, Mancur Olson. *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1965
  - chapter 3, Scott Barrett. *Environment and Statecraft: The Strategy of Environmental Treaty-Making*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003
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## 7. Final Paper and Review (Oct 11)

No reading! **Outline of analysis paper due in class and by email!**

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## 8. Midterm (Oct 16)

Midterm!

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## Interlude. Workshop# 1 (Oct 18)

Don't hesitate to bring your laptops!

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## PART III: SOLUTIONS TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

### 9. Growth (Oct 23)

- S. Dasgupta, B. Laplante, H. Wang, and D. Wheeler. Confronting the environmental kuznets curve. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 16(1):147–168, 2002
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### 10. Institutions: Private Property and Democracy (Oct 25, 30)

- Elinor Ostrom, Joanna Burger, Christopher B. Field, Richard B. Norgaard, and David Policansky. Revisiting the commons: Local lessons, global challenges. *Science*, 284(5412):278–282, 1999
  - Quan Li and Rafael Reuveny. Democracy and environmental degradation. *International Studies Quarterly*, 50(4):935–956, 2006
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## Interlude. Workshop #2 (Nov 1)

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## **11. International Treaties (Nov 6)**

- Chapter 1 (Underdal), Edward L. Miles, Arild Underdal, Steinar Andresen, Wettestad Jorgen, Jon Birger Skjaereth, and Elaine M. Carlin, editors. *Environmental Regime Effectiveness: Confronting Theory with Evidence*. MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 2002
  - Aklin and Mildenberger. 2017. “Prisoners of the Wrong Dilemma.” Working Paper.
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## **12. A Tale of Three Regimes (Nov 8, 13)**

- Michael Grubb. The economics of the Kyoto protocol. *World Economics*, 4(3):143–189, 2003
  - Paris Agreement
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## **13. Clean Technology (Nov 15, 27)**

**The data for the policy paper will be released on November 27.**

- Arnulf Grübler, Nebojša Nakićenović, and David G. Victor. Dynamics of energy technologies and global change. *Energy Policy*, 27(5):247–280, 1999
  - Gregory C. Unruh. Understanding carbon lock-in. *Energy Policy*, 28(12):817–830, 2000
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## **Interlude. Workshop #3 (Nov 20)**

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## **Interlude. Workshop #4 (Nov 29)**

**Analysis paper due in class (hard copy and email).**

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## **14. Public Opinion & Interest Groups (Dec 4)**

- Michaël Aklin, Patrick Bayer, S.P. Harish, and Johannes Urpelainen. Understanding environmental policy preferences: New evidence from brazil. *Ecological Economics*, 94:28–36, 2013
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## **15. Conclusion (Dec 6)**

**Policy paper due in class (hard copy and email).**