GOV 94CP
Political Economy of the Environment

Spring Term 2019
Thursdays, 3 - 5:45pm
CGIS South 003

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OVERVIEW

This course will explore the political economy problems involved in protecting the environment will also sustaining growth. We will explore a range of environmental issues such as industrial pollution, man-made environmental disasters, animal and ecosystem conservation, and climate change. We will discuss what the objectives of environmental policy should be, and explore the difficult tradeoffs involved in achieving those objectives. We will examine how these tradeoffs have been resolved more or less successfully in the past, and the prospects for resolving current and future issues. We will pay close attention to how policy is made, and who ends up bearing the burdens of resolving or not resolving environmental problems.

Respectful Discourse

This course will deal with issues that are relevant to current politics, and many of them are the subject of intense controversy. No particular set of views on environmental problems or the appropriate responses to them are required to take this course. All students are, however, expected to treat their fellow classmates and their views with respect, even if they disagree with them, and to participate in civil discussion. If you have concerns about your ability to do this, or about any of the material we are covering in the course, feel free to e-mail me so we can discuss it.

Accessibility

If you are registered with the Accessible Education Office, please send me your letter within the first two weeks of term so I can make the appropriate accommodations. For more information, see http://aeo.fas.harvard.edu/. If you have preferences about your name or pronouns that are not reflected in the University's databases, feel free to contact me so I can address you correctly.

Collaboration and Integrity

Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard citation practices in the discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work. If you received any help with your writing (feedback on drafts from peers or others), you must also acknowledge this assistance.
Attendance

Like any discussion-based course, attendance is crucial. Emergency absences must be accompanied by a formal note written by a doctor or your Resident Dean. If there is an anticipated scheduling conflict, the student will be able to write an extra response paper in lieu of attendance for one class only, if agreed in advance. Unexplained absences will result in a late penalty equivalent to 1/3 of a letter grade for the final class participation grade (e.g., from an A to an A-).

Environmental Beat

The range of environmental issues is too broad for us to cover all of them in each week’s readings. To make sure we cover as many as possible, every student will pick a particular environmental issue as their “beat” (like that of a journalist). Throughout the semester, you will be responsible for finding, studying, and posting readings that relate to both your topic and the week’s discussion. You need to do this for five of the weeks in the class. On the weeks that you select, you should post a link to the piece of media on the course website by midnight on the Wednesday before class, along with a short summary (<150 words) of how it relates to week’s topic.

This reading does not need to be an academic article or even a written piece – it can be a news article or a blog post or a video – any material that substantively connects your topic with the week’s assignment. I will provide a list of possible beats from which to choose, but you can come up with a new beat as long as I approve it. If you want to change your beat later, you can do so as long as you run it by me. The beat you choose can be useful preparation for your final paper, but you are not required to write the final on the same subject as your beat.

Leading Discussions

Each student will be responsible for starting one class with a discussion of a reading for your chosen beat and how it relates to the week’s assigned readings. You do not need to relate it to all of the readings, but it should ideally tie into more than one. You will summarize your reading, and then lead the class in a short discussion. Weeks will be assigned based on students’ preferences, but depending on the final class size you may not get the week you prefer most.

Assignments and Grades

Your grade consists of three components: participation, your coverage of your environmental beat, two short response papers, and one longer research paper.

1. Class Participation (30%): since this is a seminar, your participation in discussion is crucial to the success of the course. Everyone will be expected to contribute actively. Quantity of participation is less crucial than quality, and good questions are just as useful as good answers. Part of this grade will be based on your coverage of your chosen “beat” and your discussion leadership.

2. Short Papers (30%): you will write two short papers of 2-3 pages each on the material in two weeks of your choice. One week must be prior to the Spring Recess. The paper will critically analyze the week’s material, and potentially draw on other sources to complement or critique the assigned readings. I will discuss the structure of the short papers and provide a rubric for their grading in class. The papers will either count for 15% of your grade each, or 10% and 20%, depending on which is more favorable to you.
3. **Final Research Paper (40%)**: you will write a final paper of 10-15 pages that analyzes how a specific environmental problem has been dealt with in a specific place. You will be expected to discuss the problem and its resolution through some of the political economy lenses we have covered in the class. Ideally you will have some connection to the place: either somewhere you have lived, somewhere in the Greater Boston area, or some region you have studied previously. As part of writing the paper, you will need to submit an outline and a plan of work by the end of week 9. In week 11, you will present on your chosen project to the class and receive feedback. The paper will be due on the final examination date for the course.

**Preparation**

The readings for this course are designed to be manageable. This is because we will be discussing each assigned text in detail during class. You are expected to carefully read all the assignments for each session. However, you do have one "get out of jail free" card. Once during the semester, you are welcome to e-mail me before class to say that you have not been able to do the readings, and your participation grade will not be affected (as long as it is not your assigned week to lead discussion).

In addition to the assigned readings, you are also expected to regularly read one mainstream daily news source, paying special attention to articles related to the environment. Good examples include (but are not limited to) the New York Times, the Boston Globe, the Washington Post, or the BBC. This is good practice for anyone studying politics (or for citizens in general), but it will also inform our discussion in class. Depending on each week’s news, we may spend some time at the beginning of class reviewing recent developments.

**CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS**

The materials for this class will be available either on Canvas, through Hollis, or be provided in class.

*Note: The final list of readings and topics may change when the course begins.*

**Session 0: Overview (1/31)**

- No readings

**Session 1: Problems and Perspectives (2/7)**


**Session 2: Power and Inequality (2/14)**


Session 3: Valuation and Cost-Benefit Analysis (2/21)


Session 4: Common Pools and Collective Action (2/28)


Session 5: Growth and Wealth (3/7)

• Pollin, Robert (2015) ‘Think We Can't Stabilize the Climate While Fostering Growth? Think Again,” The Nation, October 27.

Session 6: Trade and Globalization (3/14)

• Vogel, David “International Trade and Environmental Regulation,” 354-373.

Spring Recess: No class on 3/21

Session 7: Policymaking in Theory (3/28)

Session 8: Policymaking in Practice (4/4)

Session 9: International Negotiation (4/11)

Session 10: Sustainable Development (4/18)

Session 11: Symposium (4/25)
• No readings