This course will explore the problems involved in protecting the environment while also maintaining and growing prosperity. 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.

Course Policies

Admissions

Admission to this course is through a lottery run by the Undergraduate Program Office in the Department of Government. The deadline to enter the online lottery is 6:00 pm on Tuesday, January 19. The lottery form is available at undergrad.gov.harvard.edu/gov-94-seminars. Students will be notified of the lottery results no later than January 20.

I will be holding two introductory sessions for the course. The first will be on Friday, January 15 at 3:30pm at this Zoom link. The second will be on Tuesday, January 19 at 2:30pm at this Zoom link. Attendance at these introductory sessions is not mandatory, but students who do attend are more likely to receive discretionary spots in the course.

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 ideology or party or set of views is required. 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 the semester, 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 e-mail me so I can address you correctly.

Collaboration

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 medical professional 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 reduce your grade for the course.

Preparation

The readings for this course are designed to be manageable: you will be expected to read all the assigned texts and be ready to discuss them during class. As discussed below, your participation in discussion will form part of your evaluation. 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.

In addition to the assigned readings, you are encouraged to pay special attention to climate-related articles in the news. If there has been significant climate news in a week, it is likely to come up during class discussion.
Assignments and Grades

Your grade consists of five elements: participation, attendance at two virtual check-ins, weekly active learning assignments, one short paper, and one final paper.

1. **Class Participation (20%)**: since this is a seminar, your participation in discussion is crucial to the success of the course. Everyone is expected to attend all the sessions and contribute actively. That said, I know that remote learning creates unusual challenges, that not everyone is control of the place they’re calling from, and that everyone has “off” days. Your performance will be evaluated holistically across the meetings.

2. **Two Virtual Check-ins (5%)**: these are short one-on-one meetings to chat about your goals for the course, your progress, or other topics that interest you. They’re informal: you get the credit just for showing up. One should take place in the first three weeks of the semester. You’re welcome to schedule office hours beyond this.

3. **Weekly Active Learning Assignments (10%)**: each week you will have a small assignment that pushes you to go beyond the readings and gain some active experience of climate politics. Some of them will require you to post writing on Canvas: these write-ups should be short, in the 100-300 word range. If there is something to hand in, the deadline is 12 hours before class begins. These assignments are intended to have low stakes. They don’t need to be highly polished: you can get full credit for showing honest effort.

4. **Short Paper (15%)**: you will write one short paper of 3-4 pages on a question related to the material in a week of your choice. 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 paper and provide a rubric for its grading in class.

5. **Capstone Paper (50%)**: the final project will consist of a long paper (of no more than 15 pages) on a topic of your choosing related to environmental politics or policy. As part of writing this paper, you will also be asked during the course of the class to produce 1) an initial proposal, 2) an annotated bibliography, 3) an outline, and 4) a presentation for the class. These will each be worth 5% of your total grade, and the final paper itself will be worth 30%. The final paper will be due on the examination date for the course.

Readings

All readings will be available digitally, either through Canvas or through links in the syllabus. *N.B.: these readings and assignments are subject to change.*
Problems and Perspectives


Inequality


Valuation


**Collective Action**


**Growth**


**Trade and Globalization**


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


International Negotiation


Regimes


Knowledge and Risks


Looking to the Future


