



## **GVPT 306 -Global Environmental Politics**

**Fall, 2023 semester.**

### **Instructor:**

Dr. Conny Kazungu Sigel

E-mail: ckazungu@umd.edu

Class Meeting Location: Le Frak 2166

Class Meeting Times: Tu-Th 9.30a-10.45a

Office Hours: Zoom by appointment.

### **Graduate Teaching Assistant:**

Kainan Gao

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Office Hours : (from November 28<sup>th</sup>) on Zoom by appointment

### **Course Description**

The world is interconnected with increasing breakthroughs in technology, communication, and transportation, and so are the environmental impacts from human activities across the globe. Today, environmental policy issues are taking center stage in numerous countries across the world. Policymakers globally are seeking solutions to environmental degradation with some countries achieving relative success, while others struggle to reach agreements which are equal and effective.

Our shared global ecology means that countries have common environmental interests that need to be addressed through agreements, which are approved upon policies and procedures on how to deal with environmental concerns.

This course aims to expose students to the complexity of the policymaking process in environmental issues across the world. It focuses on the processes of international environmental policy development, including identifying problems, negotiating solutions, and implementing agreements through a range of case studies to include global climate change.

This is an integrative course that allows students to effectively explore, analyze and discuss specific global environmental problems. To ensure that students have an in-depth perspective of global environmental politics, the course will include guest speakers, team presentations, in-class debates, as well as a student-led round table discussion at the end of the semester.

At the end of this course, you should have an in-depth comprehension of global environmental challenges and be able to develop informed opinions on how governments and organizations can adapt to environmental political and policy challenges.

## Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students should:

1. Understand efforts to address environmental problems at the international level.
2. Understand the complexity of rights and policy with respect to the environment.
3. Develop an understanding of arguments around environmental challenges, including the different actors and interests involved.

## Textbooks

- Kütting Gabriela and Herman Kyle (2018). *Global environmental politics: concepts, theories and case studies (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)* (Ser. Global environmental politics). Routledge.
- We will also use a variety of sources for our class readings, including research articles and policy reports from organizations, film studies and short films.
  - All these sources will be available to you on ELMS .

## Grades

In this class you will be assessed based on the following:

1. Participation (in-class lectures and discussions)	10%
2. Teamwork	20%
3. Film Studies Reflection Papers	20%
4. Mid Term Exam	25%
5. Final Exam	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Grading Scale

Final grades will be assigned on the following scale:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	59% or lower

### 1. Mid Term Exam

You will have a mid-term exam which covers topics from the first half of the semester. The exam will be in-person on **Thursday, October 12<sup>th</sup> from 9.30a-10.45a.**

### 2. Final Exam

You will have a final exam which covers topics from the second half of the semester. The exam will be on ELMS (Lockdown Browser is required) on **Thursday, December 14<sup>th</sup> from 8a-10a.**

### 3. Film Study Series and Reflection Papers.

Understanding contemporary environmental issues using films and documentaries is an interactive and informative way students can process the complexity of Global Environmental Politics. As such, students will be required to watch four short films during the semester.

- *Film 1: "Milking the Rhino".*

Focusing on the Maasai community (East Africa) and the Himba tribe (Namibia), Milking the Rhino tells a story of community-based conservation, which tries to balance the needs of wildlife and people, historically touted by

environmentalists as "win-win." The reality is more complex. Charting the collision of ancient ways with Western expectations, the film tells intimate, hopeful and heartbreaking stories of people facing deep cultural change.

- *Film 2: I Am Greta; Force of Nature.*

This film follows the story of teenage activist, Greta Thunberg. It highlights the importance of political action and advocacy. Upon completion of watching this film, a two-page reflection paper will be due on ELMS. Further details on what is expected in the reflection paper will be provided on a separate assignment sheet, on ELMS.

- *Film 3: FILM "2040". 93 minutes, by Australian director Damon Gameau.*

"A Journey to explore what the future could look like by the year 2040 if we embraced the solutions already available to us to improve the planet. An accessible, informative and optimistic look at solutions to the climate crisis." The film is available on your ELMS under "Modules". Upon completion of watching the film, we will have an in-class discussion on the film.

#### **4. Teamwork**

This is an interactive, project-based course with *significant* group work. You must be prepared to work in a team during the semester. You will have a total of *three* presentations during the semester. Each presentation will be based on teams, and you will be divided into your groups during the first week of classes.

##### *Team Leaders.*

Once you are divided into your teams for the semester, I will allow you time to meet, exchange contact information, and assign a team leader. The team leaders will contact me with any questions or concerns as you work on your projects. They will also be very useful in getting everyone together to work on the project. In addition, the team leader will gather feedback for each project/presentation (including how each team member contributed to be project).

- **Team Project 1: Global Environmental News Presentations**

In recent months, environmental issues have taken center stage amongst policymakers, interstate organizations and social movements. Governments worldwide are attempting to make policy changes towards environmental degradation, while coping with the social, political, cultural, and economic pressures of a global pandemic.

The purpose of this assignment is to critically analyze ongoing environmental events news across our world.

At the beginning of the semester, students will be divided into teams of three. Each team will select a day over the course of the semester to lead a **15-minute class discussion** about an ongoing global environmental issue. Students must select an ongoing issue that reflects the topic we are discussing that week.

The *current events news* articles must be from a ***reputable*** news source. A separate assignment sheet with a list of recommended sources and more details about the presentation are provided on ELMS.

- **Team Project 2: The GMO Debate.**

The GMO debate is an open discussion on the safety, socio-economic impacts, and politics of the production and use of GMOs.

At the beginning of the semester, teams will be assigned a position to represent in the debate. Each team will have a position statement (one per team) indicating your stance on the issue. The statements are due on the ELMS discussion board by **Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup>**.

Participation in this debate will require some outside research on your assigned position. However, prior to the debate, we will cover a two-part lecture on GMO's and the politics surrounding the issue. Therefore, you will be informed on the perspectives involved with this highly controversial yet salient environmental issue.

On **Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup>**, we will have the debate. You will be evaluated on how accurately you represent your assigned position in the debate.

**\*\*Note that missed attendance without documentation during in-class presentations will result in a non-negotiable 10% impact on your final grade.**

## **Course Policies:**

### **1. Participation**

I expect students to be engaged during each class session, meaning being attentive to lectures with ideas, comments, and questions so that you may actively participate in the discussions.

It also means respectfully responding to the ideas and perspectives of your classmates, even if you may disagree with them.

This course includes collaborative practices, such as teamwork on certain projects involving group engagement and preparation. **\*\*Note that missed attendance without documentation during in-class presentations will result in a non-negotiable 10% impact on your final grade.**

### **2. Make-up Policy**

This applies to presentations, reflection papers and exams. If a student has a [university-approved](#) excuse, you must notify me in **writing** prior. The allowance of such arrangements remains at the discretion of your instructor.

### **3. Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism, cheating, and/or not citing another person's ideas or work will be subject to the university's policy on [academic integrity](#) to include but not limited to the following:

- **Cheating:** fraud, deceit, or dishonesty in any academic course or exercise in an attempt to gain an unfair advantage and/or using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic course or exercise.
- **Fabrication:** unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in any academic course or exercise.
- **Facilitating Academic Dishonesty:** knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate any provision of this Code.
- **Plagiarism:** representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic course or exercise. In all of your assignments, presentations, drafts of papers, you may use words or ideas written by someone else in publications, news sources, reports etc. but properly cite them. Always refer to [UMDs citation](#) help tools when in doubt.
- **Self-Plagiarism:** the reuse of substantial identical or nearly identical portions of one's own work in multiple courses without prior permission from the current instructor or from each of the instructors if the work is being submitted for multiple courses in the same semester.

### **4. UMD Resources**

For COVID related illnesses, please follow the guidelines stipulated by the university [here](#). For a comprehensive list of UMD resources including COVID-19 click [here](#).

### **5. UMD Access to Newspaper databases:**

a) Access to older newspapers through the Historical Newspapers database:

[Advanced Search - ProQuest](#)

b) Access to current, and national newspapers:

- [Basic Search - ProQuest](#)
- [Nexis Uni® Home \(umd.edu\)](#)

\*Please note that Nexis Uni does not provide access to the Washington Post, Baltimore Sun, and the WSJ.

- c) Access to databases by subject or type:
- <https://lib.guides.umd.edu/az.php>
  - [Database Finder \(umd.edu\)](#)

**6. Assignment Guidelines:**

**All written assignments should follow the following format:**

- Calibri Body 10-pt font with 1-inch margins, double-spaced.
- 1" margins (NOTE: Microsoft defaults to 1.25" margins, so you will need to adjust them).
- Utilizes a minimum of 5 varied, scholarly sources, government reports, etc. If you are doubtful about whether a source is scholarly (i.e., "peer reviewed") review Cornell University Library's YouTube video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDGJ2CYfY9A>
- Use of maps and/or images is encouraged, especially when used to help readers understand your subject matter. Remember to cite them (usually right next to the map/image, rather than in the bibliography).
- APA Citation and references (cite images, too).
- A bibliography
- [Citation Tools | University Libraries \(umd.edu\)](#)

**7. Alteration of the Syllabus**

The instructor reserves the right to revise or amend this syllabus. Should any alterations be made, students will be notified via e-mail and in-class.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic Covered and Assignments Due.</b>
Tuesday, August 29 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction. Syllabus overview.</li> </ul>
Thursday, August 31 <sup>st</sup>	<p><b>Asynchronous Class. The Politics of Climate Change</b> Watch Film <a href="#">The Cross of the Moment on Vimeo</a></p>
Tuesday, September 5 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>International Relations Theory and the Environment.</b> Kütting Chapter 1.</p>
Thursday, September 7 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Transnational Actors in Global Environmental Politics.</b> Kütting Chapter 2.</p> <p><b>*Teams released for the semester.</b></p>
Tuesday, September 12 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Global Political Economy and Development.</b> Kutting Chapter 3.</p> <p><b>Neoliberalism: Water Wars.</b> Read : Biro, Andrew. (2012) "Water Wars by Other Means: Virtual Water and Global Economic Restructuring," <i>Global Environmental Politics</i>, 12:4</p> <p>Watch : <a href="#">Water - human right or private commodity? Europe's ongoing battle with privatisation - YouTube</a></p>
Thursday, September 14 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Environmental Security.</b> Read: Kutting Chapter 4. Read: Rayfuse, R. (2013). War and the Environment: International Law and the Protection of the Environment in Relation to Armed Conflict – Introduction to the Special Issue, <i>Nordic Journal of International Law</i>, 82(1), 1-5.</p>
Tuesday, September 19 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Sustainable Consumption I.</b> Kütting Chapter 5.</p>

Thursday, September 21 <sup>st</sup>	<p><b>Sustainable Consumption II.</b></p> <p>Read: The Product Life Cycle (Available on ELMS)</p> <p>Watch video: "The Story of Stuff".  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GorqroiqgM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GorqroiqgM</a></p>
Thursday, September 26 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>International Environmental and Ecological Justice.</b></p> <p>Kütting Chapter 6.</p>
Tuesday, September 28 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Climate Change: Science, international cooperation, and global environmental politics.</b></p> <p>Read: Kutting Chapter 7.</p>
Tuesday, October 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<p><b>Endangered Species, Biodiversity and the politics of Conservation I.</b></p> <p><b>Asynchronous Class. Watch FILM "Milking the Rhino".</b></p> <p>Complete Reflection paper.</p>
Thursday, October 5 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Asynchronous Class. The importance of Activism: Political Action, Advocacy as well as speaking truth to power II.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch Video on ELMS. "I Am Greta: A Force of Nature" by Swedish director Nathan Grossman From back of video: "the story of teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg."</li> </ul> <p><b>"I Am Greta". Reflection due on ELMS before midnight</b></p>
Tuesday, October 10 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Endangered Species, Biodiversity and the politics of Conservation II.</b></p> <p>Kutting Chapter 11.</p>
Thursday, October 12 <sup>th</sup>	<p>Mid-Term exam in -person.</p>
Tuesday, October 17 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>As China goes, so goes the planet: the environmental implications of the rise of China.</b></p> <p>Kütting Chapter 8</p>
Thursday, October 19 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>The importance of Activism: Political Action, Advocacy as well as speaking truth to power I.</b></p> <p><b>Read:</b> Kahumbu, Paula (2023). "Harness the power of storytelling to inspire a new generation of conservationists".</p> <p><u><a href="https://www.nationalgeographic.com">Paula Kahumbu harnesses the power of storytelling to inspire a new generation of conservationists (nationalgeographic.com)</a></u></p>
Tuesday, October 24 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>The Role of Technology in the Global Environment.</b></p> <p>Kütting Chapter 9.</p>
Thursday, October 26 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Land Rights and Environmental Justice.</b></p> <p>Case Study I: Land Rights in Australia.</p> <p>Read: Effectiveness in Social Impact Assessment Aboriginal Peoples and Resource Development in Australia. (New South Wales, the Kimberley Region).</p> <p>Read: Restorative Justice in Australia</p>

Tuesday, October 31 <sup>st</sup>	<p><b>Land Rights and Environmental Justice.</b> Case Study II: Land Rights in East Africa. Maasai land Rights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women in Conservation: Reshaping the future of Conservation at the Maasai Mara.</li> </ul> <p>Read: <a href="#">Voice of the Mara 6th Edition small (1).pdf</a></p>
Thursday, November 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<p><b>The Global Politics of Food System Sustainability I. Kütting Chapter 12.</b></p> <p>Read: Joao Augusto de Araujo Castro. (1972). Environment and Development: The Case of the Developing Countries. <i>International Organization</i>, 26(2), 401–416. <a href="http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706009">http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706009</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">It's time we all come together to address the global food crisis (msn.com)</a></li> </ul>
Tuesday, November 7 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Forest Politics, Neoliberalism and the Limits of International Environmental Policy.</b> Kütting Chapter 13.</p> <p><b>*GMO position statements are due before midnight.</b></p>
Thursday, November 9 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>International Environmental Agreements and Governing Complexities; Multilateral Agreements.</b></p> <p>Read: Hoch, S., Michaelowa, A., Espelage, A., &amp; Weber, A.-K. (2019). Governing complexity: how can the interplay of multilateral environmental agreements be harnessed for effective international market-based climate policy instruments? <i>International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics</i>, 19(6), 595–613.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Why We Need A Global Environmental Organization   HuffPost The World Post</a></li> </ul>
Tuesday, November 14 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>GMO Debate.</b></p>
Thursday, November 16 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Asynchronous Class.</b></p> <p><b>Is There a Way Forward? I. Perspectives from Developing Countries.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Based Conservation Practices in East Africa. “The One Mara Research Project”. An online asynchronous lecture in conjunction with Dr. Julliana Senteu. Researcher, University of Groningen</li> </ul>
Tuesday, November 21 <sup>st</sup>	<p><b>Asynchronous Class.</b></p> <p><b>Is There a Way Forward? II. Perspectives from the Global North.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch Film: "2040".</li> </ul> <p>Film 2040 Reflection is due before midnight on ELMS.</p>
Thursday, November 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<p>Thanksgiving Break. No Class</p>
Tuesday, November 28 <sup>th</sup>	<p>Environmentalism in Australia</p>
Thursday, November 30 <sup>th</sup>	<p>The Politics of Environmentalism in India.</p>
Tuesday, December 5 <sup>th</sup>	<p>Far Right Extremism , and Environmental Policy in Brazil</p>
Thursday, December 7 <sup>th</sup>	<p>Domestic Politics , and Environmental Policy in China</p>
Thursday, December 14 <sup>th</sup>	<p><b>Final exam will be on ELMS (Lockdown Browser is required) 8a-10a.</b></p>