GVPT 273: Introduction to Environmental Politics
University of Maryland

Instructor: Stephen Arves  email: sarves@umd.edu

Course Description

Environmental politics is a relatively new area of academic study, having only come into its own during the 1960s. Despite this, the field is both diverse and complex. It borrows from other disciplines, such as political theory and scientific research, yet is distinct in its own right. The goals of this course are to introduce students to major discussions and tensions within the field and equip students with tools to critically assess and critique these topics.

To do this, we cover many diverse subjects throughout the semester. We start with some of the philosophical and theoretical ideas that influence environmental thought. Next, we talk about the environmental attitudes of citizens and examine the ways they collectively organize to advance environmental concerns. We then address environmental policy approaches and consider some challenges to environmental policy-making. We also shift our focus up to the global level and consider Environmental Politics and policy there. The last portion of the course considers International Environmental Law and the relationship between conflict and the environment. Most classes consist of lecture, discussion and/or a group activity.

Required Texts

There is no textbook for this course. All readings are available on ELMS.

Course Expectations

For this to be a great class, all of us need to do our share. I’ll do my best to present Environmental Politics in clear and interesting ways. You’re expected to put your best effort into this course and to take an active role in the learning process. Always be respectful of one another, even when disagreeing with someone. You are encouraged to disagree and to present counter arguments.

Course Requirements and Assignments

- Participation 20% of final grade
- Discussion Questions 10% of final grade
- Midterm I Exam 20% of final grade
- Midterm II Exam 20% of final grade
- Group Presentation & Paper 30% of final grade
**Participation:** Participation points are accrued during each class. It is worth 20 percent of your overall grade. By registering for this course, you are making a commitment to come prepared to every class. This includes active listening, taking notes, asking questions, and participating in other class activities.

All students are required to complete the assigned readings before each class. Be ready to summarize, analyze, evaluate, and debate the readings each day. The quality of our class depends on this. The format of course discussion will include short, in-class writing assignments, partner discussion, and full class discussion.

Each student is responsible for self-grading his/her participation. This should be completed immediately after each class, and you have until 11:59PM that day to complete it. I reserve the right to adjust your participation grade. A detailed description is below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>absent from class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>didn’t read the assignment and didn’t make in-class contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>didn’t read the assignment but makes in-class contribution OR read the assignments, but didn’t contribute to the class discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>read the assignments and made one in-class contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>read the assignment and made more than one in-class contribution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We’ll watch a couple movies throughout the course and will spend time in class discussing them. Pay close attention to these movies. They are meant to be provocative (at times) and hopefully to introduce us to new ideas. Take detailed notes as we watch the movies and look for ways that they connect to Environmental Politics.

Please note that self-grading criteria will differ when we view a movie, have group presentations, have guest speakers, and attend the library session. I will provide additional details for those situations.

**Discussion Questions on ELMS:** Discussion questions are due each day that we have assigned readings and account for 10 percent of your overall grade. Students will submit one discussion question per reading on ELMS for each day there are assigned readings. The posts are due before class. The questions should be well thought out in order to encourage discussion and debate in class. In fact, we’ll use these questions to steer our discussions.

**Midterm I Exam:** Midterm I is worth 20 percent of your overall grade. It includes material from lectures, discussions, and the course readings. Exams are multiple choice, fill in the blank, True/False, short answer, and/or essay answers. Class time will be devoted to review and preparation for the exam, and I will also make study guides available.

**Midterm II Exam:** Midterm II is also worth 20 percent of your overall grade. Midterm II also includes material from lectures, discussions, and the course readings. It will also include multiple choice, fill in the blank, True/False, short answer, and/or essay answers. The format of Midterm II may differ from the first exam. Class time will be devoted to review and preparation for the exam, and I will also make study guides available. This exam is NOT cumulative.
Group Presentation and Paper: Group presentations are and group paper are worth 30 percent of your overall grade. Over the course of the semester, you’ll work in a small groups to collaborate on a project and a paper. I will provide additional details at a later date. A mandatory library session is scheduled for students.

Course Policies

Laptops and tablets are allowed for note-taking only. If they become a distraction, you will forfeit your right to use them in class. Cell phones and headphones are not permitted during class. They detract from your learning and also distract those around you. Students using laptops or tablets for any other purpose forfeit all participation credit for that day.

Exams must be completed during the designated time. Extensions and make-ups will only be granted under extreme circumstances and at the discretion of the instructor. Failure to turn in assignments on time will result in grade reductions of one full letter grade per day.

For an absence to be excused, you must email me prior to missing class. You are also required to provide proper documentation of your medical illness to have that absence excused. If you need to miss any class due to religious observances, it is your responsibility to notify me via email immediately.

A complete overview of University Course-Related Policies can be found here. Student are expected to familiarize themselves with these policies. Any suspected violation will be reported to the University.

Every effort will be made to accommodate students that are registered with the Disability Support Service (DSS) Office. In order for accommodations to be made, though, students must submit a current University of Maryland DSS Accommodation Form. Please submit the Accommodation Form to me (via email) by the end of the second week of class.

Course Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>98-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94 to &lt;98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 to &lt;94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88 to &lt;90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84 to &lt;88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 to &lt;84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78 to &lt;80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74 to &lt;78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 to &lt;74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>68 to &lt;70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64 to &lt;67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60 to &lt;64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Course Overview

| Week 1 | Course Overview and Introductions  
|        | Environmental Philosophy |
| Week 2 | Guest Speakers  
|        | Environmental Theories |
| Week 3 | Environmental Rights as Human Rights  
|        | Public Opinion |
| Week 4 | Citizen Action and Environmental Pressure Groups  
|        | Green Political Parties |
| Week 5 | Green Politics and Party Politics  
|        | Environmental Policy Problems |
| Week 6 | The Fukushima Daiichi Meltdown  
|        | Environmental Policy Paradigms |
| Week 7 | Midterm I Exam Review  
|        | Midterm I Exam |
| Week 8 | Environmental Policy Instruments  
|        | Global Environmental Politics I |
| Week 9 | Global Environmental Politics II  
|        | Library Session |
| Week 10 | Presentation Preparation  
|         | Presentation Preparation |
| Week 11 | Movie – Wasteland  
|         | Movie – Wasteland |
| Week 12 | Group Presentations  
|         | Group Presentations |
| Week 13 | Globalization and Trade  
|         | No Class – Thanksgiving Break |
| Week 14 | International Environmental Law  
|         | Conflict and the Environment |
| Week 15 | Paper Workshop  
|         | Midterm II Review |
| Week 16 | Midterm II Exam in class  
|         | Group Paper Due |
Course Schedule and Readings

Note: Course Schedule and Readings are subject to change. Students will be notified of changes as soon as they happen.

Week 1
Course Overview and Introductions

Environmental Philosophy
- Peter Singer. 1979. “Equality for Animals?” from Practical Ethics

Week 2
Guest Speakers

Environmental Theories

Week 3

Environmental Rights as Human Rights

Public Opinion
- David Roberts. Apr 21, 2016. “8 Maps that Reveal Americans’ Incoherent Opinions on Climate Change” Vox

Week 4
Citizen Action and Environmental Pressure Groups
- Matt McGrath. Dec 11, 2014. “Greenpeace sorry for Nazca lines stunt in Peru” BBC
Green Political Parties

**Week 5**

Green Politics and Party Politics
- Kate Connolly and Philip Olterman. May 23, 2016. “Austria Elected Green Candidate as President in Narrow Defeat for Far Right” *The Guardian*

Environmental Policy Problems
- Anna Maria Barry-Jester. Jan 26, 2016. “What Went Wrong In Flint” *FiveThirtyEight*

**Week 6**

The Fukushima Daiichi Meltdown
- No readings assigned

Environmental Policy Paradigms

**Week 7**

Midterm Review
- Midterm I

**Week 8**

Environmental Policy Instruments
- “China wants to clear the air with a market-based approach to pollution” Sep 24, 2015. *The Economist*
- Henry Fountain. “Rethinking the Airplane, for Climate’s Sake” Jan 11, 2016. *New York Times*
- Christie Aschwanden. Jan 2, 2015. “Every Time You Fly, You Trash the Planet –And There’s No Easy Fix” *FiveThirtyEight*
Global Environmental Politics I

Week 9

Global Environmental Politics II

Library Session with Judy Markowitz

Week 10

Presentation Preparation in-class

Week 11

Movie –Waste Land

Week 12

Group Presentations

Week 13

Globalization and Trade
- Clare Leschin-Hoar. Dec 14, 2015. “Fish Stocks are Struggling to Rebound. Why Climate Change is On The Hook” NPR

No Class –Thanksgiving Break
**Week 14**

International Environmental Law

Conflict and the Environment
- Findings from the Selected Federal Reports: The National Security Implications of A Changing Climate The White House Statements & Releases
- Craig Welch. 2015. “Climate Change Helped Spark Syrian War by Craig Welch” in National Geographic

**Week 15**

Paper Workshop

Midterm II Review

**Week 16**

Midterm II in class

Group Paper Due