

**IS 221: Global Ecopolitics**  
**Fall 2009**  
**T/R 9:30-10:45am**  
**Buckman 325 – CRN10314**

**Professor:** Dr. Jennifer Sciubba

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**Office hours:** MW 10:00-12:00; Tu 10:45-12:00 and by appointment

**Course description:** This course is designed to introduce you to the ecological politics paradigm in International Relations. We will explore how environmental issues, population, disease, technology, and globalization create solutions and problems for traditional questions of IR—like war and peace, sovereignty, development, and power—and raise new areas of inquiry. This course fulfills the F2i Writing Intensive foundation and will emphasize “writing to learn”. Over the semester you will build your reading and writing skills through short reaction assignments, longer papers, and regular revision of your work.

This class is conducted as a seminar. Some students have jokingly referred to it as the “apocalypse course”, but in a way that’s the central question: Is apocalypse inevitable? How do we mobilize to save civilization (borrowing the subtitle from Lester Brown’s book)? We use writing as a process of intellectual inquiry to address these broad questions. The discussions and reaction writing assignments provide a forum for dealing with questions raised by the readings and lectures. Participation is essential both to demonstrate your journey towards understanding the readings, and to aid you in synthesizing the information.

If you have a documented disability or other issue that requires assistance, please let me know by the end of the second week of classes and I will be happy to help or refer you to Student Disability Services (SDS).

**Readings:**

*Readings are listed on the day they are DUE.*

Texts:

Conca, Ken and Geoffrey D. Dabelko. 2004. *Green Planet Blues: Environmental Politics from Stockholm to Johannesburg*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Westview Press.

Zinsser, William. 2006. *On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition. Collins Publishers.

Recommended: Brown, Lester R. 2008. *Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization*. Earth Policy Institute. Online: <http://www.earth-policy.org/Books/PB3/Contents.htm> (not at bookstore!)

All of the articles are organized by topic in the public folders on the academic server and many are on Moodle. In the interest of the environment—and given

that this is an environmental politics course—I ask that you try to read online as much as possible and refrain from printing unless absolutely necessary!

### **Resources:**

I highly recommend the New Security Beat blog (<http://newsecuritybeat.blogspot.com>) for broad coverage of environmental security issues. There are many other fine environmental blogs, websites, and listservs that you should explore and should feel free to share with the class, including <http://www.grist.org>, <http://www.enn.com>, and <http://www.scidev.net>. And to be fair, if you want a completely anti-ecological politics paradigmatic viewpoint, see the Planet Gore blog by *The National Review* at <http://planetgore.nationalreview.com>.

### **Class policies:**

- This syllabus is subject to change.
- I strongly encourage you to consult the Writing Center for help with your writing assignments.
- I expect you to attend class and arrive on time. Any illnesses should be documented by a medical professional. Only if you provide documentation will you be allowed to make up missed work.
- We will take the Honor Code very seriously. You can read the policy at [www.rhodes.edu/campuslife/1478.asp](http://www.rhodes.edu/campuslife/1478.asp).
- We will all benefit if you are an active and respectful participant in the class, do the readings before class, and keep up with the news daily. The participation grade for the course is earned.
- Make-up policy: If you miss a deadline for a documented illness or college-sponsored event you may submit your assignment *before* the scheduled due date when possible, or soon after in rare, documented instances.
- If you are a student athlete, please inform me if there will be conflicts and prepare to complete assignments early.
- The best way to get in touch with me is via email. However, so that I may spend time with my family I often do not check or answer email after 5pm each day or on the weekends, though I often do.

### **Requirements:**

#### **Presentations of readings/leading discussion (10%)**

- Working in pairs, you should spend 10 minutes or so describing the main points of the reading and then lead discussion for the remainder of the class, reserving the last 10 minutes for me to wrap.
- You should speak with me about your presentations and discussion plans beforehand.

#### **Journal of reading responses (30%)**

- The journal emphasizes writing as “thinking on paper,” a way to “extend, develop, refine and crystallize [your] thinking” (Finkel 2000). This is a journal of discovery, not a journal of communication (we will discuss these differences in class). I will pose a question (or two) on Moodle and

- students will write ~2-paragraph responses. You should answer the day's question at least one hour BEFORE coming to class so that we can all benefit from having read your response. You may write between 12-14 responses over the semester. I will periodically review the journals and provide feedback to help you develop critical reading skills.
- You will post a response roughly once a week and I will review the week's responses after Thursday's class. The first 4 responses will be due by the end of September; the second 4 by the end of October; and the final 4 by the end of November. You are also free to comment in December and those responses will still count towards your journal requirement.
  - Also by the end of every month, you will read through the prior comments, select two "interesting" essays and write a letter to its author responding critically to the essays using the "reply" function on Moodle. This exercise fosters the sense that we are all part of a writing *community* engaging in *public* and *collective* inquiry. Critiquing and responding to someone else's writing is an integral part of learning to write well.

**Thematic reaction essays (4-5 pages each) (60%)**

- Together, we will choose the topics of your papers and I expect that the journal exercise will serve as a guide. Through your journal, you will have made discoveries about connections between topics, relevance of issues, etc. In these papers, you focus on effectively communicating a thesis.
- You will submit one of these for peer review and revise appropriately.
- One of these will be on your course experience. You will have the opportunity to "learn by doing", to get out into the Memphis community and see how ecopolitics are at play here. With my approval, you must arrange for your environmental experience by the end of September, though you may do the experience any time during the semester (keep paper deadlines in mind, however).
- Turn in the first paper by Oct 9th; the second by Nov 6th; and the third by Dec 4th.

**Grade scale:**

94-100	= A	74-76	= C
90-93	= A-	70-73	= C-
87-89	= B+	67-69	= D+
84-86	= B	64-66	= D
80-83	= B-	60-63	= D-
77-79	= C+	59 & below	= F

*Guidelines for determining grades on papers will be discussed in class in advance of assignment deadlines.*

**Course schedule:**

**Thursday, 8/27 - Introduction to course**

Discussion: Course requirements, journal response writing, and role of paradigms

**Tuesday, 9/1 – Ecological paradigm**

- (1) Pirages, Dennis. 1978. “The Origins of Ecopolitics,” pgs. 4-15, from *Global Ecopolitics*. Stop at “Populations and Resources”.

**Thursday, 9/3 – (No class) Writing and revising**

- (1) Zinsser, Chs. 1, 2, 3 and 11
- (2) <http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2009/07/palin-speech-edit-200907?printable=true&currentPage=all>

**Tuesday, 9/8 – Ecological paradigm, then and now**

- (1) *The Upside of Down* by Thomas Homer-Dixon (2006), Prologue (pgs. 1-8) and Ch. 1, “Tectonic Stresses” (pgs. 9-30)
- (2) GPB, “Limits to Growth” 24-28

**Thursday, 9/10 – Ecological paradigm, then and now**

- (1) GPB Intro
- (2) “The Coming Anarchy” by Robert Kaplan, *The Atlantic Monthly* (May 1994) (pgs. 44-74)

**Tuesday, 9/15 – Levels of analysis**

- (1) GPB 37-52
- (2) Homer-Dixon, *The Upside of Down*, Ch. 2, “A Keystone in Time,” (pgs. 31-55)

**Thursday, 9/17 – North-South divide**

- (1) GPB 29-36
- (2) Reuveny, Rafael X. and William R. Thompson. 2007. “The North-South Divide and International Studies: A Symposium, Introduction.” *International Studies Review* 9:4 (pgs. 556-564)
- (3) Arie M. Kocozwicz. 2007. “Globalization, Poverty and the North-South Divide,” *International Studies Review* 9:4 (pgs. 565-580).

**Tuesday, 9/22 – North-South divide**

- (1) GPB 61-80
- (2) “How Ethanol Fuels the Food Crisis,” C. Ford Runge and Benjamin Senauer, *Foreign Affairs* 5/28/08 Brown Ch. 2, “Deteriorating Oil and Food Security” (pgs. 27-47)

**Thursday, 9/24 – North-South divide**

- (1) GPB 94-118 and 122-135

**Tuesday, 9/29 – North-South divide**

- (1) Persaud, Arinash. 2001. "The Knowledge Gap." *Foreign Affairs*.
- (2) Evans, David S. 2002. "Who Owns Ideas? The War Over Global Intellectual Property." *Foreign Affairs*.

*Handout: Midterm evaluation*

**Thursday, 10/1 – Writing**

- (1) Zinnser, Chs. 22 & 23.

*Midterm evaluation due*

**Tuesday, 10/6 – Ecological security**

- (1) Pirages, Dennis and Teresa DeGeest. 2004. "From International to Global Relations," pgs. 1-28, in *Ecological Security*.
- (2) ECSP Report 13, "Foreword: Environmental Security Heats Up"  
[http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/ECSPReport13\\_Foreword.pdf](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/ECSPReport13_Foreword.pdf)
- (3) GPB 285-312
- (4) Testimony of Sherri Goodman before the Committee on Energy & Commerce, Subcommittee on Energy and Air Quality, U.S. House of Representatives, June 26, 2008

**Thursday, 10/8 – Environmental security**

- (1) GPB 314-329
- (2) ECSP Report 13 pgs. 64-84  
[http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/ECSPReport13\\_NavigatingPeace.pdf](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/ECSPReport13_NavigatingPeace.pdf)

**Monday, 10/12 – Attend a class with Dr. Thomas Homer-Dixon**

Options:

- (1) 1:00 pm - 1:50 pm, Clough Hall 102, Prof. Robert K. Lusteck
- (2) 2:00 pm - 3:15 pm, Buckman Hall 214, Prof. Tait S. Keller

**Tuesday, 10/13 – Environmental security cont'd and writing**

- (1) Zinnser, Chs. 4-7 and 20
- (2) Sciubba, Jennifer. 2008. "Defense Implications of Demographic Trends"  
[http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq\\_pages/editions/i48/27.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu/inss/Press/jfq_pages/editions/i48/27.pdf)

**Thursday, 10/15 – Population and security**

- (1) Paul Ehrlich. 1968. *The Population Bomb*, pgs. 15-35
- (2) Pearce, Fred. "Consumption Dwarfs Population As Main Environmental Threat."  
<http://e360.yale.edu/content/feature.msp?id=2140>

**Tuesday, 10/20 – NO CLASS – Fall Break!**

**Thursday, 10/22 – Population**

- (1) Cincotta, Richard. 2009. ECSP Report 13, "Half a Chance: Youth Bulges and Transitions to Liberal Democracy"  
[http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/ECSPReport13\\_Cincotta.pdf](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/ECSPReport13_Cincotta.pdf)
- (2) Leahy, Elizabeth. 2009. ECSP Report 13, "Beginning the Demographic Transition: Very Young and Youthful Age Structures"  
[http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/ECSPReport13\\_Leahy.pdf](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/ECSPReport13_Leahy.pdf)

**Tuesday, 10/27 – Population**

- (1) Reuveny, Rafael. (2007). "Climate change-induced migration and violent conflict." *Political Geography* 26(6), 656-673.
- (2) ECSP Report 13, pgs. 57-62
- (3) TBA

**Thursday, 10/29 – Writing**

- (1) Zinsser chs. 8-10

**Tuesday, 11/3 – Population (urbanization)**

- (1) Watch *The End of Suburbia* streaming on Moodle
- (2) UN Habitat's *State of the World's Cities 2006/7*, your choice from sections 1-15 (only about 2 pgs each) or  
<http://www.unhabitat.org/content.asp?cid=5964&catid=7&typeid=46&subMenuId=0>

**Thursday, 11/5 – Contemporary impact of disease**

- (1) Dennis C. Pirages. 2007. "Nature, Disease, and Globalization: An Evolutionary Perspective." *International Studies Review* 9: 4 (pgs. 616-628).
- (2) Laurie Garrett, "The Next Pandemic." *Foreign Affairs* July/August 2005.
- (3) Spread of the flu: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/166335>

**Tuesday, 11/10 – Contemporary issues with disease**

- (1) World Health Organization. 2007. "The World Health Report 2007: A Safer Future"

**Thursday, 11/12 – Institutions**

- (1) GPB pgs. 143-162
- (2) Millennium Development Goals 2009 Report  
<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG%20Report%202009%20ENG.pdf>

**Tuesday, 11/17 – Institutions**

- (1) GPB pgs. 185-215

**Thursday, 11/19 – Eco-justice**

- (1) GPB pgs. 333-367

**Tuesday, 11/24 – Sustainability**

- (1) GPB pgs. 229-264

Susan Schantz lecture, Wednesday (Nov. 11) at 4:30 in Barret 051

**Thursday, 11/26 – NO CLASS Thanksgiving Break!**

**Tuesday, 12/1 – Sustainability**

- (1) GPB pgs. 265-281
- (2) Selection from Simple Living, TBA

**Thursday, 12/3 – Experiences**

- (1) Discussion of environmental experiences

**Tuesday, 12/8 – Apocalypse now?**

Evaluation and discussion of:

- (1) Homer-Dixon, Ch. 11 “Catagenesis”, pgs. 265-295