

IS 321: Comparative Ecopolitics

Spring 2010

T/R 9:30-10:45am
Buckman 325 – CRN 20687

Prerequisites: IS200, IS221,
or instructor's permission

Professor: Dr. Jennifer Sciubba

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Office hours: MW 11:00-12:00; Tu 10:45-12:00 and by appointment

Course description: How do different countries and communities end up with different approaches to the same environmental and population problems? Using a comparative lens we will look for the answer in the different roles of social movements and advocacy; regime type; political culture and institutions; the policymaking process; and economic development. At times, we will reflect on ways that Memphis has dealt with issues similar to the ones we study in other communities.

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).

Learning objectives:

- (1) Gain factual knowledge of environmental challenges and controversies
- (2) Learn fundamental principles, generalizations, and theories common to comparative politics as a subfield of political science
- (3) Learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and different points of view about environmental and population issues

Resources:

- (1) Web 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 an opposing viewpoint, see the Planet Gore blog by *The National Review* at <http://planetgore.nationalreview.com>.
- (2) Me: During office hours, my door is open. I strongly welcome you to come by and discuss your thoughts or concerns about our course or assignments, your career plans, graduate school opportunities, or environmental news that has sparked your interest. If my office hours conflict with your class or work schedule, you may make an appointment with me or join me for lunch in the Rat.

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.
- 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.
- 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:**Participation**

Though not part of your formal grade, participation is still required. Interaction with one another, with the instructor, and with the community will provoke new ideas and encourage you to make new discoveries. This class is conducted as a seminar. The discussions 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.

Presentation 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 are required to speak with me about your presentations and discussion plans beforehand. Each student will present once.

Free response quizzes and homework assignments (20%)

- Periodically, there may be homework assignments or in-class quizzes where I will ask you to respond in essay format to a question I pose. The quizzes will require that you keep up with the reading for the course and practice writing on your own. To encourage your progress in the course I will drop the lowest quiz grade. If you are absent and miss a quiz, I will drop that grade—therefore you should not miss more than one quiz.

Research paper and presentation (50%)

- Each student will have the opportunity to write a 12-15 page (double spaced) research paper on a subject to be chosen in consultation with the professor. The paper can either be a deep analysis of an environmental or population issue within one country or can compare cross-national responses to a particular environmental or population issue.

Grades for the paper are broken down into several components:

- Topics due in class, 2/23 (5%)
- First draft via email by class time, 3/23 (15%)
- Final draft via email by midnight, Monday, 4/19 (20%)
- Final 10-minute presentation of research (10%)

I will distribute a grading rubric sometime during the first few weeks of classes.

Final exam (20%)

- The final exam will be held on Friday, 5/7 at 5:30pm

Course Calendar:

Readings are listed on the day they are DUE.

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!

Introduction to course

In this section of the course, we will answer such questions as:

- What is ecopolitics?
- What is meant by “comparative” versus “global” ecopolitics?
- In what ways could domestic political processes shape environmental outcomes?

Thursday, 1/14 – Introduction to course

- (1) Expectations, requirements, questions, themes, content, goals
- (2) *Assignment due in class on Tuesday: outline E. Economy reading (see handout)*

Tuesday, 1/19 – Introduction

- (1) Elizabeth Economy, Introduction to *The River Runs Black*

Drop/add ends 1/20

Values, attitudes, and ideas

For this section of the course, we will examine the role of *values, attitudes, and ideas* in shaping environmental outcomes. Some questions to guide our inquiry are:

- How do states manipulate population to create identity?
- How do population trends relate to national identity?
- What is the relationship between population, identity, and institutions?
- What is the relationship between ideology and environmental degradation? How do attitudes and values shape environmental policies and outcomes?

Thursday, 1/21 – Values, attitudes, and ideas

- (1) Agrawal, Arun. "Environmental Transformations and the Values of Modernity," pgs. 347-359 and
- (2) Clark A. Miller, "Framing Shared Values: Reason and Trust in Environmental Governance," pgs. 377-394, both in *Forging Environmentalism*, edited by Joanne Bauer. Armonk, NY: ME Sharpe, 2006.

Tuesday, 1/26 – Values, attitudes, and ideas

- (1) Teitelbaum, Michael S. and Jay Winter. 1998. *A Question of Numbers: High Migration, Low Fertility, and the Politics of National Identity*. New York: Hill & Wang. Ch. 1 ("Germany" pgs. 11-30) & Ch. 3 ("Britain" pgs. 49-62)

Thursday, 1/28 – Values, attitudes, and ideas

- (1) Teitelbaum and Winter Ch. 8 ("American Political Interests" pgs. 155-172) and Ch. 9 ("Canada: Civil Fissures" pgs. 173-192)

Tuesday, 2/2 – Values, attitudes, and ideas

- (1) Teitelbaum and Winter Ch. 4 (Yugoslavia pgs. 65-84)

Extended drop ends 2/3

Thursday, 2/4 – Values, attitudes, and ideas

- (1) Shapiro, Judith. 2001. *Mao's War against Nature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch 1, "Population, Dams, and Political Repression," pgs. 1-19
- (2) Economy, bottom of pages 28-mid 36 and 51-mid-55

Tuesday, 2/9 – Values, attitudes, and ideas

- (1) Shapiro Ch 2, "Deforestation, Famine, and Utopian Urgency," pgs. 67-93

Regime type

For this section of the course, we will examine the role of different government types—democratic and authoritarian governments, and everything in between—in approaches to environmental and population issues. Some questions to guide our inquiry include:

- Do democracies have better environmental records?
- What is the relationship between regime type and environmental protection?
- Which institutions support or hinder environmental protection, and why?
- How do institutions shape the relationships between humans and nature?
- Which domestic political arrangements favor environmental protection/degradation?

Thursday, 2/11 – Regime type

- (1) Carter, Neil. 2001. "Green Parties: The Rise of a New Politics?", pgs. 84-105 in *The Politics of the Environment*. (e-book through library)

Tuesday, 2/16 – Regime type

- (1) Li Quan and Rafael Reuveny. 2006. "Democracy and Environmental Degradation" *International Studies Quarterly* 50(4), pgs. 935-56.
- (2) Frederiksson Per G. and Jim Wollscheid. 2007. "Democratic Institutions versus Autocratic Regimes" *Public Choice* 130: 381-93

Thursday, 2/18 – Regime type

- (1) Readings on Nazi Germany, TBA

Tuesday, 2/23 – Regime type

****PAPER TOPICS DUE IN CLASS****

- (1) Teitelbaum and Winter, Ch. 6 "The Politics of the Birthrate in Socialist Romania," pgs. 109-123
- (2) Teitelbaum and Winter, Ch. 5 "The End of the Soviet Empire," pgs. 85-108.

Political Economy

For this section of the course we will look at ways that politics and economics intersect and influence environmental outcomes.

- What is the relationship between economic system and environmental degradation?
- Does the free market lead to negative or positive environmental consequences?
- Does economic development provide opportunities or challenges for environmental protection?
- What is the impact of trade and foreign investment.
- What economic disadvantages do the poor face that make them bear the burden of environmental disasters?

Thursday, 2/25 – Political economy

- (1) Dolšak, Nives and Elinor Ostrom. 2003. "The Challenges of the Commons" pgs. 3-34. In The Commons in the New Millennium: Challenges and Adaptations (e-book through library). Edited by Dolšak and Ostrom. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Tuesday, 3/2 – Political Economy

- (1) Baviskar, Amita, Subir Sinha and Kavita Philip. 2006. "Rethinking Indian Environmentalism: Industrial Pollution in Delhi and Fisheries in Kerala," pgs. 189-248. In Forging Environmentalism: Justice, Livelihood, and Contested Environments, ed. Joanne R. Bauer, Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.

Thursday, 3/4 – Political Economy

- (1) Economy, Elizabeth. Ch. 3 "The Economic Explosion", pgs. 59-90, in *The River Runs Black*

Tuesday, 3/9 – Political Economy

- (1) Kütting, Gabriela. 2004. *Globalization and the environment: greening global political economy*. (e-book through library). Ch. 5, pgs. 86-91 and Ch. 6 "The Case of West Africa".

Thursday, 3/11 – Political Economy

- (1) Bullard, et al, "Transportation Matters," pgs. 63-80
- (2) Whelan and Strong, "Rebuilding Lives Post-Katrina," pgs. 183-201, both in *Race, Place, and Environmental Justice After Hurricane Katrina*, edited by Robert D. Bullard and Beverly Wright (2009) Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Monday, 3/15 – Friday, 3/19 – SPRING BREAK

Policy process

For this section of the course we will use two recent documentaries to understand:

- How do different actors within states, such as local and federal governments, multinational corporations, and activists, interact to influence the policymaking process?

Tuesday, 3/23

****FIRST DRAFT OF PAPER DUE VIA EMAIL BY CLASS TIME****

- (1) Carter, "The Environment as a Policy Problem," pgs. 161-193

Thursday, 3/25

- (1) Documentary film: *Who Killed the Electric Car?* Streamed through Moodle.

Tuesday, 3/30

- (1) Documentary film: *Food Inc.* Streamed through Moodle.

Thursday, 4/1 – No class, EASTER RECESS

Advocacy and Activism

For the final section of the course we will examine the actions of non-governmental actors and social movements in responding to and addressing environmental issues.

- What are the connections between environmentalism and civil rights?
- How do advocacy groups interact with other actors, such as the state and with communities?
- How is the burden for action distributed among federal, state, and local governments, NGOs and advocates, and individuals?

Tuesday, 4/6 – Advocacy and activism

- (1) Carter, Neil. 2007. "Environmental Groups," pgs. 131-153 in *The Politics of the Environment*

Thursday, 4/8 – Advocacy and Activism

- (1) Di Chiro, Giovanna. 1996. "Nature as Community: The Convergence of Environment and Social Justice," pgs. 298-320 in Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature, ed. William Cronon. New York: W.W. Norton.

Tuesday, 4/13 – Advocacy and Activism

- (1) Nance, Earthea. 2009. "Making the Case for Community-Based Laboratories: A New Strategy for Environmental Justice," in *Race, Place, and Environmental Justice After Hurricane Katrina*. Edited by Robert D. Bullard and Beverly Wright. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pgs. 153-164.
- (2) Godsil, Rachel, Albert Huang, and Gina Solomon. 2009. "Contaminants in the Air and Soil in New Orleans After the Flood: Opportunities and Limitations for Community Empowerment," in *Race, Place, and Environmental Justice After Hurricane Katrina*. Edited by Robert D. Bullard and Beverly Wright. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pgs. 115-138.

Thursday, 4/15 – Advocacy and Activism

- (1) Case study: India's Narmada River controversy. View websites: Friends of River Narmada, www.narmada.org and <http://www.sardarsarovardam.org/>

Monday, 4/19 - **FINAL PAPER DUE VIA EMAIL BY MIDNIGHT**

ATTENDANCE FOR THE FOLLOWING SESSIONS IS MANDATORY:

Tuesday, 4/20 – *When the Levees Broke*, Spike Lee

Film, food, and fascinating cross-disciplinary discussion, 6-9pm, location TBA

Thursday, 4/22 – Student research presentations

McNeill Earth Day talk, Blount Auditorium, evening, time TBA

Tuesday, 4/27 – Student research presentations

Thursday, 4/29 – Last day of classes