

POL349/EPC 390: International Environmental Politics
Spring 2023
Northwestern University
Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00 – 3:20 pm, Scott Hall 201

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Office Hours: Thursdays 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm; other times available by appointment only

Course Overview

Environmental problems that transcend national borders are amongst the most intractable challenges facing our global community. Collective action problems are pervasive in negotiations and attempts to address, monitor, and enforce international environmental agreements are often weak. Yet, despite these constraints, international actors have designed and secured agreement in a variety of policy arenas, aiming to improve global environmental governance. Through a team-based approach to learning, we will explore how, why, and when the international community is able to overcome collective action problems and effectively address global environmental challenges.

The course is divided into three parts. In the first part of the course, we will focus on the problems, institutions, and politics in global environmental governance. The second part of the course focuses on key concepts or themes in global environmental politics that shape our understanding of international cooperation in solving environmental problems, such as science, justice, markets, and security. In the third part of the course, students will participate in an extended negotiation simulation to examine the diverse actors and modes of engagement that define the politics around a particular issue.

What are our common learning objectives?

The overarching objective of this interactive course is to cultivate critical thinking and reading skills to generate a nuanced, analytical approach for understanding the international political dynamics of environmental issues. By the end of this course students will be able to:

Foundational Knowledge

- Analyze how biophysical, institutional, and political dimensions shape global environmental problems
- Assess and evaluate the ways in which diverse actors engage in international environmental politics
- Synthesize information about an issue from multiple, identifiable perspectives

Application

- Produce a well-researched paper that effectively communicates sound and logical arguments about a global environmental problem
- Integrate collaborative approaches in learning, leadership, and problem-solving endeavors

During the course, students will develop:

- An in-depth analysis that advances a position on a current global environmental problem
- Peer-to-peer relationships for ongoing support

Course Format:

The course is designed to facilitate active learning. We meet two times per week to engage in discussions and other collaborative learning activities.

Team-based Approach: Students will work in teams throughout the course. The purpose of these teams is to: (1) cultivate student expertise in a topic area they are interested in; (2) practice critical thinking skills through peer tutoring; and, (3) facilitate development of teamwork skills.

How will our learning be assessed?

To achieve our common learning objectives, requirements include active participation, analytical memos, contributions to the negotiation simulation, and a position paper. ****Assignment details and rubrics for each assessment will be provided at least two weeks in advance of the due date.****

Assessments	Learning Objective	Weight
Research Study Participation	See below	See below
Participation	1, 2, 5	15
Team-based Learning Quizzes	1, 4	30
Research Paper	3, 4	40
Negotiation Simulation	2, 3, 5	15
	TOTAL	100

Participation (15%): Contribution to class learning. Assessment includes consideration of regular in-class contributions, in-class assignments and activities, as well as self-assessments. Additional details are available in the assignment packet.

Team-based Learning Quizzes (30%): Five quizzes throughout the quarter will assess student understanding of the reading material for the week. Students will first complete the quiz individually, then as a team, and then grade the quizzes together. Student scores are calculated as a weighted average of individual (45%) + group scores (55%). Individual scores of less than 50% are dropped from the group average and students with individual scores of 50% or less will receive only their individual score – not the group average. The lowest score of five quizzes will be dropped. Past students have commented that this was one of the most effective learning activities they have experienced.

Research Paper (40%): each student will research, analyze, and draft and revise a 10 to 12-page research paper that examines a global environmental problem and addresses two questions: (1) how effective has one international attempt been at addressing the problem; and (2) what is the most promising avenue for addressing the problem? Obviously, there are no right answers to these questions. The idea of this assignment is to pick a perspective for arguing the effectiveness of a policy attempt and then pick an avenue for political progress that you feel is promising and elaborate on why and how it could be successful in generating change. Additional details are available in the assignment packet.

Negotiation Simulation (15%): The final part of our course will be a negotiation simulation. Through the negotiation simulation, students will gain perspective on how different actors negotiate diverse problems and interests, bringing together their developing knowledge on topics and themes into the negotiation. Each student will advance the interests of their assigned parties while also working together to produce a written agreement by the end of the simulation, with the objective to generate a new multilateral environmental agreement that all parties will sign on to. During the simulation debrief, each student will also give one 4-minute presentation on their party in class. Students will be assessed based on their preparation and participation in the negotiation simulation and their contributions to the final agreement.

Research Study Participation Requirement

Students enrolled in this course are required to complete a research assignment that can include up to 4 hours of research study participation. This will require students set up times to complete participation in on-line surveys and in-person studies at Scott Hall. Students will learn how studies are conducted and will receive a synopsis at the conclusion of the quarter describing the study's goal, result, and relevance to the class. Students who prefer not to participate in research may opt for an alternative that entails reading a book chapter about political science research and writing a five-page reaction paper. The typical chapter is about 20 pages and thus reading it and writing a five-page paper should take approximately four hours.

During the two weeks of the quarter, students will receive an e-mail asking them whether they prefer study participation or the alternative assignment. The e-mail will also include details on how to complete either requirement. Failure to complete the requirement during the quarter will result in an incomplete. Failure to complete the requirement during the following quarter will result in a failing grade for the class. Note that if you are enrolled in multiple classes that require participation, you only need to satisfy the requirement one time. Also, if you already completed the requirement in another course in a previous quarter (year), you are excused from the requirement. Contact Info: Andres Matias Schelp, AndresSchelp2025@u.northwestern.edu. Please watch this [video](#) for more information on the requirement.

Our Contract

By enrolling in this course, you and I are entering into a contract with each other. I will work hard to be prepared, enthusiastic, fair, and respectful of every student and their opinions. I will be accessible and try my best to return graded materials after no more than two weeks. If you have read this far in the syllabus, please post a picture of a Goldman Prize Winner and a statement of why you selected them on the Leadership discussion board in Canvas. By enrolling in the class, you have agreed to (1) attend and prepare for class, (2) actively demonstrate your commitment to furthering your learning by asking questions and joining in class discussions, (3) read the assigned material and complete assignments on time, (4) comply with class policies established in this syllabus, and (5) uphold Northwestern University's commitment to academic integrity (see <http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/>).

Course Policies

A complete set of course policies, including technology, grading, attendance, academic integrity, and accommodations is available on Canvas.

Disclaimer: This syllabus is a living document. I reserve the right to adjust the schedule, readings and assignments as appropriate and/or necessary. You are responsible for checking Canvas for updates.

Course Materials

The following materials are required for this course and are available at the Norris Bookstore. Student Enrichment Services offers advice on how to find and afford our course materials. Please visit <http://www.northwestern.edu/enrichment/>

- Kate O'Neill (2017). *The Environment and International Relations*, 2nd edition. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK. ISBN-13: 978-1-107-67171-3.
 - The readings from this book are noted as **O'Neill** in the reading assignments.

- *Older editions are available but may not have all of the same chapters. Please compare the table of contents to make sure you have access to the readings.*
- Morin, Jean-Frederic and Amadine Orsini, eds. (2021). *Essential Concepts of Global Environmental Governance*. Routledge: New York, NY. ISBN: 978-0-367-41869-4
 - The readings from this book are noted as **GEG** in the reading assignments.
 - The library does have an electronic version of this book but is only accessible one user at a time.
 - *Older editions are available but may not have all of the same chapters. Please compare the table of contents to make sure you have access to the readings.*
- Additional materials available through Canvas.
- Library Guide for Environmental Studies: <http://libguides.northwestern.edu/environmentalstudies>
- Course Website developed by past students: <https://sites.northwestern.edu/globalenvironmentalpolitics>

Course Reading Guide

Our course readings are an important part of your learning experience in this class. All of the readings are required unless otherwise noted. As you read, you should question and critique all of the readings I have assigned. **Do not simply take them at face value.** I have not selected them because I agree with everything written or expect that you will agree. They have been chosen to expose you to a diversity of viewpoints and I expect that we will have a wide variety of opinions and questions related to each of the readings. You should know the authors' arguments, but you should approach the readings and class lectures with a healthy degree of skepticism. For each assigned reading, you should annotate the text. I highly recommend you save your summary annotations along with the citation in Zotero or EndNote.

How should I focus my attention on the readings? Your goal in reading is not to memorize all of the details of the chapter or article, but instead to be able to do the following:

- (1) Identify and define key concepts and terms: What new concepts, theories, and variables are important to know in order to understand this work?
- (2) Articulate the main question(s) and argument the author makes: What is this work about? What is the topic? What is the author trying to explain?
- (3) Interrogate the logic of the argument: What assumptions does the author make? How do these assumptions contribute to the author's explanation? What is doing the explaining and how?
- (4) Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the work: What is wrong with the argument? How can it be improved?
- (5) Describe the evidence and/or approach the author uses: What empirical evidence does the author provide to support the argument? Is it convincing?
- (6) Link the reading to the core questions for our session: How does this reading help me answer the core questions for each class session (see detailed reading schedule)?

Note: Readings in the GEG book are designed to help you quickly learn about key concepts and issues in global environmental governance. As such, they are not designed to articulate arguments with evidence, but instead summarize current research on the topics. Your goal in reading these entries is to be able to identify and define key concepts and their relationships with other key concepts and topics in our class.

COURSE SCHEDULE OVERVIEW (Tu/Th)

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments
3/28 (Tu)	Introduction and Course Overview	GEG Selections	Read syllabus
3/29 (W)	Global Environmental Issues in an Unequal World	O'Neill Chapter 1 GEG Selections	TBL Practice Quiz
4/3 (M)	The Challenge of the Global Commons	O'Neill Chapter 2 GEG Selections	TBL #1
4/5 (W)	Actors in Global Environmental Politics	O'Neill Chapter 3 GEG Selections Additional readings	
4/10 (M)	Non-state Actors <i>Guest Speaker: Jen Allen</i> Note: possible change in meeting time to accommodate guest speaker (shift to 8:00 am?)	O'Neill Chapter 7 GEG Selections Additional readings	Deadline to submit Research Topic by 5:00 pm
4/12 (W)	International Regimes and Regime Design	O'Neill Chapter 4 GEG Selections Additional readings	TBL #2
4/17 (M)	Negotiating Multilateral Environmental Agreements <i>Guest Speaker: Pam Chasek</i>	GEG Selections Additional readings	
4/19 (W)	Impacts and Effectiveness <i>Guest Speaker: Mark Buntaine</i>	O'Neill Chapter 5 GEG Selections Additional readings	
4/24 (M)	Human and Ecological Security	GEG Selections Additional readings	TBL #3
4/26 (W)	Equity, Rights, and Justice	GEG Selections Additional readings	TBL #4
5/1 (M)	Global Economic Governance	O'Neill Chapters 6, 8 GEG Selections Additional readings	TBL #5
5/3 (W)	Simulation Preparation	Simulation materials	
**5/5 (F)	DRAFT RESEARCH PAPER DUE		Draft Paper – submit through Canvas by 5:00 pm
5/8 (M)	Simulation Day 1	Simulation materials	
5/10 (W)	Simulation Day 2	Simulation materials	
5/15 (M)	Simulation Day 3	Simulation materials	
5/17 (W)	Simulation Day 4	Simulation materials	
5/22 (M)	Simulation Debrief	Student Presentations	
5/24 (W)	Looking Forward (LAST CLASS)	O'Neill Chapter 9 GEG Selections	
5/29 (M)	NO CLASS – Memorial Day		
5/31 – 6/4	READING WEEK – make-up class (if needed)		
**6/7 (W)	REVISED RESEARCH PAPER DUE		Revised Research Paper Due by 5:00 pm

Detailed Reading Schedule

Class #1 (Tu, 3/28): Course Overview

Core Questions: *What are global environmental politics? What does international cooperation on the environment look like?*

Common Readings

- Syllabus
- GEG Selections: (1) United Nations Environment Programme; (2) World Environment Organization; (3) Commission on Sustainable Development

Class #2 (W, 3/29): Global Environmental Issues in an Unequal World

Assignments:

- TBL Practice Quiz

Core Questions: *How did the environment become an international political issue? What are different ways of explaining international cooperation on the environment? What role does inequality play in shaping global environmental politics?*

Common Readings

- O'Neill Chapter 1: Introduction: The Environment and International Relations
- GEG Selections: (1) Emerging countries; (2) Least developed countries; (3) Markets; (4) Science; (5) Justice; (6) Security

Class #3 (M, 4/3): The Challenge of the Global Commons

Assignments:

- TBL Quiz #1

Core Questions: *What are different ways of explaining global environmental problems?*

Common Readings

- O'Neill Chapter 2: Global Environmental Problems
- GEG Selections: (1) Global public good; (2) Tragedy of the commons; (3) Sovereignty
- UNEP GEO-6 Summary for Policymakers

Class #4 (W, 4/6): Actors in Global Environmental Politics

Core Questions: *How do different actors impact and influence international environmental politics?*

Common Readings

- O'Neill Chapter 3: Actors in Global Environmental Politics
- GEG Selections: Antarctic Treaty System, Arctic Council, Emerging Countries, Global Environment Facility, High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, Negotiating Coalitions, Partnerships, Secretariats, Summit Diplomacy, Transgovernmental Networks, United Nations Environment Programme, World Bank, World Environment Organization, World Trade Organization

- Find and read a recent (within the last year) article related to your topic on *The Conversation*. Post the citation and link on your Team Topic Page, plus a brief annotation of the roles of different actors in your topic area reflected in the article.

Topic Readings – read those assigned for your topic

Biodiversity

- GEG Selections: Agroecology, Biodiversity Regime, CITES, Conservation and Preservation, Ecocentrism, Ecosystem Services, Markets, Military conflicts, Sustainable finance, Transnational Crime, Wetlands Convention

Climate Change

- Adaptation, Anthropocene, Cities, Climate Change Regime, Common but Differentiated Responsibilities, Energy Transitions, Geoengineering, Markets, Ozone Regime, REDD+, Transboundary Air Pollution Regime

Food and Water

- Agroecology, Aid, Conservation and Preservation, Labeling and Certification, Green Economy, Markets, Military conflicts, Population sustainability, Scarcity and conflicts, Sustainable development, Transboundary Water Regime

Oceans

- GEG Selections: Assessments, Common Heritage of Mankind, Dumping, Fisheries Governance, International Whaling Commission, Markets, Ocean Plastics Charter, Ocean protection, UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

Sustainable Consumption and Production

- GEG Selections: Carrying capacities paradigm, Corporate Social Responsibility, Degrowth, Green economy, Hazardous Waste Regime, Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure in Trade, Stockholm Conventions on Persistent Organic Pollutants

Additional readings (recommended, not required):

Betsill, Michele M., and Harriet Bulkeley. "Cities and the multilevel governance of global climate change." *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations* 12.2 (2006): 141-159.

Coolsaet, Brendan, and John Pitseys. "Fair and Equitable Negotiations? African Influence and the International Access and Benefit-Sharing Regime." *Global Environmental Politics* (2015).

Witter, R. et al. 2015. "Moments of influence in global environmental governance." *Environmental Politics*.

Class #5 (M, 4/10): Non-state Actors

Assignments:

- Submit proposed research topic by 5:00 pm

Guest Speaker: Jen Allen, Senior Lecturer, School of Law and Politics, Cardiff University

Core Questions: *What explains non-state actor influence in international environmental politics?*

Common Readings

- O'Neill Chapter 7: Non-state Global Environmental Governance

- GEG Selections: Businesses and corporations, Epistemic communities, Indigenous peoples and local communities, Influential individuals, Nongovernmental organizations, Partnerships, Transgovernmental networks

Class #6 (W, 4/12): International Regimes and Regime Design

Assignments:

- TBL Quiz #2

Core Questions: *What explains international cooperation amongst states? Under what conditions do regimes emerge? What factors shape regime design?*

Common Readings

- O'Neill Chapter 4: State-led Global Environmental Governance
- GEG Selections: Compliance and implementation, Effectiveness, Ozone regime, Regional governance, Institutional interactions, Nonregimes, Private regimes, Regimes

Topic Readings – Pick 2 topics

Biodiversity

- Smallwood, Joanna Miller, Amandine Orsini, Marcel Tj Kok, Christian Prip, and Katarzyna Kate Negacz. "Global Biodiversity Governance: What Needs to Be Transformed?." In *Transforming Biodiversity Governance*, pp. 43-66. Cambridge University Press, 2022.

Climate Change

- Laura Mai, Joshua Philipp Elsässer; Orchestrating Global Climate Governance Through Data: The UNFCCC Secretariat and the Global Climate Action Platform. *Global Environmental Politics* 2022; 22 (4): 151–172. doi: https://doi.org/10.1162/glep_a_00667

Food and Water

- Siegel, Karen M., and Mairon G. Bastos Lima. "When international sustainability frameworks encounter domestic politics: The sustainable development goals and agri-food governance in South America." *World Development* 135 (2020): 105053.

Oceans

- Tiller, Rachel, Elizabeth De Santo, Elizabeth Mendenhall, and Elizabeth Nyman. "The once and future treaty: towards a new regime for biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction." *Marine Policy* 99 (2019): 239-242.

Sustainable Consumption and Production

- Tessnow-von Wysocki, Ina, and Philippe Le Billon. "Plastics at sea: Treaty design for a global solution to marine plastic pollution." *Environmental Science & Policy* 100 (2019): 94-104.

Class #7 (M, 4/17): Negotiating Multilateral Environmental Agreements

Guest Speaker: Dr. Pam Chasek, Professor of Political Science, Manhattan College, Co-Founder and Executive Editor, *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*

Core Questions: *What explains the outcomes of multilateral negotiations? What comprises multilateral negotiations and how do agency and structure impact the outcomes of negotiations?*

Common Readings

- Pickering, Jonathan. "Deliberative Ecologies: Complexity and Social–Ecological Dynamics in International Environmental Negotiations." *Global Environmental Politics* 19, no. 2 (2019): 61-80.
- UNEP. 2007. *Multilateral Environmental Agreement Negotiator's Handbook*. UNEP: Nairobi, Kenya. **Read the following pages: xi-xii; Section 1 (1-1 – 1-11); Section 4 (4-1 – 4-16)**
- GEG Selections: Negotiating coalitions, Summit diplomacy, Treaty negotiations, Secretariats, Shaming

Theme Readings (Pick 2 themes, approx. 7-9 pages/theme):*Justice:*

GEG selections: Common but differentiated responsibilities, Common heritage of mankind, Human and environmental rights, Global deliberative democracy, Liability, Participation

Markets:

GEG selections: Aid, Kuznets curve, Labeling and certification, Polluter pays principle, Taxation, Technology transfer

Science:

GEG selections: Assessments, Carrying capacities paradigm, Population sustainability, Precautionary principle, Preventative action principle, Technology transfer

Security:

GEG selections: Disasters, Dispute resolution mechanisms, Migrants, Military conflicts, Scarcity and conflicts, Transnational crime

Class #8 (W, 4/19): Impacts and Effectiveness

Guest Speaker: Dr. Mark Buntaine, Associate Professor, Bren School of the Environment, University of California Santa Barbara

Core Questions: *How does science effect global environmental politics? How do scientists and experts shape international cooperation around global environmental problems? How do we know if and how a regime is effective?*

Common Readings

- O'Neill Chapter 5
- Karvonen, A. and R. Brand. 2014. "Expertise: Specialized knowledge in environmental political and sustainability." Chapter 17 (p. 215-228) in Harris, P. (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Global Environmental Politics*.
- GEG Selections: Adaptation, Assessments, Audits, Reporting
- Review GEG selections previously assigned: Compliance and Implementation, Effectiveness, Science

Class #9 (M, 4/24): Human and Ecological Security

Assignments: Analytical Memos

- TBL #3

Core Questions: What is environmental security? What is human security? How do these concepts of security interact with an effect global environmental politics? To what extent and how do security concerns shape global environmental governance?

Common Readings

- Jeannie Sowers, Erika Weinthal, Humanitarian challenges and the targeting of civilian infrastructure in the Yemen war, *International Affairs*, Volume 97, Issue 1, January 2021, Pages 157–177, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiaa166>
- Aysegül Kibaroglu, Ramazan Caner Sayan, Water and ‘imperfect peace’ in the Euphrates–Tigris river basin, *International Affairs*, Volume 97, Issue 1, January 2021, Pages 139–155, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiaa161>
- GEG Selections: Migrants, Military conflicts, Scarcity and conflicts, Transnational crime, Scarcity and conflicts
- Review GEG selections previously assigned: Security
- *Recommended:* Lautensach, S. and A. Lautensach. 2014. “Environmental security: international, national and human. Chapter 19 (p. 246-258) in Harris, P. (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Global Environmental Politics*.

Class #10 (W, 4/26): Equity, Rights, and Justice

Assignments:

- TBL #4

Core Questions: What is justice in global environmental politics? To what extent and how do (and should) justice concerns shape global environmental governance?

Common Readings

- Menton, Mary, Carlos Larrea, Sara Latorre, Joan Martinez-Alier, Mika Peck, Leah Temper, and Mariana Walter. "Environmental justice and the SDGs: From synergies to gaps and contradictions." *Sustainability Science* 15 (2020): 1621-1636.
- GEG Selections: Common but differentiated responsibility, Common Heritage of Mankind, Global deliberative democracy, Human and Environmental Rights, Liability, Participation
- Review GEG selections previously assigned: Justice
- *Recommended:* Temper, L. 2017. “Globalizing environmental justice: Radical and transformative movements past and present.” Chapter 39 (p. 490-501) in Holifield, R. et al (eds.) *Routledge Handbook of Environmental Justice*.

Class #11 (M, 5/1): Global Economic Governance

Assignments:

- TBL #5

Core Questions: What is the role of markets in global environmental politics? To what extent and how do markets shape global environmental governance? What role *should* markets play?

Common Readings

- O’Neill Chapters 6, 8

- GEG Selections: Kuznets curve, Labeling and certification, Polluter pays principle, Sustainable Development, Taxation, Technology transfer, World Bank, World Trade Organization
- Review GEG selections previously assigned: Markets
- *Highly Recommended*: Starobin, Shana M. "Beekeepers versus biotech: commodity characteristics and regulatory interdependence in the global environmental politics of food." *Global Environmental Politics* 18, no. 2 (2018): 114-133.
- *Recommended*: Kochtcheeva, L. 2014. "Globalization and the environment: Markets, finance, and trade." Chapter 22 (p. 284-294) in Harris, P. (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Global Environmental Politics*.

Class #12 (W, 5/3): Negotiation Simulation Preparation

Common Readings:

- UNEP. 2007. *Multilateral Environmental Agreement Negotiator's Handbook*. UNEP: Nairobi, Kenya. **Read the following pages: Section 2.1, 2.2 (pages 2-1 – 2-3), Section 2.4 (pages 2-18 – 2-22), Section 3.6 (pages 3-80 – 3-97), Section 5 (pages 5-1 – 5-15)**
- Simulation documents

Friday, 5/5: DRAFT RESEARCH PAPERS DUE AT 5:00 PM

Classes #13-16 (M, 5/8; W, 5/10; M, 5/15; W, 5/17): Negotiation Simulation

Classes #17 (M 5/22): Negotiation Simulation Debrief

Class #18 (W, 5/24): Looking Forward in Global Environmental Politics

Core Questions: What does the future of global environmental politics hold? To what extent and how can different epistemological and ontological orientations help forge a more cooperative and productive future for solving global environmental problems?

Common Readings

- O'Neill Chapter 9
GEG Selections: Critical political economy, Deep ecology, Ecocentrism, Ecofeminism, Ecological modernization, Liberal environmentalism, Post-environmentalism, Reflexive governance

Wednesday, 6/7: REVISED RESEARCH PAPERS due at 5:00 pm