Political Science 129: Environmental Politics

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About This Course

Instructor:
- M. Christopher Sardo, PhD
Meeting Time and Place
- TuTh 5-6:20pm SE2 1306
Canvas Site
- https://canvas.eee.uci.edu/courses/7682

About Me

Email:
- msardo@uci.edu
Office Hours
- Tuesdays 2-4pm or by appointment
Office:
- SSPB 2271

Important Dates

First Day of Class:
- January 9
Midterm
- February 6
Last Day of Class
- March 15
Final
- March 22 4-6pm
GOALS FOR THIS COURSE

It is beyond a truism to state that global climate change represents a, if not the, profound political challenge of the 21st century. However, it would be a mistake to reduce the questions of environmental politics either to climate change or a recent phenomenon. As we will see throughout the quarter, it is important to understand the environment as a site of politics and treat environmental questions as political questions – involving competing interests, unfolding through institutions, and invoking contending ethical and value systems. This course will provide a variety of theoretical frameworks and empirical analyses to understand environmental challenges as political ones as well as to evaluate different possibilities for political action, from the local to the international level.

This course is organized into four main units:

- We will begin by introducing key concepts and principles that organize the study of environmental politics as well as a survey of environmentalism to study the how the environment came to be regarded as an issue of political concern.
- We will then turn to study environmental policy-making in an American perspective, analyzing both different frameworks and political avenues for environmental policies.
- The third unit will study the unique global challenges of environmental politics, with particular attention focused on global climate change.
- Finally, we will conclude this course with a discussion of different ethical and moral questions raised by environmental politics including scientific authority, environmental justice, and responsibility.

By the end of the quarter, you will be able to:

- Identify, define, and utilize core concepts, approaches, principles in the study of environmental politics
- Compare and evaluate different political perspectives and policy strategies on environmental questions
- Write analytical and argumentative essays drawing on both theoretical and empirical scholarship on environmental politics
Readings and Other Media

All of the reading assignments for this course can be found in one of these sources:

**ES in Syllabus**
- Please purchase, rent, or borrow this book.

**VK in Syllabus**
- Please purchase, rent, or borrow this book

**LD in Syllabus**
- Articles and other resources available through the UCI library online database (Hyperlinks included in syllabus)

**Web in Syllabus**
- News articles and other media available on the internet (Hyperlinks included in syllabus)

**PDF in Syllabus**
- Scanned items available as a PDF file.

If you have trouble accessing any of the material, please contact me, so that I can ensure you are able to read the material and keep up with the class.
**ASSESSING YOUR SUCCESS**

These assignments are used to measure progress towards our learning objectives:

- **Midterm:** There will be one in-class midterm during week 5 on February 6. The midterm will cover material from the first half of the class. The exam will be a mix of **identification questions** and **short answer**. More information is available on Canvas.

- **Final Exam:** The final exam will take place on March 22. It will consist in two parts. The first will mirror the midterm, focusing on content from the second half of the course. The second part will be an **argumentative essay with a cumulative scope**. More information is available on Canvas.

- **Weekly Responses:** Following the second lecture of each week, a discussion prompt will be posted on canvas. Half of the class will write **brief (~100 word) responses** to the prompt by Sunday at 5pm; the other half is required to make a **short comment (~50 words)** on one of the responses by Monday at 5pm.

  Students with last names beginning with A-L are responsible for writing responses for odd numbered weeks, students with last names beginning with M-Z are responsible for even numbered weeks.

- **Attendance and Participation:** The questions and challenges we will be discussing in this course are about communities; therefore, it is best to engage them as a group. The classroom is not a place to learn passively but an opportunity to **grapple with some of the most pressing and challenging questions of politics with your peers**. Bring your **questions, interpretations, criticisms**, and **analyses** to class.

  Participation also requires preparation: please carefully read all assigned readings and bring the assigned texts to class to facilitate a thorough discussion.

**BREAKDOWN OF FINAL GRADE**

- **Midterm:** 30%
- **Final:** 40%
- **Weekly Responses:** 20%
- **Participation:** 10%
BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE CLASSROOM

Learning is a project that we work on together; success in the classroom requires all of us working together to build an environment where all of us are empowered to learn, contribute, and produce our best work. Your success in this class is important to me. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

Respect in the Classroom

• All members of the UCI community deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. While well-reasoned, passionate, and contentious debates and disagreements are encouraged, I will not allow belittling, insulting, or mocking others based on their race, gender identity or expression, nationality or ethnic background, sexuality, religion, class, or any other aspects of identity.

Accessibility

• If you require accomodations, you have a right to ensure they are met. Please notify me as early as possible so I can ensure you have the resources to do your best work.

Office Hours and Communication

• Office hours are a resource to help you achieve your best in this course. Please come to office hours when:
  • You have questions, are excited, or want to learn more about the material
  • You are unsure about an assignment's expectations or grade
  • You are under stress because of a personal matter
  • You were unable to attend a class meeting
  • You want to talk to me about school, life, or anything else
• If you cannot make my scheduled office hours, please email me to schedule a time.
• Email is a great medium for clarifying assignment questions or scheduling meetings. Unfortunately, it is not a good medium for reviewing material, discussing the substance of assignments, or asking questions about graded material. We can learn better and more efficiently by meeting in person about these matters.

Scheduling, Emergencies, and Makeups

• Please note the dates and times of all assignments in a planner or calendar app. If you have a university approved conflict (religious observance, athletics event, academic competition), please let me know early so we can make arrangements.
• I also know that things don't always go according to plan. If an unplanned event or emergency is preventing you from completing assignment, we can work together to arrange a makeup. Please contact me within 24 hours and provide documentation and we can go from there.

Your Health and Success

• I want you to be successful in this class, at UCI, and in life. Your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health are just as important as your academic success. I encourage you to let me know if you are facing any challenges precluding you from doing your best work so that we can work together to address.
# COURSE SCHEDULE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNIT 1: THE ENVIRONMENT AS A POLITICAL QUESTION</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Week 1: Introduction</strong></td>
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| 1/9 | Course Introduction: What are environmental politics?  
- What makes environmental questions political questions? | No assigned readings |
| 1/11 | Core Concepts in Environmental Politics:  
- How can analytical concepts such as public goods, collective-action problems, and tragedy of the commons help us understand the nature of environmental political questions?  
- How do these concepts frame environmental political questions?  
- What are the limits to these framings? | Hardin, Garret, “Tragedy of the Commons” (ES)  
- Ostrom, Elinor et al “Revisiting the Commons” (ES)  
- Van Vugt, Mark “Averting the Tragedy of the Commons” (ES)  

- **Week 2: Environmentalism and Social Movements** |
| 1/16 | History of the Environmentalism  
- How have environmentalism and environmental policy developed in the United States?  
- How did the environment become framed as a political issue?  
- What are some of the successes and limitations of environmental advocacy in the US? | Kraft, Michael E. and Norman J. Vig “U.S. Environmental Policy: Achievements and New Directions” (VK)  
- Muir, John “Hetch Hetchy Valley” (ES)  
- Carson, Rachel, “Excerpts from Silent Spring” (ES)  
- Gottlieb, Robert, from “Where We Live, Work, and Play” (ES) |
| 1/18 | Prospects, Perils, and Politics of Environmentalism  
- What opportunities exist for environmental advocacy in the present political context?  
- What are the limitations of traditional conceptions of environmental advocacy? | Nisbet, Matthew C. “Environmental Advocacy in the Obama Years: Assessing New Strategies for Political Change” (VK)  
- Nordhaus, Ted and Michael Shellenberger, from “The Death of Environmentalism” (ES)  
- Guha, Ramachandra, “The Paradox of Global Environmentalism” (ES) |
## UNIT 2: ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY: FRAMEWORKS AND STRATEGIES
### Week 3: Environmental Policy I

#### 1/23 Regulatory Approaches
- What is the difference between command and control and market-based environmental regulations?
- What successes and limitations have such policies met?
- Should environmental questions be framed in market terms?

- Olmstead, Sheila M. “Applying Market Principles to Environmental Policy” (VK)
- Hitzlik, Michael “California’s cap-and-trade program has cut pollution” LA Times July 29, 2016 (Web)
- Jamieson, Dale “Ethics, Public Policy, and Global Warming” Science Technology and Human Values 17, 2 (Spring 1992): 139-153 (LD)

#### 1/25 Legislative and Judicial Avenues
- How can environmental policy be made through congress or the courts?
- What are the advantages and drawbacks of these approaches?

- Kraft, Michael E. “Environmental Policy in Congress” (VK)
- O’Leary, Rosemary “Environmental Policy in the Courts” (VK)
- Wittes, Benjamin, “The Hapless Toad” The Atlantic May 2005 (Web)

#### - Week 4: Environmental Policy II

#### 1/30 Executive Avenues
- How can environmental policy be shaped by the executive branch?
- What are the advantages and drawbacks of these approaches?

- Vig, Norman J. “Presidential Powers and Environmental Policy” (VK)

#### 2/1 Federal Agencies, States, and Localities
- How do federal agencies and state and local governments shape environmental policy?

- Andrews, Richard N. L., “The Environmental Protection Agency” (VK)
- Rabe, Barry G. “Racing to the Top, the Bottom, or the Middle
## UNIT 3: SHARING SPACESHIP EARTH: GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

### Week 5: Exam I & Sustainable Development

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Reading/Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>Exam I</td>
<td>No Assigned Readings</td>
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| 2/8  | Sustainable Development | - Holland, Allan, “Sustainability” (ES)  
- UN World Commission on Environment and Development: “Our Common Future, From One Earth to One World” pp. 10-27 (WEB)  

### Week 6: Global Environmental Politics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Reading/Notes</th>
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</table>
- Wheeler, David “Beyond Pollution Havens” Global Environmental Politics 2, 2 (May 2002) (LD)  
- Livingstone, David N. “Stop Saying Climate Change Causes War” Foreign Policy (December 4, 2015) (Web) |

### Week 7: Climate Change and Global Environmental Governance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Reading/Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/20</td>
<td>The Challenge of Global Collective Action Problems</td>
<td>- Imber, Mark F. &quot;Governing the Global Commons.&quot; Issues In</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Questions</td>
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| 2/22 | Building a Climate Regime: The Road to and from Paris | • How did the 2015 Paris Climate Accords emerge?  
• What are the politics underpinning them?  
• Why did the US withdrawal and what will the effects of withdrawal be? | - Selin, Henrik and Stacy D. VanDeveer, “Global Climate Change Governance: The Long Road to Paris” (VK)  
- Urpelainen, Johannes, “Here’s what political science can tell us about the Paris climate deal” The Monkey Cage (December 14, 2015)(Web) |
| 2/27 | Climate Change and Global Justice | • What are the implications of climate change on global, gender, and racial justice?  
• How should the goals of climate justice be achieved? | - Roberts, J. Timmons, “Global Inequality and Climate Change” Society and Natural Resources 14, 6 (2001): 501-509 (LD)  
- United Nations WomenWatch, “Women, Gender Equality, and Climate Change” (Web)  
- Bullard, Robert D., from “Environmentalism and Social Justice” (ES) |
| 3/1 | Responsibility for Climate Change | • Who is responsible for global climate change?  
• Who should be responsible for addressing climate change? | - Caney, Simon, “Cosmopolitan Justice, Responsibility, and Global Climate Change” Leiden Journal of International Law 18, 4 (December, 2005): 474-775 |
| 3/6 | Scientific Authority and Communication | • How does scientific expertise and authority shape the politics of climate change?  
• How should scientific expertise be communicated in the public sphere? | - Peter J. Taylor and Frederick H. Buttel, “How do we Know we have Global Environmental Problems? Science and the Globalization of Environmental Discourse” (ES)  
- Davenport, Coral and Eric Lupton, “How G.O.P. Leaders Came to View Climate Change As a National Security Issue” |

**UNIT 4: WHAT DO WE OWE NATURE? THEORETICAL AND ETHICAL QUESTIONS**

**Week 8: Climate Change, Justice, and Responsibility**

**Week 9: Science, Humans, and Non-Humans**
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is the relationship between humanity and the rest of nature?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Does climate change challenge the distinction between humanity and nature?</td>
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<td>- Schlosberg, David “from Theorizing Environmental Justice: The Expanding Sphere of a Discourse” (ES)</td>
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- **Week 10: The Future of Environmental Politics (Course Review)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>Future of Environmental Politics</td>
<td>- Kraft, Michael E. and Norman J. Vig, “Future Environmental Challenges and Solutions” (VK)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What are the prospects of environmental politics and advocacy going forward?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/15</td>
<td>Course Review</td>
<td>- No assigned readings</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/22</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>- Final Exam</td>
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