

fPOLI 350: Global Environmental Politics

Winter 2020, McGill University
Weds/Fri 2:35-3:55, Burnside 1B45

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Course TAs

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OVERVIEW

Environmental problems like climate change, deforestation, biodiversity loss, and oceanic pollution transcend national borders. Solving these problems will require global cooperation on an unprecedented level. In this course, we will explore the challenges of contemporary global environmental governance and innovative solutions being advanced at the community, municipal, provincial, national, and international levels. Theories of international relations will form the lenses through which we assess the causes of, and solutions to, contemporary environmental challenges.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will:

- Have an understanding of the key environmental challenges facing humanity
- Understand how theories of international relations apply to global environmental challenges
- Be able to apply theoretical insights to diagnose environmental challenges and propose appropriate solutions
- Gain fluency in the diverse areas of global environmental governance that exist at multiple scales and be able to critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of different types of governance
- Sharpen their capacity to be critical consumers of political and environmental media

COURSE FORMAT

Lectures will meet twice weekly for 1.5 hours for most of the term. There are no TA conferences for this course, however the TAs will hold extended office hours to support students in preparing for the final paper, climate simulation, and final exam.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

All assigned readings are available through the McGill library.

EVALUATION

Name of Assignment	Due Date	% of final grade
Weekly reading reactions	Ongoing	10
Paper outline	Feb. 7	10
Research paper	Feb. 28	35
World climate simulation	Apr. 1	15
Final Exam	TBD	30
	Total	100

ASSIGNMENTS

Weekly reading reactions (starting in Week 2) (10%)

The assigned readings for this course are **mandatory**. The readings and lectures complement one another—you will not succeed by doing either alone. In order to help you keep up with the readings and practice reading critically, you will write weekly reading reactions over the course of the term.

The reading reactions are designed to help you synthesize and analyze key works in global environmental politics. Each reading reaction is a maximum of 250 words and should include the following:

1. Thesis of the reading, i.e., “This paper argues that...” (1-2 sentences)
2. Summary of the reading (1-2 sentences)
3. Criticism or questions raised by the reading (2-3 sentences)

In weeks where there are two or more readings, students may focus their reading reaction on just one of those readings. The journal will be marked as a whole at the end of the term and each entry in the journal will receive a grade as follows.

- 1 = The reaction is complete, accurate and done with some thought.

- .5 = The reaction is complete but shows no effort or completely misses the point of the reading
- 0 = The reaction is incomplete or late

You must complete 10 reading reactions in total. Reading reactions are **due by the beginning of class on Wednesdays** for the weeks in which the reading is assigned. **Upload your reaction to myCourses by pasting your reading reaction in the comments section of the assignment rather than uploading a word file.**

Paper Outline (10%)

In advance of writing the final essay, students will prepare a **maximum two-page** essay outline (not including the bibliography). The outline will help you prepare to write your essay by requiring you to gather research materials in an organized and timely way, and to identify your essay's central argument before you start writing. It should also summarize the main sub-arguments that will support the thesis and provide an indication of the type of evidence that will be used. The outline should include a bibliography with a **minimum of eight scholarly sources**.

The following list of journals may be useful in finding relevant sources: *Global Environmental Change, Global Environmental Politics, Environmental Politics, Governance, Regulation & Governance, Nature Sustainability, Nature Climate Change*.

Upload your outline through myCourses by 11:59pm on Friday Feb. 7. Name your file as follows: lastname_firstname_POLI350_Outline.docx. Please submit your outline in either Word, RTF, or Adobe PDF format, no other types of files are permitted and Word documents are preferred whenever possible.

Research Paper (35%)

Students will write a max. 3000 word (excl. bibliography) double-spaced paper to be submitted **by 11:59pm on Friday Feb. 28**. Papers should be formatted for 1-inch margins, use a standard 12 pt font (e.g., Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri), include page numbers, and adhere to an accepted citation style (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc). Papers should also include a separate title page with an original title, the student's name, McGill ID number, the class name, and the instructor's name. Papers must also include a properly formatted bibliography that cites a **minimum of eight credible academic sources**. Are you unsure about what is/is not a credible source? To talk to a librarian. Librarians rock!

Paper Assignment: Choose a specific instance of global environmental challenge (e.g., air pollution, biodiversity loss, climate change, fisheries depletion, etc) and answer the following questions:

1. What is the underlying cause of this challenge?

2. Which theory of international relations best explains the underlying cause of this challenge and why?
3. Based on your answers to questions 1&2, will existing efforts to address this challenge be successful? Why or why not?

In your answer to question 2, be sure to contrast your answer with at least one theoretical alternative.

You must upload your final paper through myCourses before midnight on Feb. 28. **Name your file as follows:** lastname_firstname_POLI 350_Paper.docx. Please submit your paper in either Word, RTF, or Adobe PDF format, no other types of files are permitted.

A note on style: Academic papers are not mystery novels. By the end of the first paragraph, you should clearly and directly summarize your answers to the three assignment questions. There is nothing wrong with using phrases like “I will argue...” Clarity is of the utmost importance. Do not use a five-syllable word when a two-syllable one will do. Semi-colons are generally not your friends. If English/French is not your first language or you have trouble writing, consider making an appointment with the [McGill Writing Centre](#).

World Climate Simulation (15%)

On Mar. 20, students will be split into regional groups and asked to select a specific country/region/interest group within that regional group to represent in the next round of UNFCCC negotiations. On Mar. 25 and 27, each regional group will convene in-class to compare research notes, outline their initial positions, and try to arrive at a consensus negotiating position.

On April 1, one representative from each regional group will deliver a 3-minute opening statement (don't go over!) to the assembled parties of the UNFCCC. Imagine this is the first day of negotiations and your region is trying to outline a vision for what you would like to achieve by the end of negotiations. Be creative and play the part of your negotiating group. After opening statements, groups will have until the end of class to negotiate new positions that collectively move the world closer to staying below a 2-degree average temperature change. We will gauge the prospects for a successful outcome using the CROADS climate simulator; the same tool that UN negotiators use when calculating the impacts of nationally determined contributions to the Paris Climate Agreement.

The evaluation breakdown for the simulation is as follows:

Negotiation prep (12%)

As evinced through a 500-word max (+ bibliography) memo **uploaded to myCourses by the beginning of class on Apr. 1**. The memo should summarize the student's research into the negotiating position for their specific country/region/interest group in global climate negotiations.

Group effort (2%)

As evinced by the accuracy of your broader regional group's positions, its consistency with internal power dynamics, and the success of your negotiation outcomes.

Class outcome (1%)

If the class succeeds in reaching a final agreement that keeps average temperature increase below 2 degrees Celsius and raises \$100B/year in funding to the GCF, everyone gets 1/1 on this section. By contrast, if the class fails, everyone gets 0/1 on this section.

Final Exam (30%)

The final exam will be cumulative and will combine multiple choice questions with short essays. You will be tested on your ability to understand and apply the theories, concepts, and knowledge detailed in the course readings and lectures. The exam will be held within the final examination period at a time/location TBD.

COURSE POLICIES

Late Assignments

Late reading reactions will receive a mark of zero unless excused by a valid note of accommodation. Late papers will be penalized 3% per calendar day. Papers are due before midnight on Feb .28, anytime thereafter will be deemed late. Extensions will be granted only for valid reasons supported by documentation from credible sources. For more on obtaining documentation, see the [Student Wellness Hub](#).

Accessibility

As the instructor of this course, I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#), 514-398-6009.

Additional policies governing academic issues which affect students can be found in the McGill Charter of Students' Rights (see the [Handbook on Student Rights and Responsibilities](#)).

Appeals

Students in this course have a right to an impartial and competent review of any mark, provided the appeal occurs no later than two weeks after the mark was received. If you are concerned about your mark on an exam, paper, or group assignment, please follow these procedures:

1. Wait 48 hours after the mark is returned before appealing. This is a "cool-down" period for you to re-read your work and reflect on the accuracy of the grader's comments.

2. Write a max. one page double-spaced response to your grader, indicating any areas you feel were incorrectly marked in the initial assessment. Your response should only deal with the content of your work and not any other conditions (i.e., I need an 'A' to get into law school!)
3. Either the TA or instructor will review your mark. It may go up, down, or stay the same.

Cell Phones

Cell phones are not permitted to be used in class without my explicit permission. Accommodations will be made only for students with accessibility concerns. Please consult the [Policy Concerning the Rights of Students with Disabilities](#) to determine if you qualify for an exception. Please turn your ringer off before the start of class.

Email Etiquette

Your TAs are the first point of contact for email questions. We will do our best to answer emails quickly (usually within 48 hours), but professors and TAs lead lives outside the classroom too. Setting reasonable work-life boundaries is something we are all going to have to learn to do. As such, you should not expect instant replies to emails in the evenings or over the weekend. Before emailing, please read the syllabus to see if your question is answered there. Longer questions about substantive matters (e.g., essay content) are better handled in person. I encourage you to come see me or your TAs during office hours.

Language of Submission

In accordance with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives.

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).

McGill Statement on Academic Integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity/> for more information).

Put more simply, DO NOT PLAGIARIZE. You will get caught. If you are unclear about whether or not to cite something, follow this simple rule: when in doubt, cite-it-out!

Sustainability

This course has been designed to adhere to McGill's policies on sustainability. For more information, please consult the [Office of Sustainability](#).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Part I *Diagnosing the problem*

Week 1 **Course introduction. What are we up against?**

W Jan 8 The course in a nutshell.

F Jan 10 The state of the global environment in 2020

Readings WWF. 2018. Living Planet Report 2018. Gland: WWF.

Week 2 **Keeping it real: realism and global environmental politics**

W Jan 15 States, national interest, hegemonic stability theory, and regime formation

F Jan 17 Securitization of the environment and the specter of geoengineering

Readings Dimitrov, Radoslav S. 2010. "Inside Copenhagen: The State of Climate Governance." *Global Environmental Politics* 10(2): 18–24.

Week 3 **Can't we all just get along? Liberalism, constructivism and global environmental politics**

W Jan 22 Neoliberal institutionalism and environmental regimes + library resources

F Jan 24 Guest lecture by Sébastien Jodoin (Law)

Readings Keohane, Robert O. 2016. "Keohane on Climate: What Price Equity and Justice?" *Climate Home News*.
<https://www.climatechangenews.com/2016/09/06/keohane-on-climate-what-price-equity-and-justice/> (November 22, 2019).

Klinsky, Sonja et al. 2017. "Why Equity Is Fundamental in Climate Change Policy Research." *Global Environmental Change* 44: 170–73.

Week 4 **Smash capitalism: critical theory and global environmental politics**

W Jan 29 Neo-Gramscianism and the environment.

F Jan 31 Writing a successful term paper

Readings Fuchs, Doris, and Agni Kalfagianni. 2010. "The Causes and Consequences of Private Food Governance." *Business and Politics* 12(3): 1–34.

Week 5 **Indigenous and feminist Approaches to Environmental Politics**

W Feb 5 Eco-feminism

F Feb 7 Indigenous ways of knowing ***Paper outline due***

Readings Dauvergne, Peter, and Genevieve LeBaron. 2013. "The Social Cost of Environmental Solutions." *New Political Economy* 18(3): 410–30.

Kimmerer, Robin Wall. 2013. "Mishkos Kenomagwen: The Teachings of Grass" in *Braiding Sweetgrass*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, pp. 156-166.
Available at:
<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/mcgill/detail.action?docID=1212658>

Part II Exploring solutions

Week 6 It's complicated: regimes, regime complexes and path dependency

W Feb 12 Peer outline feedback workshop

F Feb 14 Regimes and regime complexes

Readings Raustiala, Kal and David G. Victor. 2004. The Regime Complex for Plant Genetic Resources. *International Organization* 58(2): 277–309.

Week 7 Dream small: from orchestration to degrowth

W Feb 19 Is orchestration the answer?

F Feb 21 The politics of degrowth

Readings Hsu, Angel, Andrew S. Moffat, Amy J. Weinfurter, and Jason D. Schwartz. 2015. "Towards a New Climate Diplomacy." *Nature Climate Change* 5: 501–3.

Week 8 The business of sustainability: corporate environmentalism

W Feb 26 Why do companies 'go green'?

F Feb 28 Separating greenwash from governance ***Research paper due***

Readings van der Ven, Hamish. 2014. "Socializing the C-Suite: Why Some Big-Box Retailers Are 'Greener' than Others." *Business and Politics* 16(1): 31–63.

MAR 2-6 READING BREAK – NO CLASS

Week 9 Takin' it to the streets: ENGOs and social movements

W Mar 11 From #nodapl to eco-terrorism

F Mar 13 The ABCs of ENGOs

Readings Neville, Kate J., and Erika Weinthal. 2016. "Scaling up Site Disputes: Strategies to Redefine 'Local' in the Fight against Fracking." *Environmental Politics* 25(4): 569–92.

Hockenos, Paul. "The Realpolitik of Greta Thunberg." *Foreign Policy*.
<https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/09/25/the-realpolitik-of-greta-thunberg/>
(November 21, 2019).

Week 10 From the inside out: national and subnational politics and diffusion effects

W Mar 18 Cities and subnational environmental governance

F Mar 20 World climate simulation prep

Readings Gordon, David J., and Craig A. Johnson. 2017. "The Orchestration of Global Urban Climate Governance: Conducting Power in the Post-Paris Climate Regime." *Environmental Politics* 26(4): 694–714.

Week 11 Simulation Prep

W Mar 25 NO CLASS. SIMULATION PREP.

F Mar 27 NO CLASS. SIMULATION PREP. *****Climate simulation memo due*****

Readings Review your regional policy brief on myCourses and the UNFCCC website in advance of the simulation: <http://bigpicture.unfccc.int/>.

Week 12 COP Simulation

W Apr 1 *****COP 24 SIMULATION EXERCISE IN CLASS*****

F Apr 3 *****COP 24 SIMULATION EXERCISE IN CLASS*****

Readings TBD.

Week 13 Well that was depressing...Where do we go from here?

W Apr 8 Taking action: from the individual to the collective.

F Apr 10 NO CLASS. GOOD FRIDAY.

Readings Maniates, Michael F. 2001. "Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World?" *Global Environmental Politics* 1(3): 31–52. (Available on the McGill library website)

Week 14 Final Exam Review

T Apr 14 Jeopardy! (Exam Prep Version)

Readings Review all readings to date.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

© Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be

subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.