

Global Environmental Politics

POLS 30321

Corbett Family Hall E202

MW 2:00-3:15 PM

Instructor: William Kakenmaster (wkakenma@nd.edu)

Office hours: MT 12:30-2:00 pm in 2036 Jenkins Nanovic Halls

Course Description

Global environmental politics is a field of political science that examines how political processes shape environmental outcomes and *vice versa*. On the one hand, it is concerned with issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, and natural resource use. On the other hand, it studies things like political institutions, social movements, party systems, and state-business relations. All the while, it places these ideas in a cross-national, global perspective. Throughout this course, students will grapple with both foundational and emerging questions in the study of global environmental politics. Why do some governments have stronger environmental policies than others? When do interest groups support or oppose different forms of environmental regulation? What role do social movements play in supporting diverse coalitions of environmental interests? How do voters form and express preferences for or against environmental action?

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, students will:

1. Be informed about global environmental issues and understand how they are related to politics.
2. Understand key concepts in global environmental politics and apply them in different settings.
3. Know how to analyze and critically evaluate social scientific research on the environment.
4. Develop strong written and verbal communication skills.

Reading(s)

There are no required textbooks for this course. Instead, students will be asked to read a variety of academic book chapters and journal articles listed in the course schedule. All required and recommended readings for this course will be posted on Canvas. For those interested in further reading beyond this course, see the list of [Harold and Margaret Sprout Award](#), [Don K. Price Award](#), and [Lynton Keith Caldwell Prize](#) winning books, Cambridge University Press series on [environmental policy, economics, and law](#) and the [politics of climate change](#), and [multiple series](#) of MIT Press books.

Assignments

There are four assignments in this course: two short (3-4 pages) response papers, a midterm exam, and a final exam.

The first short response paper is due on **March 28** and must discuss readings from the second part of the course. The second short response paper is due on **April 26** and must discuss readings from the third part of the course.

The midterm exam will be administered in person on **February 28**. It is closed book and closed note and may include a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

The final exam will be administered remotely and is due on **May 10**. It is an open book and open note essay format. The essay prompt will be released two weeks prior to the due date.

Students are also expected to participate actively throughout the course. Active participation involves reading the assigned material, arriving to class prepared and on time, paying close attention, posing insightful questions, and completing all required assignments. Included in participation are weekly, one-paragraph reading reflections due before class each **Monday**.

Grading

Participation		15%	
Short Response Papers		25%	
Midterm Exam		30%	
Final Exam		30%	
≥ 93.00	A	73.00 - 76.99	C
90.00 - 92.99	A-	70.00 - 72.99	C-
87.00 - 89.99	B+	67.00 - 69.99	D+
83.00 - 86.99	B	63.00 - 66.99	D
80.00 - 82.99	B-	60.00 - 62.99	D-
77.00 - 79.99	C+	≤ 59.99	F

Organization

Roughly speaking, this course is divided into four parts. The first part of the course (weeks 1-3) introduces students to general issues and theories of global environmental politics. Topics include collective action, distributive politics, and environmental justice.

The second part (weeks 4-5, 7, and 9) delves into institutional approaches to global environmental politics. Topics include international environmental agreements, democracy and autocracy, firms and economic institutions, and environmental policymaking.

The third part (weeks 10-13) deals with behavioral approaches to global environmental politics. Topics include environmental attitudes and policy preferences, voting behaviors, social movements, and violent conflict.

The fourth part (weeks 14 and 15) is reserved for topics and review. Topics include climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and biodiversity, natural resources and extractive industries, consumption, waste and recycling, and water.

Course Policies

- **Attendance and participation:** Attendance is mandatory and factors into students' participation grades. Unexcused absences result in a participation grade of 0 for that day. Excused absences are excluded when calculating final participation grades. Only absences permitted by university policy and verified per section 3.1 of the honor code will be excused.
- **Honor code:** All students must abide by the [Undergraduate Academic Code of Honor](#). Most importantly, students are expected to uphold the high standards of academic integrity set by the University of Notre Dame. These standards of conduct include refraining from plagiarism, using proper citation methods, and completing one's own work.
- **Diversity and inclusion:** The University of Notre Dame promotes diversity and inclusion as part of its academic mission. This course contributes to those goals by providing students with a learning environment that is based on openness, communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex, gender, age, class, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin will not be tolerated in this course.
- **Disability services:** Students with a registered disability should speak with me as soon as possible regarding accommodations. Students with a disability that is not registered with the university should contact the [Center for Student Support and Care](#).
- **Mental health:** Poor mental health can interfere with your academic performance and lead to lower overall well-being. If you are struggling with your mental health in this course, I strongly encourage you to take advantage of the free, confidential mental health services offered by the [University Counseling Center](#). Getting help is the best thing you can do for yourself and those around you.
- **Technology:** Students are encouraged not to use laptops, cell phones, or other electronic devices during class. You should bring copies of the readings and any note-taking material (e.g., pens, pencils, notebooks, folders) you may need to class.

Schedule

Week 0 (Jan. 17): Course Introduction

Required:

No required readings. Please read this syllabus carefully before class.

Recommended:

Cass, Loren R. 2022. "The Discipline of Global Environmental Politics: A Short History." In Harris, Paul G. (ed). 2022. *Routledge Handbook of Global Environmental Politics*, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Part 1: Theories of Global Environmental Politics

Week 1 (Jan. 22, 24): Collective Action

Required:

- Esty, Daniel C. 2008. "Rethinking Global Environmental Governance to Deal with Climate Change: The Multiple Logics of Global Collective Action." *American Economic Review: Papers & Proceedings* 98(2), 116-121.
- Harris, Paul G. 2007. "Collective Action on Climate Change: The Logic of Regime Failure." *Natural Resources Journal* 47(1), 195-224.
- Ostrom, Elinor. 2000. "Collective Action and the Evolution of Social Norms." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 14(3), 137-158.

Recommended:

- Hardin, Garrett. 1968. "The Tragedy of the Commons." *Science* 162(3859), 1243-1248.

Week 2 (Jan. 29, 31): Distributive Politics

Required:

- Aklin, Michaël and Matto Mildenberger. 2020. "Prisoners of the Wrong Dilemma: Why Distributive Conflict, Not Collective Action, Characterizes the Politics of Climate Change." *Global Environmental Politics* 20(4), 4-27.
- Colgan, Jeff D., Jessica F. Green, and Thomas N. Hale. 2021. "Asset Revaluation and the Existential Politics of Climate Change." *International Organization* 75(2), 586-610.

Recommended:

- Alcañiz, Isabella and Ricardo A. Gutiérrez. 2022. *The Distributive Politics of Environmental Protection in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Chapter 4 (pp. 30-51).
- Golden, Miriam and Brian Min. 2013. "Distributive Politics Around the World." *Annual Review of Political Science* 16, 73-99.
- Mildenberger, Matto. 2019. "The Tragedy of the Tragedy of the Commons." *Scientific American*. <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/voices/the-tragedy-of-the-tragedy-of-the-commons/>.

Week 3 (Feb. 5, 7): Environmental Justice

Required:

- Mohai, Paul, David Pellow, and J. Timmons Roberts. 2009. "Environmental Justice." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 34, 405-430.

Walker, Gordon. 2012. *Environmental Justice: Concepts, Evidence, and Politics*, Chapters 1 (pp. 1-15) and 2 (pp. 16-38). New York: Routledge.

Recommended:

Jamieson, Dale. 2014. *Reason in a Dark Time: Why the Struggle Against Climate Change Failed – and What It Means for Our Future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapter 5 (pp. 144-177).

Pellow, David N. 2016. "Toward a Critical Environmental Justice Studies: Black Lives Matter as an Environmental Justice Challenge." *Du Bois Review* 13(2), 221-236.

Vanderheiden, Steve. 2008. *Atmospheric Justice: A Political Theory of Climate Change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapter 2 (pp. 45-80).

Part 2: Institutional Approaches

Week 4 (Feb. 12, 14): International Environmental Agreements

Required:

DeSombre, Elizabeth R. 2006. *Global Environmental Institutions*. New York: Routledge, Introduction (pp. 1-6) and Chapter 2 (pp. 7-42).

Keohane, Robert O. and David G. Victor. 2011. "The Regime Complex for Climate Change." *Perspectives on Politics* 9(1), 7-23.

Suechting, Peter and Mary E. Pettenger. 2022. "International Environmental Regimes: Formation, Effectiveness, Trends and Challenges." In Harris, Paul G. (ed). 2022. *Routledge Handbook of Global Environmental Politics*, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

Recommended:

Mitchell, Ronald B. 2003. "International Environmental Agreements: A Survey of Their Features, Formation, and Effects." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 28, 429-461.

Mitchell, Ronald B., Liliana B. Andonova, Mark Axelrod, Jörg Balsiger, Thomas Bernauer, Jessica F. Green, James Hollway, Rakhyun E. Kim, Jean-Frédéric Morin. 2020. "What We Know (and Could Know) About International Environmental Agreements." *Global Environmental Politics* 20(1), 103-121.

Tørstad, Vegard, Håkon Sælen, and Live Standal Bøyum. 2020. "The Domestic Politics of International Climate Commitments: Which Factors Explain Cross-Country Variation in NDC Ambition?" *Environmental Research Letters* 15, 024021.

Week 5 (Feb. 19, 21): Democracy and Autocracy

Required:

Bättig, Michèle B. and Thomas Bernauer. 2009. "National Institutions and Global Public Goods: Are Democracies More Cooperative in Climate Change Policy?" *International Organization* 63(2), 281-308.

- Ross, Michael L. 2001. "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* 53(3), 325-361.
- Sanford, Luke. 2023. "Democratization, Elections, and Public Goods: The Evidence from Deforestation." *American Journal of Political Science* 67(3), 748-763.
- von Stein, Jana. 2022. "Democracy, Autocracy, and Everything in Between: How Domestic Institutions Affect Environmental Protection." *British Journal of Political Science* 52(1), 339-357.

Recommended:

- Chesler, Angela, Debra Javeline, Kimberly Peh, and Shana Scogin. 2023. "Is Democracy the Answer to Intractable Climate Change?" *Global Environmental Politics* 23(4), 201-216.
- Kakenmaster, William. 2024. "The Fossil-Fueled Roots of Climate Inaction in Authoritarian Regimes." *Perspectives on Politics*. Forthcoming.
- Payne, Rodger A. 1995. "Freedom and the Environment." *Journal of Democracy* 6(3), 40-53.
- Povitkina, Marina. 2018. "The Limits of Democracy in Tackling Climate Change." *Environmental Politics* 27(3), 411-432.

Week 6 (Feb. 26, 28): Review and Midterm Exam

Required:

No required readings. Please review for the midterm exam on Feb. 28.

Recommended:

- Ferrari, Michelle, director. *Rachel Carson*. Public Broadcasting Service, 2017. 1 hr., 54 mins. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/rachel-carson/>.

Feb. 28: Midterm Exam

Week 7 (Mar. 4, 6): Firms and Economic Institutions

Required:

- Grumbach, Jacob. 2015. "Polluting Industries as Climate Protagonists: Cap and Trade and the Problem of Business Preferences." *Business and Politics* 17(4), 633-659.
- Lerner, Michael and Iain Osgood. 2022. "Across the Boards: Explaining Firm Support for Climate Policy." *British Journal of Political Science* 5(3), 934-957.
- Meckling, Jonas. 2011. *Carbon Coalitions: Business, Climate Politics, and the Rise of Emissions Trading*. Cambridge: MIT Press, Chapter 2 (pp. 25-46).

Recommended:

- Cory, Jared, Michael Lerner, and Iain Osgood. 2021. "Supply Chain Linkages and the Extended Carbon Coalition." *American Journal of Political Science* 65(1), 69-87.

Grasso, Marco. 2018. "Big Oil's Duty of Disgorging Funds in the Context of Climate Change." In Tahseen Jafry (ed). 2018. *Routledge Handbook of Climate Justice*. New York: Routledge.

Kennard, Amanda. 2020. "The Enemy of My Enemy: When Firms Support Climate Change Regulation." *International Organization* 74(2), 187-221.

Whelan, Tensie and Carly Fink. 2016. "The Comprehensive Business Case for Sustainability." *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2016/10/the-comprehensive-business-case-for-sustainability>.

Week 8 (Mar. 11, 13): Spring Break

Week 9 (Mar. 18, 20): Environmental Policymaking

Required:

Stavins, Robert and Bradley Whitehead. 1997. "Market-Based Environmental Policies." In Chertow, Marian R. and Daniel C. Esty (eds). *Thinking Ecologically: The Next Generation of Environmental Policy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, Chapter 7 (pp. 105-117).

Steinberg, Paul F. 2012. "Welcome to the Jungle: Policy Theory and Political Instability." In Steinberg, Paul F. and Stacy D. VanDeveer (eds). *Comparative Environmental Politics: Theory, Practice, and Prospects*. Cambridge: MIT Press, Chapter 10 (pp. 255-284).

Jordan, Andrew, Rüdiger K.W. Wurzel, and Anthony R. Zito. 2003. "Comparative Conclusions - 'New' Environmental Policy Instruments: An Evolution or a Revolution in Environmental Policy?" *Environmental Politics* 12(1), 201-224.

Recommended:

Saikawa, Eri. 2013. "Policy Diffusion of Emissions Standards: Is There a Race to the Top?" *World Politics* 65(1), 1-33.

Trachtman, Samuel. 2023. "Policy Feedback and Interdependence in American Federalism: Evidence from Rooftop Solar Politics." *Perspectives on Politics* 21(2), 462-477.

Seto, Karen C., Steven J. Davis, Ronald B. Mitchell, Eleanor C. Stokes, Gregory Unruh, and Diana Ürge-Vorsatz. 2016. "Carbon Lock-In: Types, Causes, and Policy Implications." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 41, 425-452.

Part 3: Behavioral Approaches

Week 10 (Mar. 25, 27): Environmental Attitudes and Policy Preferences

Required:

Bush, Sarah Sunn and Amanda Clayton. 2023. "Facing Change: Gender and Climate Change Attitudes Worldwide." *American Political Science Review* 117(2), 591-608.

- Franzen, Axel and Dominikus Vogl. 2013. "Two Decades of Measuring Environmental Attitudes: A Comparative Analysis of 33 Countries." *Global Environmental Change* 23(5), 1001-1008.
- McCright, Aaron M., Riley E. Dunlap, and Sandra T. Marquart-Pyatt. 2016. "Political Ideology and Views about Climate Change in the European Union." *Environmental Politics* 25(2), 338-358.

Recommended:

- Anderson, Brilé, Tobias Böhmelt, and Hugh Ward. 2017. "Public Opinion and Environmental Policy Output: A Cross-National Analysis of Energy Policies in Europe." *Environmental Research Letters* 12, 114011.
- Gaikwad, Nikhar, Federica Genovese, and Dustin Tingley. 2022. "Creating Climate Coalitions: Mass Preferences for Compensating Vulnerability in the World's Two Largest Democracies." *American Political Science Review* 116(4), 1165-1183.
- Javeline, Debra, Tracy Kijewski-Correa, and Angela Chesler. 2019. "Does it Matter if You 'Believe' in Climate Change? Not for Coastal Home Vulnerability." *Climatic Change* 155, 511-532.
- Kim, So Young and Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias. 2014. "Cross-National Public Opinion on Climate Change: The Effects of Affluence and Vulnerability." *Global Environmental Politics* 14(1), 79-106.
- Konisky, David. 2011. "Public Preferences for Environmental Policy Responsibility." *Publius* 41(1), 76-100.

Week 11 (Apr. 1, 3): Voting Behaviors

Required:

- Damsbo-Svendsen, Søren and Kasper M. Hansen. 2023. "When the Election Rains Out and How Bad Weather Excludes Marginal Voters from Turning Out." *Electoral Studies* 81, 10257.
- Guber, Deborah Lynn. 2001. "Environmental Voting in the American States: A Tale of Two Initiatives." *State and Local Government Review* 33(2), 120-132.
- Hoffmann, Roman, Raya Muttarak, Jonas Peisker, and Piero Stanig. 2022. "Climate Change Experiences Raise Environmental Concerns and Promote Green Voting." *Nature Climate Change* 12, 148-155.
- McCrea, Rod, Zoe Leviston, and Iain A. Walker. 2016. "Climate Change Skepticism and Voting Behavior: What Causes What?" *Environment and Behavior* 48(10), 1309-1334.

Recommended:

- Hazlett, Chad and Matto Mildemberger. 2020. "Wildfire Exposure Increases Pro-Environment Voting within Democratic but Not Republican Areas." *American Political Science Review* 114(4), 1359-1365.

- Newkirk II, Vann R. 2016. "Hurricane Matthew's Voting-Rights Challenge." *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/10/hurricane-matthew-floods-voting-election/503834/>.
- Papp, Zsófia. 2022. "Environmental Attitudes, Environmental Problems and Party Choice: A Large-N Comparative Study." *Political Geography* 97, 102652.
- Stein, Robert M. 2015. "Election Administration During Natural Disasters and Emergencies: Hurricane Sandy and the 2012 Election." *Election Law Journal: Rules, Politics, and Policy* 14(1), 66-73.
- Wade, Jared. 2016. "How Hurricane Matthew May Have Destroyed Colombia's Peace Vote." *The City Paper*. <https://thecitypaperbogota.com/news/how-hurricane-matthew-may-have-destroyed-colombias-peace-vote/>.

Mar. 28: Short Paper #1 due at 11:59 pm Eastern Time

Week 12 (Apr. 8, 10): Social Movements

Required:

- Fisher, Dana R. and Sohana Nasrin. 2022. "Climate Activism and its Effects." *WIREs Climate Change* 12(1), e683.
- Saunders, Clare. 2013. *Environmental Networks and Social Movement Theory*. London: Bloomsbury, Chapter 2 (pp. 22-44).
- Wapner, Paul. 1995. "Politics Beyond the State: Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics." *World Politics* 47(3), 311-340.

Recommended:

- Eisenstadt, Todd A. and Karleen Jones West. 2019. *Who Speaks for Nature? Indigenous Movements, Public Opinion, and the Petro-State in Ecuador*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-34).
- O'Brien, Kevin J. 2017. *The Violence of Climate Change: Lessons of Resistance from Non-violent Activists*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, Chapters 1 (pp. 17-39) and 2 (pp. 40-60).
- Riofrancos, Thea. 2020. *Resource Radicals: From Petro-Nationalism to Post-Extractivism in Ecuador*. Durham: Duke University Press, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-28).

Week 13 (Apr. 15, 17): Violent Conflict

Required:

- Berman, Nicolas, Mathieu Couttenier, Dominic Rohner, and Mathias Thoenig. 2017. "This Mine is Mine! How Minerals Fuel Conflicts in Africa." *American Economic Review* 107(6), 1564-1610.
- Ide, Tobias, Carl Bruch, Alexander Carius, Ken Conca, Geoffrey D. Dabelko, Richard Matthew, and Erika Weinthal. 2021. "The Past and Future(s) of Environmental Peacebuilding." *International Affairs* 97(1), 1-16.

Koubi, Vally. 2019. "Climate Change and Conflict." *Annual Review of Political Science* 22, 343-360.

Recommended:

Gleick, Peter H. 2014. "Water, Drought, Climate Change, and Conflict in Syria." *Weather, Climate, and Society* 6(3), 331-340.

Hendrix, Cullen S. 2017. "A Comment on 'Climate Change and the Syrian Civil War Revisited.'" *Political Geography* 60, 251-252.

Hendrix, Cullen S. and Idean Salehyan. 2012. "Climate Change, Rainfall, and Social Conflict in Africa." *Journal of Peace Research* 49(1), 35-50.

Kowszyk, Yanina, Frank Vanclay, and Rajiv Maher. 2023. "Conflict Management in the Extractive Industries: A Comparison of Four Mining Projects in Latin America." *The Extractive Industries and Society* 13, 101161.

Selby, Jan, Omar S. Dahi, Christiane Fröhlich, and Mike Hulme. 2017. "Climate Change and the Syrian Civil War Revisited." *Political Geography* 60, 232-244.

Stoop, Nik, Marijke Verpoorten, and Peter van der Windt. 2019. "Artisanal or Industrial Conflict Minerals? Evidence from Eastern Congo." *World Development* 122, 660-674.

Week 14 (Apr. 22, 24): Topics

Required (choose three):

Stokes, Leah Cardamore. 2020. *Short Circuiting Policy: Interest Groups and the Battle Over Clean Energy and Climate Policy in the American States*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapters 1 (pp. 1-34) and 2 (pp. 35-67).

Agrawal, Arun and Elinor Ostrom. 2006. "Political Science and Conservation Biology: A Dialog of the Deaf." *Conservation Biology* 20(3), 681-682.

Auld, Graeme, Michele Betsill, and Stacy D. VanDeveer. 2018. "Transnational Governance for Mining and the Mineral Lifecycle." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 43, 425-453.

Conca, Ken and Erika Weinthal. 2019. "The Political Dimensions of Water." In Conca, Ken and Erika Weinthal (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Water Politics and Policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapter 1 (pp. 3-20).

Javeline, Debra. 2014. "The Most Important Topic Political Scientists Are Not Studying: Adapting to Climate Change." *Perspectives on Politics* 12(2), 420-434.

Miller, Daniel C. and Arun Agrawal. 2023. "Political Science and Conservation." In Miller, Daniel C., Ivan R. Scales, and Michael B. Mascia (eds). *Conservation Social Science: Understanding People and the Conservation of Biodiversity*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, Chapter 6 (pp. 185-232).

O'Neill, Kate. 2019. *Waste*. Cambridge: Polity, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-24).

Vanderheiden, Steve. 2008. *Atmospheric Justice: A Political Theory of Climate Change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-44).

Recommended:

All other readings you did not choose from the above list.

Apr. 26: Short Paper #2 due at 11:59 pm Eastern Time

Week 15 (Apr. 29, May 1): Review

Required:

No required readings. Please review for the final exam on May 10.

May 10: Final Exam due at 11:59 pm Eastern Time