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53048 - The politics of the Environment

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Winter Term 2020/2021
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Thursdays, 08:15-09:45
Online Class (Zoom)

Course Description

Climate change and the environment are becoming central topics for politics and societies in many countries. This course introduces students to the politics surrounding the environment, with a focus on political behavior, party politics and policy-making. It will provide an overview of the main debates on the environment within political science, also integrating research from economics. The focus will be - but is not limited to – established democracies in the Global North and quantitative empirical research.

Prior knowledge of hypothesis testing and familiarity with quantitative methods is required. Participants must prepare a presentation and write an empirical research design paper (in English) to receive full credit.

Course Goals

This course will:
- introduce students to some of the most important questions in the field of the politics of the environment, with a focus on policy, political behaviour and political parties.
- help students formulate their own research question.
- give them an understanding of typical research design and methods in the field.
- present the most relevant studies and recent theoretical debates in the literature.

Requisites:
- The course is mainly focused on quantitative empirical research, so students should have some statistical knowledge.
- The course's language is English.

A note on online teaching

This class will be taught remotely, as prescribed by the current measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This makes things different from regular seminars.

Most importantly, we will be meeting weekly and virtually via **Zoom**.

- create a **Zoom account** linked to your **HU account before the first session**
- see https://www.cms.hu-berlin.de/de/dl/multimedia/bereiche/tele/zoom
- download Zoom client (preferable) or give zoom rights to access in browser (chrome works best)
- enter Zoom meeting 10 minutes before class starts
- Zoom Meeting ID: 640 0984 4739
- **password: polenviron**
- Mute your microphone if you are not speaking (hold space bar to unmute)
- It is preferable that you keep your camera turned on, but not mandatory.

As usual, we will rely on **Moodle** to manage the class:
- Name: The Politics of the Environment (Link)
- **password: polenviron21**
- All texts will be uploaded on moodle at least one week ahead

Course Requirements

Presentation & Discussion:
Students are expected to give one presentation on a **substantive reading** covered in class. This can happen either alone or in a group of two. The style will resemble a **mock academic conference talk**, where presentations do not exceed 15 minutes and are supported by slides. For each presentation, one discussant will be chosen to prepare a brief critique of the content, not exceeding 5 minutes. The duration of presentation and discussion is timed and should not go over the limits. Afterwards, the floor is open to general discussion.

- Presentation slides are uploaded on Moodle as PDF until the day before the presentation (Wednesdays), noon.
- On Moodle, you will find a number of resources on how to read academic papers, how to interpret causal claims, and how to read empirical results.

Readings, Participation & Commenting:
Science relies on exchange of ideas and critical thinking. You are expected to have read the required texts carefully prior to class and to engage in the in-class discussions of them. All students who are not acting as presenter or discussant during a session are expected to prepare themselves by reading the texts and posting two comments. Comments can be (constructive)

criticisms of the paper, its assumptions, or design, comments on how they are related to other literature and how they might be relevant to current topics. If there are aspects of the reading you do not understand or struggled with you are also encouraged to share them (there is no such thing as stupid questions and we're all here to learn). You are encouraged to engage with other students' comments as well. Comments should be posted on Moodle by Monday, 11:00pm before class. From time to time we may work on small in-class assignments (policy briefs, etc).

- Post **one question per text** on Moodle by Monday, 11:00pm.
- Answer or comment at least **one question per text** by Tuesday, 11:00pm.
- On Moodle, you will find a number of resources on how to read academic papers, how to comment on them, and other useful tools.

Other Sources:

Especially during covid, you are more than welcome to look for other resources and - if you find them relevant - to bring them into our Moodle and in-class discussions. You are also welcome to engage in discussions of these topics on Moodle, in a separate discussion forum. Here are some examples:

- *A Matter of Degrees*, by Leah C. Stokes and Katharine Wilkinson, a 9-episode podcast on climate by a leading political scientist and a renowned climate activist.
- https://climate.nasa.gov/evidence/
- https://insideclimatenews.org/. This is just an example, but many of the larger newspapers have webpages dedicated to environmental journalism.
- Feel free to share other sources you find.

Research Design Paper:

Students are expected to hand in a paper that outlines a research project that is related to environmental politics **as a PDF via email by September 30th, 2021**. This paper should not exceed 3000 words in length and is written in English. Please use "author-year" citation styles, (e.g. Egan and Mullin 2012). You should cite your sources and plagiarism will be harshly punished. Topics **should** be discussed with the instructor in advance during office hours. In general, the paper must address a specific research question and follow the guidelines of empirical social science research discussed in class. We will clarify the style and scope of the projects throughout class.

- Hand in research design paper by **September 30th, 2021** as PDF by email to antonio.valentim@hu-berlin.de.

Office Hours

Regular office hours are held Thursdays from **10:00 to 11:20** on Zoom. Make sure to sign-up for a 20-minute time slot using the Google Doc. Please **sign up before Thursday 00:00**. The password to join the Zoom session is **officehour** and the Meeting ID is 686 3448 5089.

Recommended Preliminary Readings

Bernauer, Thomas (2013) Climate Change Politics. Annual Review of Political Science 16, 421-448.

Cao, Xun et al (2013). Research Frontiers in Comparative and International Environmental Politics: An Introduction. Comparative Political Studies 47, 291-308.

Howe, Peter et al. (2019). How will climate change shape climate opinion? Environmental Research Letters 14, 113001.

Class Schedule

1 Introduction

15.04: Introductory Session
- Technical setup and introduction
- Presentation of the course topics and outline
- Introduction to the concepts of the seminar

2 Climate Change Today

22.04: An overview of climate change and its consequences
Required Readings:
- Carleton, & Hsiang (2016) Social and economic impacts of climate. Science, 353, aad9837-1, aad9837-15.
- Hsiang & Kopp (2018). An economist's guide to climate change. Journal of Economic Perspectives 32, 3-32.

Further Readings:
- IPCC (2018) Global warming of 1.5°: *Summary for policymakers.*
- Gillis (2017) Climate Change is Complex - We've got Answers to Your Questions. New York Times.
- The Hamilton Project and EPIC (2017). Twelve Economic Facts on Energy and Climate Change
- Tol, R. (2009). The Economic effects of climate change. Journal of Economic Perspectives 23, 29-51.
- Ranson, M (2014). Crime, weather and climate change. Journal of Environmental Economics and Management 67, 274-302.
- Hsiang, S., Burke M. & Miguel, E. (2013). Quantifying the Influence of Climate on Human Conflict. Science 341, 1235367-1 - 1235367-14.
- Doherty, J. & Clayton, S. (2011). The Psychological impacts of Global Climate Change, The American Psychologist 66, 265-276.

3 International cooperation and policy

29.04: International policy-making
Required Readings:
- Harrison, Kathryn & Sundstrom, L. M. (2007). The Comparative Politics of Climate Change. Global Environmental Politics, 7:4, 1-18.
- Chan, G, Stavins, R & Ji, Z. (2018). International Climate Change Policy. Annual Review of Resource Economics, 10, 10:9.1-10:9.26.

Further Readings:
- Bernauer, Thomas (2013) Climate Change Politics. Annual Review of Political Science 16, 421-448.

06.05: An issue of collective action?
Required Readings:
- Aklin, M. & Mildenberger, M. (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.
- Breetz, H., Mildenberger, M. & Stokes, L. (2018). The political logics of clean energy transitions. Business and Politics, 20, 4, 492-552,

Further Readings:

- Nordhaus, W. (2015), Climate Clubs: Overcoming Free-riding in International Climate Policy. American Economic Review 105, 1339-1370.
- Grasso, M. & Timmons Roberts, J. (2014). A compromise to break the climate impasse. Nature Climate Change 4, 543-549.
- Hardin, G (1968). The Tragedy of the Commons. Science 162, 1243-1248.

13.05: No Session!

20.05: Climate policy and inequality

Required Readings:
- Hartzell-Nichols, L. (2011). Responsibility for meeting the costs of adaptation. WIREs Climate Change 2, 687-700.
- Diffenbaugh, N. S. & Burke, M. (2019) Global warming has increased global economic inequality. PNAS 116 (20), 9808-9813

Further Readings:
- Ross, M (2015). What Have We Learned about the Resource Curse? Annual Review of Political Science 18, 239-259.
- Knox et al (2012). Climate change impacts on crop productivity in Africa and South Asia. Environmental Research Letters 7, 034032

4 The Environment and political behaviour

27.05: Political behaviour I: Public opinion on climate

Required Readings:
- Lee, T. et al. (2015). Predictors of public climate change awareness and risk perception around the world. Nature Climate Change 5, 1014-1020.
- Bush, Sarah & Clayton, Amanda (2021). Facing Change: Identity and Cross-National Responses to Climate Change. Working paper.

Further Readings:
- Bloom, D. (1995). International Public Opinion on the Environment. Science 269, 354-358.
- Mildenberger, M. & Leiserowitz (2017). Public opinion on climate change: Is there an economy–environment tradeoff? Environmental Politics 26, 801-824

03.06: Political behaviour II: Natural disasters and voting behaviour

Required Readings:
- Egan, P. & Mullin, M. (2012). Turning Personal Experience into Political Attitudes: The Effect of Local Weather on Americans' Perceptions about Global Warming. Journal of Politics 74, 796-809.
- Baccini, L. & Leemann, L. (2020). Do Natural Disasters Help the Environment? How Voters Respond and What that means. Political Science Research and Methods, *Online First.*

Further Readings:
- Stanig, P., et al (2021) Thermostatic Environmentalism: Extreme Weather Events and Vote for Green Parties in Western Europe. Working paper
- Howe, Peter et al. (2019). How will climate change shape climate opinion? Environmental Research Letters 14, 113001.
- Hazlett, C. & Mildenberger, M. (2020). Wildfire Exposure Increases Pro-Environment Voting within Democratic but Not Republican Areas. American Political Science Review, 114, 1359-1365.

10.06: Political behaviour III: Natural disasters and accountability

Required Readings:

- Healey, A. & Malhontra, A. (2009). Myopic voters and natural disaster policy. American Political Science Review 103, 387-406.
- Gasper, J. & Reeves, A. (2011). Make It Rain? Retrospection and the Attentive Electorate in the Context of Natural Disasters". American Journal of Political Science 55: 340-355.

Further Readings:
- Bechtel, M. & Hainmueller, J. (2011). How lasting is voter gratitude? An analysis of the short-and long-term electoral returns to beneficial policy. American Journal of Political Science, 55, 852-868.
- Cole, S., Healy, A. & Werker, E. (2012). Do voters demand responsive governments? Evidence from Indian disaster relief". Journal of Development Economics 97: 167-181.
- Achen, C. H: & Bartels, L. M. (2016). Democracy for Realists. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 5: Blind Retrospection: Electoral Responses to Droughts, Floods, and Shark Attacks.

5 Policies and behaviour

17.06: Public support for climate action
Required Readings:
- Bechtel, M- M. & Scheve, K. F. (2013). Mass Support for global climate agreements depends on institutional design. PNAS 110, 34, 13763-1378.
- Stokes, L. (2016). Electoral backlash against climate policy: A natural experiment on retrospective voting and local resistance to public policy. American Journal of Political Science 60 (4), 958-974.

Further Readings:
- The NYT's Daily Podcast on A wind Farm in Coal Country
- McGrath, L. & Bernauer, T. (2017). How strong is public support for unilateral climate policy and what drives it? WIREs Climate Change, e484.

24.06: Behaviour and policies, policies and behaviour
Required Readings:
- Kraus, S. & Koch, N. (2021). Provisional COVID-19 infrastructure induces large, rapid increases in cycling. PNAS, 118, e2024399118.
- Werfel, S. H. (2017). Household behaviour crowds out support for climate change policy when sufficient progress is perceived. Nature Climate Change 7, 512-516.

Further Readings:
- Mattauch, L, Ridgway, M. & Creutzig, F. (2016). Happy or liberal? Making sense of behavior in transport policy design. Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment 45, 64-83.

6 Political Parties and Responsiveness

01.07: Green Parties' origins and reactions to them
Required Readings:
- Burchell, J. (2002). The Evolution of Green Politics - Development and Change within European Green Parties. London: Earthscan. Chapter 1: A 'New' Challenge to Party Politics? Analysing Green Party Development and Change.
- Arend, T., Ellger, F., & Valentim, A. (2021). The Electoral Consequences of New Political Actors: Evidence from the German Greens. Working paper

Further Readings:
- Burchell, J. (2002). The Evolution of Green Politics - Development and Change within European Green Parties. London: Earthscan.

- Kitschelt, H. P. (1986). Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest: Anti-Nuclear Movements in Four Democracies. British Journal of Political Science, 16, 57-85

08.07: Responsiveness on the Environment

Required Readings:

- Valentim, A. (2021). Imperfect Information and Party Responsiveness. Working paper
- Bernardi, L., Morales, L., Lühiste, M. & Bischof, D. (2018) The effects of the Fukushima disaster on nuclear energy debates and policies: a two-step comparative examination. Environmental Politics 27, 42-68.

Further Readings:

- Lenz Gabriel, S. (2012): Follow the Leader? How Voters Respond to Politicians' Policies and Performance: Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 6: Avoiding Political Meltdowns: Chernobyl.
- Huber, R., Fesenfeld, L., & Bernauer, T. (2019). Political populism, responsiveness, and climate mitigation. Climate Policy 20, 373-386.

15.07: Concluding Session

Wrapping Up, Discussion and Research Design