

Course Handbook

Global Environmental Politics (2024)



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Responsible Teacher



Dr Lauri Peterson is a Senior Researcher at the Centre for Climate Change, Energy and Environmental Law of the University of Eastern Finland Law School. He is involved in the EU Horizon 2020 project NDC ASPECTS that investigates the Nationally Determined Contributions within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and ACHIEVE on the voluntary climate action of non-state actors. Peterson has published in high-ranking peer-reviewed journals, such as *World Development*, *Ecological Economics*, *Global Environmental Politics*, and *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics*. Beyond academic

work, he also has experience at policy think tanks, such as the Wuppertal Institute in Germany and Praxis in Estonia. Peterson graduated with a PhD in Political Science from Uppsala University. E-mail address: lauri.peterson@uef.fi

Lecturers:



Dr Yulia Yamineva is Associate Professor in Climate Law and Policy at the University of Eastern Finland Law School, Centre for Climate Change, Energy and Environmental Law. Yamineva has published on the law and governance of climate change and air pollution, and the science-policy interface in key journals such as *Transnational Environmental Law*, *Review of European, Comparative and International Environmental Law (RECIEL)*, *Environmental Science & Policy*, *Nature Climate Change*, and others. She has a geographically varied work experience from Europe, Russia, China, Central Asia, and Indonesia. Previously, Yamineva worked for the UN Climate Change Convention

Secretariat and the International Institute for Sustainable Development in addition to various NGOs and private sector. Yamineva holds a PhD in International Studies from the University of Cambridge. E-mail address: yulia.yamineva@uef.fi



Niklas Löther is a Project Researcher and PhD student in Environmental Law at CCEEL and holds degrees in Politics & International Relations from the University of Aberdeen and Natural Resources Governance from UEF. His research under the ClimAirPathways project (Research Council of Finland, 2023-2027) focuses on pathways and obstacles to the integration of climate change and air pollution policies in the EU from a multi-level and multi-actor perspective. He has published on the global governance of short-lived climate pollutants and the functioning of the global climate regime. Email address: niklas.lother@uef.fi



Moritz Petersmann is a doctoral researcher at CCEEL of the University of Eastern Finland Law School. Originating from an academic background in sustainability sciences, Moritz' doctoral research in the field of international environmental law focuses on the role and capacities of science-policy interface institutions for governing modern wicked problems. His specific interest lies in international, independent institutions such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Science-Policy Panel for Environmental Pollution (to be established). In his capacity as a Writer for the Earth Negotiations Bulletin, Moritz regularly attends United Nations environment and development negotiations. E-mail address: moritz.petersmann@uef.fi

Course Description

The state of the global environment is worsening, and environmental issues now play a key role on global policy agenda. They represent sites of political struggles and contestations with a multitude of actors, institutions, activities, forms of power, and discourses.

In this course, we learn how to problematise global environmental issues, their causes and policy responses as *political* questions.

The *objective* of the course is to provide an overview of the field of global environmental politics (GEP), its main theories, methods and themes. The classes and readings will cover the history of GEP, theoretical frameworks, methodological approaches, the main actors and institutions of the field, as well as key topics, which include, for example, North-South politics and the role of science and knowledge.

The course aims primarily at students with little or no background in political science and international relations. After successfully completing this course, students:

- Will gain an understanding of the range of perspectives on GEP and how environmental problems are understood as political issues on the global level;
- Will be able to discuss the main themes and frameworks in the analysis of global environmental problems and controversies.

Course Format and Basic Information

The course consists of 16 hours of compulsory classes which incorporate lectures and various interactive formats such as general discussions and group work.

The language of instruction on the course is **English**. The final essay must also be written in English.

All classes are compulsory for all students; the course cannot be completed without attending and participating in them (see class participation under Grading).

Students must register for the course in Peppi.

We will provide feedback on essay-based exams recorded on video 30 min explaining: what we were looking for in each essay; what was raised; what was not addressed. Furthermore, we will open an office hour for feedback on essays.

Course Readings

Each topic has a list of *core readings*, as identified below. You may be asked by a teacher to read these in advance of a class. This means that you do not have to read this material prior to a class, unless you are asked by a teacher to do so. Also, each topic has a list of *additional readings* for those who are interested in further information.

The readings are available through the UEF library and most of them are also uploaded on Moodle or will be shared by teachers by email.

Other Useful Resources

Global environmental politics is the subject of issue-specific journals, such as:

- [Global Environmental Politics](#)
- [International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics](#)
- [Environmental Politics](#)

In addition to these journals, general environmental, international relations, or politics/governance journals will often contain contributions on global environmental agenda, for instance: Global Governance, Global Policy, Review of International Studies, and others. There are also issue-specific publishing outlets like WIREs Climate Change or Climate Policy that may be interesting.

These journals are accessible through the UEF library.

For those interested in following international negotiations more closely, the Earth Negotiations Bulletin produces detailed reports of all UN meetings on the environment. These are available online.

Grading

The course grade will be calculated on the basis of the final essay (see below) and class participation. Class participation refers not to attendance as such but to active contribution to class discussion and group exercises.

Class participation	20 points
Final essay	80 points
Total	100 points

In order to pass the course, a student needs to score at least 50 from the overall points.

Final Essay Instructions

A final essay in this course is a written paper to answer a specific question. Its purpose is to demonstrate engagement with both theoretical frameworks and practical examples discussed in classes as well as ability to critically evaluate the course material and readings.

There will be several essay questions to choose from: a student has to select only ONE. The question has to be answered based on class material and suggested readings. Core readings are compulsory to use if they are relevant. Those aspiring for higher grades are strongly encouraged to use additional readings. You may use other readings not from the list of

additional readings if you deem them relevant. The maximum length of the essay is 3,000 words.

Final essays are evaluated against three criteria: (1) accuracy, (2) quality of argumentation, and (3) originality.

We have zero-tolerance to plagiarism and all essays are run against plagiarism-detecting software. Plagiarism refers to using “another person's text in one's own studies without indicating where the information, original ideas and methods come from”.¹ Plagiarism can be intentional; however, it may also be unintentional. Provide references for everything which is not your own work or ideas. This includes core readings and class material, but also any other material you use. We recommend an author-date citation style.²

Please note that the use of AI for writing exam essays is prohibited in this course.

A list of possible essay questions will open on the last day of the course (May 15). Essays are to be submitted on Moodle by June 10. Grades are available by June 30. Please use MS Word. The file should contain your name and student number.

¹ [UEF Ethical guidelines for teaching and studying](#), 2024.

² <http://libguides.williams.edu/citing/chicago-author-date#s-lg-box-12037252>

Course Timetable

Date	Location	Teacher	Topic
23.04 Tue 12 - 14	AU205	Yulia Yamineva	Course introduction Examining the theoretical foundations of GEP The history of GEP and the North-South politics
24.04 Wed 10-12	AU102	Yulia Yamineva	International environmental regimes and their effectiveness (2 hrs)
02.05 Thu 12-14	AU102	Lauri Peterson	Role of states (2 hrs)
03.05 Fri 12-14	AU205	Lauri Peterson Niklas Löther	Role of non-state actors (2 hrs)
07.05 Tue 14-16	AU102	Lauri Peterson	Political regimes and the environment (2 hrs)
08.05 Wed 14-16	AU102	Lauri Peterson	Domestic politics and the environment (2 hrs)
14.05 Tue 12-14	AU205	Yulia Yamineva Moritz Petersmann	Role of science and knowledge (2 hrs)
15.05 Wed 10-12	AU205	Yulia Yamineva	Individual action and the global environment (2 hrs) Exam instructions

Course Overview

Topic 1: Examining the History of Global Environmental Governance and Theoretical Foundations of GEP

This class starts with introductions and a brief overview of the course, including its objectives, topics, teaching formats, and assessment. The class discusses the history of GEP through the prism of the political economy of the 20th century, the North-South politics, and environment vs development debates. The class further discusses the theoretical foundations of GEP from an International Relations (IR) perspective, including such approaches as realism, rationalism/liberal institutionalism, constructivism, and others.

Core readings:

- Chapters 1 ‘Introduction: The environment and international relations’ and 2 ‘Global environmental problems’, in O’Neil, Kate, *The environment and international relations*, Cambridge University Press, 2017
- Chapter 1, sub-sections 1 on ‘Global macro-trends’ and 2 ‘An introduction to GEP’, in Chasek, P., and D. L. Downie, *Global environmental politics*, Routledge, 2020.

Additional readings:

- Joanna Depledge and Pam Chasek, “Raising the Tempo: The Escalating Pace and Intensity of Environmental Negotiations”, in Chasek, Pamela S., and Lynn M. Wagner, eds. *The Roads from Rio: Lessons Learned from Twenty Years of Multilateral Environmental Negotiations*, Taylor and Francis, 2012. pp. 19-39
- Marc Williams, “The Third World and Global Environmental Negotiations: Interests, Institutions and Ideas”, *Global Environmental Politics* 5, 2005, pp. 48–69
- Robert Falkner, “The Emergence of Environmental Stewardship as a Primary Institution”, in *Environmentalism and Global International Society*, 2021, pp. 104-127

Topic 2: International Environmental Regimes and Their Effectiveness

This class explores why and how international environmental regimes are formed, exploring the intricacies of agenda-setting, negotiations, and implementation. The class also addresses the complexity and fragmentation of the global environmental governance architecture. The class further discusses various approaches to assessing regime effectiveness. There are several group exercises including on ozone depletion, climate change, and the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution.

Core readings:

- Entries on *Regimes* (Eleni Dellas) and *Effectiveness* (Steinar Andresen). In *Encyclopedia of Global Environmental Governance and Politics*. Edited by Philipp H. Pattberg and Fariborz Zelli. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015.

Additional readings:

- VanDeveer, Stacy. Agenda-setting at sea and in the air. In: Improving global environmental governance. Edited by Andresen, Steinar, Kanie, Norichika, Haas, Peter M. Taylor and Francis, 2013.
- Falkner, Robert (2005) 'The Business of Ozone Layer Protection: Corporate Power in Regime Evolution.' In: The Business of Global Environmental Governance, ed. by David L. Levy and Peter J. Newell (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press), pp. 105-134.
- Byrne, Adam. "The 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution: Assessing Its Effectiveness as a Multilateral Environmental Regime after 35 Years." *Transnational Environmental Law* 4, no. 01 (April 2015): 37–67
- Yamineva, Yulia, and Kati Kulovesi, "Keeping the Arctic White: The Legal and Governance Landscape for Reducing Short-Lived Climate Pollutants in the Arctic Region". In *Transnational Environmental Law*, 7 (2), 2018.

Topic 3: Role of States

The class discusses the evolving role of the nation state and global order since WW2, and its implications for GEP. We will explore the ways in which states use their power to advance their own interests and shape international agreements on issues such as climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. We will also consider the challenges and opportunities for cooperation among states in addressing these global environmental issues.

Core Readings:

- Chapter 32 (States by Daniel Compagnon) in: Philipp Pattberg and Fariborz Zelli (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Global Environmental Governance and Politics* (Edward Elgar, 2015).
- Ourbak, Timothée, and Alexandre K. Magnan. "The Paris Agreement and climate change negotiations: Small Islands, big players." *Regional Environmental Change* 18.8 (2018): 2201-2207.

Additional readings:

- Antto Vihma and Harro Van Asselt, "Great expectations: Understanding why the UN climate talks seem to fail", *FIIA Briefing Paper*, 2012

Topic 4: Role of Non-State Actors

This lecture will explore the role of non-state actors, such as NGOs and transnational corporations, in shaping GEP. We will discuss the influence of these actors on international environmental agreements and policy-making, the role of civil society in holding governments and corporations accountable for their environmental impact, and the ways in which non-state actors can drive sustainable development. We will also examine the challenges and limitations faced by non-state actors in their efforts to effect change in the global arena.

Core readings:

- Michele Betsill, *Transnational Actors in International Environmental Politics*, in Michele Betsill et al. (eds.), *Advances in International Environmental Politics* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 185-210.

- Peter Newell, Philipp Pattberg, and Heike Schroeder, “Multiactor Governance and the Environment”, 37 Annual Review of Environment and Resources (2012), 365-387.

Additional readings

- Chapters 24 (Civil Society, by Karin Bäckstrand), 27 (International Bureaucracies, by Bernd Siebenhüner), 29 (Private Sector, by Jonatan Pinkse), and 37 (Private Environmental Governance, by Philipp Pattberg and Marija Isajlovic), in: Philipp Pattberg and Fariborz Zelli (eds.), Encyclopedia of Global Environmental Governance and Politics (Edward Elgar, 2015).
- Chapter 14, Section 14.5 (Multi-level, Multi-actor Governance) in: IPCC, Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change (CUP, 2022).
<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/chapter/chapter-14/>

Topic 5: Political Regimes and the Environment

In this class we will discuss whether and how political regimes affect GEP. This will include the influence of regime types on international environmental negotiations, but also environmental policy outputs and outcomes.

Core readings:

- Neumayer, E., 2002. Do democracies exhibit stronger international environmental commitment? A cross-country analysis. Journal of Peace Research, 39 (2), 139–164.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343302039002001>
- Beeson, Mark. 2010. “The Coming of Environmental Authoritarianism,” Environmental Politics 19 (2): 276-294. DOI: 10.1080/09644010903576918.
<https://www.tandfonline.com/proxyau.wrlc.org/doi/pdf/10.1080/09644010903576918?needAccess=true>
- Haber, Stephen and Victor Menaldo. 2011. “Do Natural Resources Fuel Authoritarianism? A Reappraisal of the Resource Curse,” in American Political Science Review 1-26. DOI: 10.1017/S0003055410000584.
<https://www.cambridge.org/proxyau.wrlc.org/core/journals/american-political-science-review/article/do-natural-resources-fuel-authoritarianism-a-reappraisal-of-the-resource-curse/0DC2DEF9747F89CA6894A6245E80B6F7>

Additional readings

- Böhmelt, Tobias. 2021. “Populism and Environmental Performance.” Global Environmental Politics 21 (3): 97–123.

Topic 6: Domestic Politics and the Environment

This class covers the international political economy of environmental policymaking, and the interlinkages between domestic and international policy areas. The lecture introduces environmental policy-making as both a global collective action problem and as a distributional conflict within the nation states.

Core readings:

- Keohane, Robert O., and David G. Victor. “Cooperation and Discord in Global Climate Policy.” *Nature Climate Change* 6, no. 6 (June 2016): 570–75. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nclimate2937>.
- Aklin, Michaël, and Matto Mildenerger. “Prisoners of the Wrong Dilemma: Why Distributive Conflict, Not Collective Action, Characterizes the Politics of Climate Change.” *Global Environmental Politics* 20, no. 4 (November 1, 2020): 4–27. https://doi.org/10.1162/glep_a_00578.

Additional readings:

- Kulovesi, Kati, Sabrina Shaw, and Stanley Burgiel. “Trade and Environment: Old Wine in New Bottles?” In *The Roads from Rio: Lessons Learned from Twenty Years of Multilateral Environmental Negotiations*, edited by Pamela Chasek and Lynn Wagner. New York and London: Routledge, 2012.
- Peterson, Lauri. “Domestic and International Climate Policies: Complementarity or Disparity?” *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics* 22, no. 1 (March 1, 2022): 97–118. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10784-021-09542-7>.

Topic 7: Role of Science and Expertise

This class considers the role of science in global environmental affairs, focusing on how and when it influences policy as well as its institutionalisation. The examples of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services as science-policy interfaces are discussed in detail.

Core readings:

- Beck, Silke. “Scientists and Experts.” In *Encyclopedia of Global Environmental Governance and Politics*, edited by Philipp H. Pattberg and Fariborz Zelli, 234–40. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015.
- Silke Beck, Tim Forsyth, Pia M. Kohler, Myanna Lahsen, and Martin Mahony. “The Making of Global Environmental Science and Politics.” In *The handbook of science and technology studies*, MIT Press, 2017.

Additional readings:

- Lövbrand, Eva. “Knowledge and the Environment.” In *Palgrave Advances in International Environmental Politics*, edited by Michele Betsill, Kathryn Hochstetler, and Dimitris Stevis, Second., 161–84. Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Kohler, Pia M., Alexandra Conliffe, Maria Gutiérrez, Stefan Jungcurt, and Yulia Yamineva. “Informing Policy: The Role of Science and Knowledge in Global Environmental Agreements.” In *The Roads from Rio: Lessons Learned from Twenty Years of Multilateral Environmental Negotiations*, edited by Pamela Chasek and Lynn Wagner. New York: RFF Press, Taylor and Francis, 2012.
- Turnhout, Esther, Art Dewulf, and Mike Hulme. “What Does Policy-Relevant Global Environmental Knowledge Do? The Cases of Climate and Biodiversity.” *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 18 (February 2016): 65–72.

Topic 8: Individual Action and the Global Environment

The class focuses on consumption and its environmental impacts as well as international and non-state initiatives on sustainable consumption. The class also has a group exercise to discuss the potential and limits of individualising responsibility for global environmental problems. Students are asked to take an environmental footprint test and check the related guide on sustainable living developed by Sitra (see below) prior to the class.

Core readings:

- [Test 'Is your lifestyle good or bad for the environment?'](#) Developed by Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra
- Guide '[100 ways to live sustainably](#)' Developed by Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra
- Maniates, M.F., 2001. Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World? *Global Environmental Politics* 1, 31–52

Additional readings:

- Dauvergne, P. (2010), “The problem of consumption”, *Global Environmental Politics*, 10, 2.
- Fuchs, D. & F. 2018. *Boll. 'Sustainable consumption'*, in: G Kütting (ed), *Global Environmental Politics – concepts, theories and case studies*, Routledge.
- Seele, P., and Gatti, L. (2017) Greenwashing Revisited: In Search of a Typology and Accusation-Based Definition Incorporating Legitimacy Strategies. *Bus. Strat. Env.*, 26: 239– 252.