

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE

Total length of the module: 45 hours

Number of sessions: 30

Length of each session: 1,5 h

INTRODUCTION

Environmental concerns have risen in importance in the list of issues on the global political agenda. The 1972 conference in Stockholm marked the beginning of four decades of global environmental policy. During this time, a series of major world conferences and summits has generated a set of global regimes and dense international relations among states and non-governmental actors, spanning a wide range of transnational environmental problems.

The course intends to provide the student with a set of theoretical, conceptual and analytical tools to critically understand the contemporary debate around the environmental dimension of global politics. What are the main strands of theory framing the debate on the balance between economic growth, social justice and environmental protection and enhancement? Why have global environmental regimes emerged? How effective have they been? What are the main stumbling blocks on the path to a 'greener world'? As a case study, climate change policy will be the object of detailed analysis.

The course is based on student-centered learning, requiring active participation in order to enhance the comprehension of the course concepts and to develop critical thinking and communication skills.

CONTENTS

Part 1. Introduction, key theories, concepts and frames

1. The state of the global environment: ecological pressures and their drivers (Demography, Degradation of the Biosphere, Deforestation, Global Warming, Energy)
2. From Stockholm to Rio + 20: Four decades of global environmental policy
3. The debate at Stockholm: Is there a Tragedy of the Commons? The establishment of an environmental global agenda

4. From Rio to Johannesburg: the rise and the contestation of the sustainable development paradigm
5. Alternative paradigms. Environment and Security: new and old 'environmental wars'. Ecological justice: dilemmas over conservation, development and poverty

Part 2. The 'who' and the 'how' of global environmental politics: actors, structures and regimes.

6. International Relations theories: an introduction
7. Nation- States: the difficult task of promoting national interest and defending state sovereignty in a complex and interdependent world
8. International Organizations: managing interdependence
9. Non-governmental Organization and Corporations: vying for influence in the political and policy process
10. International cooperation and regime formation
11. Development of environmental regimes: an overview
12. Effectiveness of Environmental Regimes: compliance with international law?

Part 3: Climate Change Politics and Policy

13. The contested science of climate change: too late to avoid catastrophe?
14. Emission trends and scenarios for action. The economy of climate change
15. The climate change regime: The United Nation Framework Conference on Climate Change: rules and functioning
16. The Kyoto Protocol: Architecture and Instruments
17. In search of the successor to the Kyoto Protocol: a negotiating Odyssey.
18. The European Union: a credible leader in climate change policy?

GRADING

Attendance is mandatory and students are expected to participate actively in in-class debates based on the readings assigned for each lesson. Each student will introduce a lesson through a 15-minutes presentation.

There will be two exams (mid-term and final) based on three different questions to be answered (no multiple-choice) and a final essay of 3500 words on a topic selected among those covered in the course.

The final grade will be calculated on the basis of the weights assigned to each of the following components:

- Class Participation 20%
- In-Class Presentation 10%
- Final Essay 20%
- Mid-Term Exam 25%
- Final Exam 25%

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Required Textbook

Chasek, P.; Downie, D. & Welsh Brown, J. (2010) Global Environmental Politics (Dilemmas in World Politics) (5th ed.), Westview Press, 2010

Suggested complementary textbooks

Conca, Ken, and Dabelko, Geoffrey D. (2010). Green planet blues: four decades of global environmental politics (4th ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press

Axelrod, R.; Vandever, Stacy D. & Downie D. (eds) The Global Environment: Institutions, Law and Policy (3rd ed.), CQ Press, 2010.