

# Environmental Politics and Democratization

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## 1. Course Description

This is an upper division interdisciplinary seminar that investigates the connections between environmental politics and democratization. While environmental policy will be of some consideration, the focus of the course will be on the *politics* of the environment—the political, social, and cultural battles that occur around environmental issues. We will be examining the ways that these confrontations shape the broader political landscape in communities, states, and the world. Of particular concern will be the ways that politics around the issue of the environment shapes, and is shaped by, democratic participation and politics.

This seminar will cover very wide geographic and intellectual ground. We will investigate ultra-local environmental issues. We will also study how global environmental actors such as international nongovernmental organizations and multinational corporations are shaping the process and the content of environmental policy around the world.

It is expected that each of you will be actively contributing to our collective learning experience throughout the semester. We will be utilizing a multidisciplinary approach to this topic throughout the course. This means that you should expect to feel very comfortable with the subject matter and methodological approaches during some weeks but quite uncomfortable and at a loss on other weeks. This feeling of disorientation is an intended component of the course. One of the major goals of the course is to stretch your intellectual boundaries and help make you more comfortable with different ways of thinking about and engaging with environmental (and other) issues.

Although the course is pitched at a high level and in class we will be discussing rather general topics, each of you will become an expert in the environmental politics of a particular country by the end of the semester. Each week you will be conducting research about your country, updating your wiki, and contributing your country-specific knowledge to our general discussion. At the end of the semester you will hand in a final paper that includes a summary of the collective information that you have gathered about your country, an analysis of that information, and a reflection on your experience in the seminar. Each student will also “do” some environmental politics during the semester, and your experiences and reflections on those experiences will enhance our understanding of how the abstract theories and far-away policies that we discuss in class take on shape and context in real life.

## **Learning Objectives**

- Enhanced knowledge of different types of environmental politics
- Enhanced understanding of the complex ways that environmental politics interacts with democracy
- Enhanced ability to think about ethical challenges related to the environment in multiple cultural contexts
- Enhanced ability to understand and utilize multi-disciplinary modes of inquiry
- Deeper knowledge about the environmental politics about a particular country
- Greater sense of empowerment to become positively involved in environmental politics

## **2. Required Reading**

There is one book for this course:

William Powers. *Blue Clay People: Seasons on Africa's Fragile Edge* (Blumsbury 2006).

## **3. Course Requirements**

Your seminar grade will be comprised of five parts:

### **Class Participation**

Seminars rely on quality participation by their members in order to be successful. Students are expected to come to class prepared and engage productively with the material and with their peers during class meetings. Participation in the movement and art workshops are included in this grade. 13%

### **Public Event Response Papers**

One page response papers to public talks/films/performances related to the class that include 1) articulation of the main argument of the talk/film/event, 2) description of the evidence used to support the argument, and 3) three questions that emerge from the event. Two papers minimum. The average of all papers will be the final grade for this section. 2%

<b>Participant Observation Assignment</b>	5%
<p>Each student will participate in some form of environmental politics. The activity must be part of an organized environmental politics related event (e.g., public hearing at city hall, public protest, community clean-up, etc.). Prior to the activity, the student must submit a one-page plan for the observation including how it relates to class material. After the activity the student must submit a 2-3 page response paper that includes: 1) a description of what the student did, 2) how it relates to one or more topics discussed in class, and 3) two questions/responses that have emerged for the student from the experience (e.g., now that I understand X, I wonder why...; now that I have done A, I would like to...).</p>	
<b>Wiki</b>	45%
<p>Throughout the semester students will maintain and update their wiki about the environmental politics of one particular country. The wiki should be updated each week with information related to the topic of that week and include issues specifically related to those raised by the readings. (5% per wiki for 8 weeks plus a 5% creativity bonus)</p>	
<b>Topic Papers</b>	20%
<p>Students must write two 5-6 page analytic papers over the course of the semester. Each paper will be a reflection on one of the weekly topics. The papers must have a clear argument and use the readings as well as the wiki contributions of classmates as evidence to support that argument. (2 papers -10% each)</p>	
<b>Final Paper</b>	15%
<p>The final paper will represent a culmination of the class. It is intended to offer an opportunity to demonstrate the analytic skills that you have gained over the course of the semester as well as challenge your intellectual creativity. Length and topic TBA.</p>	

#### 4. Class Schedule and Reading Guide

<u>Session</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why is the environment such an issue?</li> <li>• Who are the main actors?</li> <li>• What are the main issues?</li> <li>• What tradeoffs do policymakers make?</li> <li>• Why/how is environmental politics related to democracy? To capitalism?</li> </ul>	<p>Think about/pick country that will be your research focus for the semester. You will have your assignment by next week.</p> <p>Think about what your participant observation assignment will be.</p>

2	<p><b>Governmental Regulatory Framework</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• International regulatory framework</li> <li>• National regulatory framework</li> <li>• Sub-national regulatory framework</li> <li>• Why is regulation necessary?</li> <li>• Who regulates?</li> <li>• Who is regulated?</li> <li>• What is the purpose of regulation?</li> <li>• What kind of regulation is effective?</li> <li>• How does regulatory capacity vary across regulatory bodies/countries?</li> </ul>	<p>Marc Eisner, <i>Governing the Environment</i>. Ch. 1.</p> <p>Busch et al. "The Global Diffusion of Regulatory Instruments"</p> <p><b>Update Wiki:</b> List main actors involved in environmental politics and what they do in your country. Include 1-2 paragraphs discussing how the issues raised in the reading relate to your country.</p>
3	<p><b>International/Transnational Organizations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which intergovernmental organizations are involved in the environment? What do they do?</li> <li>• Which international, non-governmental organizations are involved? What do they do?</li> <li>• How do transnational actors connect to environmental politics on the ground?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Participant Observation assignment handed out</b></p> <p>Peter M. Haas. "Banning Chlorofluorocarbons."</p> <p>Ralph Litzinger, "In Search of the Grassroots"</p> <p><b>Update Wiki:</b> List transnational organizations involved in your country and what they do. Include 1-2 paragraphs discussing how issues raised in the readings relate to your country.</p>
4	<p><b>Environmental Ethics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is environmental ethics?</li> <li>• What are some of the issues related to environmental ethics?</li> <li>• How does cultural heritage affect environmental ethics?</li> <li>• How are environmental ethics issues resolved/ameliorated?</li> </ul>	<p>Stanford Encyclopedia on Environmental Ethics: <a href="http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-environmental/">http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-environmental/</a></p> <p>Figueroa and Mills "Environmental Justice"</p> <p>Tu Weiming, "The Continuity of Being: Chinese Visions of Nature"</p> <p><b>Update Wiki</b> What are the environmental ethics issues in your country? Include 1-2 paragraphs discussing how the issues raised in the readings relate to your country.</p>

5	<p><b>Creative Campus Movement Workshop—arts and environmental politics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What role does art play in environmental politics?</li> <li>• Does the involvement of artists have different significance in democratic and non-democratic societies?</li> <li>• How does artistic expression alter your relationship to the environment?</li> <li>• Does it change your ideas about environmental politics?</li> </ul>	<p>Jacqueline Adams. “Art in Social Movements.”</p> <p>Doug Blandy et al “Art, Ecological Restoration, and Art Education.”</p> <p><b>Update Wiki:</b> List types of artists involved in environmental politics and what they do in your country. Include 1-2 paragraphs discussing how the issues raised in the reading relate to your country.</p>
6	<p><b>Conservation Politics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are the main actors involved in conservation politics?</li> <li>• What are some of the features of conservation politics that makes it distinct from other forms of environmental politics?</li> <li>• Which features are similar to other kinds of politics?</li> <li>• Do these political processes vary in democratic and non-democratic contexts?</li> </ul>	<p>Peterson et al “A Tale of Two Species” Jamie Waterman, selected readings</p> <p><b>Update Wiki:</b> Describe main conservation issues and actors in your country. Include 1-2 paragraphs discussing how the issues raised in the reading relate to your country.</p>
7	<p><b>The Politicization of Science</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who identifies environmental “problems”?</li> <li>• How is science used in political battles concerning the environment?</li> <li>• How do different actors use/view science and knowledge differently?</li> <li>• What are the ethical components of the treatment of different kinds of knowledge?</li> </ul>	<p>Connie Ozawa. “Science in Environmental Conflict.”</p> <p>Paul Robbins. “The Practical Politics of Knowing”</p> <p><b>Update Wiki:</b> How is science used politically in your country? Include 1-2 paragraphs discussing how the issues raised in the reading relate to your country.</p>

8	<p><b>Energy Politics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the main sources of energy in your country?</li> <li>• What is the energy consumption rate?</li> <li>• What are the main energy political players and debates?</li> <li>• Any plans/hope for changing the energy mix?</li> </ul>	<p>Michael Ross, “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?”</p> <p>Jacobsson and Lauber Renewable energy in Germany</p> <p><b>Update Wiki:</b> Describe energy politics in your country: basic statistics, key players, and main battles. Include 1-2 paragraphs discussing how the issues raised in the reading relate to your country.</p>
9	<p><b>Direct Action and Eco-terrorism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is ecoterrorism?</li> <li>• Why do people engage in ecoterrorism?</li> <li>• What are the differences between local and transnational ecoterrorists?</li> <li>• What are the distinctions between direct action and eco-terrorism?</li> <li>• How does democracy make a difference?</li> </ul>	<p>Whale Wars: <a href="http://animal.discovery.com/videos/whale-wars-tools-tactics/">http://animal.discovery.com/videos/whale-wars-tools-tactics/</a></p> <p>Joose, Paul. “Leaderless Resistance and Ideological Inclusion.”</p> <p>Muzaffar Assadi. “Tribals on Warpath”</p> <p><b>Update Wiki:</b> Describe direct action and eco-terrorists in your country. Include 1-2 paragraphs discussing issues raised in the readings/clip in your country.</p>
10	<p><b>Environmental Activism Leading to Democratization?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does environmental politics operate in an undemocratic context?</li> <li>• How can environmental activism promote democratization?</li> <li>• Why do authoritarian governments allow environmental activism?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Participant Observation Assignment Due</b></p> <p>Shannon O'Lear. “Networks of Engagement.”</p> <p>Robert Weller. <i>Alternate Civilities</i>. ch.6</p>

- 11 Rethinking Garbage**
- How does waste management relate to broader environmental concerns?
  - How is it similar or different from other environmental issues?
  - Does politics of waste differ in democracies and non-democracies?
  - What are the international dimensions of waste politics?
- Update Wiki:** Describe garbage issues and politics in your country. Include 1-2 paragraphs discussing issues raised in the readings relate to your country.
- Bring in item of clean “garbage”. It will be used as part of movement workshop and may be basis for collective public art installation.
- Eileen McGurty “From NIMBY to Civil Rights”
- Toshizo Maeda IGRS Policy Brief
- Foreign Policy “Digital Dumping”
- 12 Bringing It All Together—Negative forces converge in developing countries**
- What are the main environmental issues in Liberia?
  - What are the ethical issues involved?
  - How are environmental politics related to democratization and development in Liberia?
- Install Collective Public Art Project
- William Powers. *Blue Clay People*
- 13 Working towards solutions around the world—Wrapping Up**
- One news article/link about positive action in your country posted to class wiki by midnight two days before Session 13. Read all posts by Session.
- 14 Final Paper Due**