# POLI 3385 Politics of the Environment

3 credit hours
Dalhousie University, Fall 2018
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:05 to 2:25 p.m.,
Henry Hicks 217

Instructor: Anders Hayden
Office and Hours: Henry Hicks 352, Tuesdays 2:35-3:30 p.m., Thursdays 11:00 a.m.-noon, or by appointment (please e-mail me to set up appointment)
E-mail: anders.hayden@dal.ca
Tel: 902-494-6602

## Course Description

This course examines competing perspectives on two over-riding questions:

- What are the key political and socio-economic causes of environmental problems?
- What types of political and socio-economic change are needed to achieve ecological sustainability? In other words, do lasting environmental solutions require radical changes in our political and socio-economic structure and consciousness, or are minor reforms to current practices enough?

Topics include:

- the debate over the severity of ecological crisis
- competing perspectives on ideas of limits to growth and sustainable development
- the links between poverty, North-South inequality, and environmental degradation
- controversies over the impact of population growth and how to respond to it
- the promise and limits of technological solutions to environmental problems
- the role of consumerism in ecological degradation
- global environmental regimes
- market-based environmentalism
- ecological modernization in theory and practice
- ecological critiques of capitalism and radical environmental perspectives

## Learning Outcomes

- Students will further develop their understanding of major global environmental challenges.
- Students will demonstrate understanding of major competing perspectives on the socio-economic and political causes of environmental degradation and corresponding proposals for how to address environmental challenges.
- Students will be able to apply concepts in political science to analysis of environmental issues.
- Students will further develop their communication skills (public speaking, writing, listening critically) through presentations, class discussions, and written assignments.
- Students will further develop their skills in research, analysis, and synthesis of information through their presentations and research papers.
Course Format

The course will combine lectures and class discussion, along with student presentations and the occasional use of multimedia clips.

Expectations and Grading

You will have a choice of two grading options, depending on whether you choose to do a class presentation. See details below.

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For information on how your percentage grade will be converted into a letter grade and grade point, see Dalhousie’s grade scale and definitions: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/grades-and-student-records/grade-scale-and-definitions.html

Attendance and Participation 10%
You are expected to attend every class and, with the exception of the first class, to complete the assigned readings before class. You are also expected to participate actively and respectfully in group discussions—without dominating discussion in a way that prevents others from speaking. Due to the size of the class, this component of the grade will be based mainly on attendance; students who stand out for constructive contributions to discussions throughout the semester will gain additional points.

Midterm 25%
A take-home midterm will be distributed by October 12 and will be due on October 19. Any midterms submitted after October 19 will be subjected to the late penalties discussed below—until October 26, after which midterms will not be accepted and a grade of zero will be applied.

Presentations 10%
You have the option of doing a presentation on an environmental politics issue of your choice. (It should not primarily be about technical or natural science issues, although those issues can be a secondary component of the presentation if they are related to wider political or policy questions. If in doubt about whether your topic is sufficiently political, please ask.) Some suggested presentation and paper topics will also be provided. Presentations will be ten minutes in length (no more) and will be followed by questions and comments from the class. Be sure to practice and time your presentation beforehand—ten minutes is not a lot of time, so you will have to get straight to your key points.

Why would you choose to do a presentation if it is not required? It will be a good opportunity to gain practice with presentations and public speaking, which are valuable skills. It will also give more components to your total grade, so there will be less at stake on your final exam. Above all,
it will be a good opportunity to develop ideas for your research paper and receive feedback that can strengthen your paper and improve your mark.

**Research Paper 30%**
You will write a paper of 3,000 to 4,000 words. Papers are due on November 29.

A list of possible paper topics will be distributed in class. You are also free to propose your own topic, subject to approval of the instructor.

You have the option of submitting a 1-2 page proposal, plus an initial bibliography, by October 13 at the latest. You will not receive a grade for the proposal, but this is an opportunity to receive feedback as you develop your paper. This will also help to ensure that you begin work on your paper early in the semester and avoid a last-minute rush.

**Final Exam 25% or 35%**
The final exam will cover material from the entire semester. It will take place during the exam period from December 6 to 16. The final exam schedule, which is determined by the Registrar’s Office, will be released by October 1. *Do not make travel plans until you know the date of the final exam.*

**Late Penalties**
Assignments received after the due date will be subject to a late penalty of 1% on the first day, an additional 2% on the second day, an additional 3% on the third day ... and an additional 5% on the fifth and every subsequent day, unless appropriate written documentation such as a doctor’s note is provided. (For example, a paper submitted six days late will receive a penalty of 20%, i.e. 1+2+3+4+5+5%). Please plan your work well ahead of time to avoid late penalties. The late penalties are phased in gradually to give you some extra flexibility. For example, if you need one more day to finish your paper, you may decide it is worth taking the small penalty to have a little extra time, but the penalties increase substantially as the delay grows longer.

Note that special provisions for late penalties apply for the midterm. See details above.

**Recording**
Lectures and discussions will not be recorded by the instructor. If you wish to audio record the lecture components of the class, you may do so, but please ask for permission first.

**Deadlines for Withdrawal from Course**
For Fall 2018 classes, the deadline by which a student may withdraw without a “W” appearing on the transcript is October 1. The last day to withdraw with a “W” is October 30.

**Required Books**

Weekly Themes and Readings

N.B. You can find the required readings in the required books or through links on the course website on Brightspace. Class schedule is subject to change.

If you have difficulties accessing any of the readings, whether required or recommended, please contact me.

September 4: Introduction
What are the main environmental challenges that humanity is facing?
What do the data show about the main global environmental trends?
How do perceptions of those challenges differ depending on one’s social position, ideology or worldview, and other factors?
What are some of the main ways to examine these challenges through a political science lens?

Required:
Dryzek. “Making Sense of the Earth's Politics.” Chapter 1 in Politics of the Earth.

Recommended:
Carey, John. 2015. “The 9 limits of our planet … and how we’ve raced past 4 of them.” TED.
Raworth, Kate and Adam Simpson. 2017. “Kate Raworth on ‘Doughnut Economics’.” Next System Project Podcast.
https://thenextsystem.org/learn/stories/episode-2-kate-raworth-doughnut-economics

September 6 and 11: The Politics of Global Limits
Is the expansion of human activity on a collision course with ecological limits?
Can markets and human ingenuity allow the global economy to grow indefinitely?

Required:


Recommended:


September 13: Sustainable Development

What does “sustainable development” mean?
What are its implications for politics and governance?
Does sustainable development represent a viable middle ground between the limits-to-growth and Promethean perspectives?
How does inequality between the global North and South complicate efforts to find political solutions to global environmental problems?

Required:


Chasek, Downie, and Brown. Pp. 30-44, 310-324, 343-350 in Global Environmental Politics.

Highly recommended:


Recommended:


September 18 and 20: Poverty and the Environment
Is poverty a key cause of environmental degradation?
Can the poor afford to care about the earth? Do people need to become wealthy before they can turn their attention to the environment?
How does an “environmentalism of the poor” differ from environmental politics in wealthy nations?

Required:


Two short news articles on Bangladesh and climate change:
http://www.climatechangenews.com/2017/03/30/open-letter-bangladesh-american-people/

Recommended:


September 25 and 27: The Politics of Population

Are there too many of us? If so, what should be done?

What are the key demographic trends and projections for population growth?

What are the key criticisms of the focus on population growth?

Why is the population debate such a political minefield, internationally and domestically?

Required:


Recommended:


October 2 and 4: Technology and Environmental Politics

Is technology at the root of our environmental problems or the main hope for solutions? Why is technology so central to mainstream environmental politics? Why are technological solutions so appealing? What are the limits of technological solutions? What key issues does the focus on technological solutions avoid? What are the competing perspectives on how to encourage greener technologies?
Required:


Highly recommended:

Recommended:


Commoner, Barry. Making Peace with the Planet. Chapter 2 and 3.


October 9 and 11: Ecological Modernization

Can modern society and capitalism be reformed to become ecologically sustainable? What are the key elements of an ecological modernization program that aims to reform capitalism? What are the key criticisms of ecological modernization and the pursuit of “green growth” as a political strategy? Is ecological modernization and its goal of “green growth” the only politically viable strategy to address our ecological problems?

Required:


Highly recommended: Ecomodernist manifesto debate


Recommended:


October 16 and 18: The Politics of Consumption (I)

Why is consumerism such a powerful social and political force? What are its attractions?
What grounds are there to critique consumerism?
What is the relationship between consumption and well-being?
What is driving high and rising levels of consumption?

Required:


Recommended:


October 19: Take-home midterm due

October 23 and 25: The Politics of Consumption (II)
Is individual action the key to reducing the impacts of consumption?
What are the different visions of a politics of “sustainable consumption”?
Are there politically viable alternatives to high-consumption lifestyles in wealthy nations?
Is it possible to live well while consuming less?

Required:


Recommended:


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**October 30 and November 1: Is Capitalism Sustainable? Radical Critiques of Endless Growth & Accumulation**

What are capitalism’s distinguishing features?

Why do critics believe capitalism is an anti-ecological system?

What might an eco-socialist alternative look like?

What types of reforms do critics of capitalism propose as intermediate steps?

What lessons can be learned from the experience of Soviet socialism? And from other cases of socialism in practice?
Required:

Highly Recommended:

Recommended:
November 6 and 8: Global Environmental Regimes

Are there any successful examples of global cooperation to address a major environmental challenge?

What key forces shape a country’s position on global environmental agreements?

What are the key political challenges in achieving global cooperation to address ecological problems?

What are the key ingredients of an effective environmental regime?

What opportunities exist to strengthen global cooperation?

Required:

Chasek, Downie, and Brown: Pp. 105-126, 162-184, 257-308.

Highly Recommended:

Chasek, Downie, and Brown. Pp. 126-138 on “Hazardous Waste,” Pp. 187-201 on “Biodiversity Loss” and/or remaining cases of environmental regimes in chapters 3-4 that are of interest to you.
November 13 and 15: No classes (study break)

November 20 and 22: Market-Based Environmentalism
Do market-based approaches represent a pragmatic response to environmental challenges?
Is a carbon price the key to achieving greenhouse gas reduction goals?
What are the main challenges and limitations in applying market-based ideas to environmental problems such as climate change?

Required:

For additional background on the economic logic behind market-based approaches, see:

Recommended:


**November 27: Environmental Justice and Other Radical Green Perspectives**

*Required:*


*Reading on environmental justice TBD.*

*Recommended:*


**November 29: Review and Reflection**

Which perspectives that we have covered do you believe have the most to contribute to environmental politics?


*Recommended:*


University Policies, Statements, Guidelines and Resources for Support

Academic Integrity

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect (The Center for Academic Integrity, Duke University, 1999). As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all of the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity.

What does academic integrity mean?
At university we advance knowledge by building on the work of other people. Academic integrity means that we are honest and accurate in creating and communicating all academic products. Acknowledgement of other people’s work must be done in a way that does not leave the reader in any doubt as to whose work it is. Academic integrity means trustworthy conduct such as not cheating on examinations and not misrepresenting information. It is the student’s responsibility to seek assistance to ensure that these standards are met.

How can you achieve academic integrity?
We must all work together to prevent academic dishonesty because it is unfair to honest students. The following are some ways that you can achieve academic integrity; some may not be applicable in all circumstances.

• Make sure you understand Dalhousie’s policies on academic integrity (http://academicintegrity.dal.ca/Policies/)
• Do not cheat in examinations or write an exam or test for someone else
• Do not falsify data or lab results
• Be sure not to plagiarize, intentionally or unintentionally
• Clearly indicate the sources used in your written or oral work. This includes computer codes/programs, artistic or architectural works, scientific projects, performances, web page designs, graphical representations, diagrams, videos, and images
• Do not use the work of another from the Internet or any other source and submit it as your own
• When you use the ideas of other people (paraphrasing), make sure to acknowledge the source
• Do not submit work that has been completed through collaboration or previously submitted for another assignment without permission from your instructor (These examples should be considered only as a guide and not an exhaustive list.)

Where can you turn for help?
If you are ever unsure about any aspect of your academic work, contact me (or the TA). Other resources:

• Academic Integrity website http://academicintegrity.dal.ca/
Links to policies, definitions, online tutorials, tips on citing and paraphrasing

• Writing Centre
(http://www.dal.ca/campus_life/student_services/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html)
Assistance with learning to write academic documents, reviewing papers for discipline-specific writing standards, organization, argument, transitions, writing styles and citations

- Dalhousie Libraries Workshops (http://libraries.dal.ca/)
  Online tutorials, citation guides, Assignment Calculator, RefWorks

- Dalhousie Student Advocacy Service (http://studentservices.dal.ca/services/advocacy.html)
  Assists students with academic appeals and student discipline procedures.

- Senate Office (http://senate.dal.ca)
  List of Academic Integrity Officers, discipline flowchart, Senate Discipline Committee

What will happen if an allegation of an academic offence is made against you?

As your instructor, I am required to report every suspected offence. The full process is outlined in the Faculty Discipline Flow Chart (http://senate.dal.ca/Files/AIO_/AcademicDisciplineProcess_Flowchart_updated_July_2011.pdf) and includes the following:

- Each Faculty has an Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) who receives allegations from instructors
- Based on the evidence provided, the AIO decides if there is evidence to proceed with the allegation and you will be notified of the process
- If the case proceeds, you will receive a PENDING grade until the matter is resolved
- If you are found guilty of an offence, a penalty will be assigned ranging from a warning, to failure of the assignment or failure of the class, to expulsion from the University. Penalties may also include a notation on your transcript that indicates that you have committed an academic offence.

If you have any questions about academic integrity and plagiarism, please ask.

Accessibility

The Advising and Access Services Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for student accessibility and accommodation. The advising team works with students who request accommodation as a result of: a disability, religious obligation, or any barrier related to any other characteristic protected under Human Rights legislation (NS, NB, PEI, NFLD). Click here to read more.

Student Code of Conduct

Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don’t follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner—perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can’t be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution. Click here to read more.

Recognition of Mi’kmaq Territory

Dalhousie University would like to acknowledge that the University is on Traditional Mi’kmaq
Territory. The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office in the McCain Building (room 3037) or contact the programs at elders@dal.ca or 902-494-6803 (leave a message).

**University Policies and Programs**
- Important Dates in the Academic Year (including add/drop dates)  
  [http://www.dal.ca/academics/important_dates.html](http://www.dal.ca/academics/important_dates.html)
- University Grading Practices: Statement of Principles and Procedures  
  [https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html)
- Scent-Free Program  
  [https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/occupational-safety/scent-free.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/occupational-safety/scent-free.html)

**Learning and Support Resources**
- General Academic Support - Academic Advising:  
  [https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/advising.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/advising.html)
- Copyright and Fair Dealing:  
- Libraries:  
  [http://libraries.dal.ca](http://libraries.dal.ca)
- Student Health and Wellness (includes Counselling and Psychological Services):  
- Black Student Advising:  
- Indigenous Student Centre:  
- ELearning Website:  
  [https://www.dal.ca/dept/elearning.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/elearning.html)
- Student Advocacy Services:  
  [http://dsu.ca/dsas](http://dsu.ca/dsas)
- Dalhousie Ombudsperson:  
- Writing Centre:  
  [https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html)
- Studying for Success program and tutoring:  
  [https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html)