POLI 3385 Politics of the Environment  
Dalhousie University, Winter 2012  
Thursdays, 2:35-5:25 pm, Sir James Dunn, Room 304

Instructor: Anders Hayden  
Office and Hours: Thursday, 1:00-2:15 pm, or by appointment, Henry Hicks 352  
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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

Course Format

The course will combine lectures and seminar 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 on p. 2.

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<th>Option A (with presentation)</th>
<th>Option B (without presentation)</th>
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<td>Midterm</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
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<td>Research Paper</td>
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Attendance and Participation 20%
You are expected to attend every class (we only meet once a week, so each time you miss a class, you miss about 8 percent of the total class time.) You are expected 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.

You will receive 1 percentage point for each class that you attend (out of 13 in total). The remainder of the grade for this component will be based on your level of participation in class discussions.

Midterm 20%
A take-home midterm will be distributed on October 18 and will be due on October 25.

Presentations 10%
You have the option of doing a presentation on an environmental politics issue of your choice. 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 important skills to have. It will also give five components to your total grade, rather than four, 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 25%
You will write a paper of 3,000 to 4,000 words. Papers are due on the last day of class, 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 November 1 at the latest. If you submit the proposal earlier, you will have more time to incorporate the feedback into your final paper. 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 exam will take place during the exam period according to the schedule set by the Registrar’s Office.

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...
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.

**Deadlines for Withdrawal from Course**

For Fall-term classes, the deadline by which a student may withdraw is November 5. October 5 is the last date by which a student may drop a fall-term class without a W appearing on the transcript.

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity**

All students in this class are to read and understand the policies on academic integrity and plagiarism referenced in the Policies and Student Resources sections of the academicintegrity.dal.ca website. Ignorance of such policies is no excuse for violations.

Any paper submitted by a student at Dalhousie University may be checked for originality to confirm that the student has not plagiarized from other sources. Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offence which may lead to loss of credit, suspension or expulsion from the University, or even to the revocation of a degree. It is essential that there be correct attribution of authorities from which facts and opinions have been derived. At Dalhousie there are University Regulations which deal with plagiarism and, prior to submitting any paper in a course, students should read the Policy on Intellectual Honesty contained in the Calendar or on the Online Dalhousie website. The Senate has affirmed the right of any instructor to require that student papers be submitted in both written and computer-readable format, and to submit any paper to be checked electronically for originality.

To ensure that you understand what plagiarism is, I suggest you take the following online quiz: http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/polisci/integrity/quiz.html. You might find some surprises.

**N.B. Almost every year that I have taught, I have had to penalize at least one student for plagiarism.** In most cases, the violations appeared to be unintentional as the students did not understand the rules for the proper citation of others’ work. **Don’t let it happen to you**—or me (it’s no fun for anybody).

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

**Statement on Accommodation**

Students may request accommodation as a result of barriers related to disability, religious obligation, or any characteristic under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. Students who require academic accommodation for either classroom participation or the writing of tests and exams should make their request to the Advising and Access Services Center (AASC) prior to or at the outset of the regular academic year. Please visit www.dal.ca/access for more information and to obtain the Request for Accommodation – Form A.
A note taker may be required as part of a student’s accommodation. There is an honorarium of $75/course/term (with some exceptions). If you are interested, please contact AASC at 494-2836 for more information.

Please note that your classroom may contain specialized accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in the classroom, untouched, so that students who require their usage will be able to participate in the class.

**Required Books and Coursepack**


A coursepack will also be available from Julia’s Photocopy, 1525 Lemarchant Street.

**Weekly Themes and Readings**

*N.B. You can find the required readings either in the required books, through links on the course website on BbLearn, or in the coursepack. Class schedule is subject to change.*

*If you have difficulties accessing any of the recommended readings, please contact me.*

**September 6: Introduction**

What do the data show about the main global environmental trends?

What are the political implications and the range of possible political responses?

*Required:*


(To see the full GEO-5 report, go to: http://www.unep.org/geo/pdfs/geo5/GEO5_report_full_en.pdf).

*Recommended:*

Dryzek, Chapter 1, “Making Sense of the Earth's Politics.”
September 13: 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:


(September / October): http://www.cato.org/pubs/policy_report/pr-so-js.html (N.B. In this
article, focus on the key elements of the Promethean argument about how environmental
challenges can be overcome) [BbLEARN]


September 20: Sustainable Development
Does sustainable development represent a viable middle ground between the survivalist and
Promethean perspectives?
What does sustainable development really mean?
How does inequality between the global North and South complicate efforts to find political
solutions to global environmental problems?

Required:


221 in Green Planet Blues. [coursepack]

Chasek, Downie, and Brown. “Paradigm Shifts and Environmental Politics.” Pp. 30-48,
“North-South Inequalities and the Environment” and “Environment and Development.” Pp. 319-
342 in Global Environmental Politics.

Highly Recommended – Readings on Recent Rio Plus 20 Summit:

Monbiot, George. 2012. “After Rio, we know. Governments have given up on the planet.” The
Guardian, June 26, p. 29. http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jun/25/rio-
governments-will-not-save-planet/print

ir.info/2012/08/06/assessing-rio-plus-20/

http://www.boell.org/downloads/Critique_of_the_Green_Economy.pdf (Chapters 2 and 3
especially relevant).
Recommended:


September 27: Poverty and the Environment
Is poverty a key cause of environmental degradation? Can the poor afford to care about the earth? How does an “environmentalism of the poor” differ from environmental politics in wealthy nations?

Required:


In-class video on Curitiba, Brazil if time permits.

Recommended:


October 4: The Politics of Population
Are there too many of us? If so, what should be done?
How important is population relative to other drivers of environmental degradation?
Why is the population debate such a political minefield, internationally and domestically?
Whose interests and ideologies are served/threatened by a focus on population?

Required:


**Recommended:**


http://www.edstephan.org/malthus/malthus.1.html

http://www.edstephan.org/malthus/malthus.2.html


http://motherjones.com/environment/2010/05/population-growth-india-vatican

**October 11: 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?
Who controls most key technological decisions?
How can governments influence future technological innovation?
What key issues does the focus on technological solutions sidestep or avoid?

**Required:**


Recommended:

Commoner, Barry. Chapter 2 and 3.


http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/8.01/futuretekture_pr.html


October 18: The Politics of Consumption (I)
Is the (North) American dream an ecological nightmare?
What are the implications of the spread of consumerist lifestyles to new parts of the globe?
Why is consumerism such a powerful social and political force?
Are there governance solutions to the driving factors behind global overconsumption?


Recommended:


October 25: The Politics of Consumption (II)
What are the different visions of a politics of “sustainable consumption”?
Are there politically viable alternatives to high-consumption lifestyles in wealthy nations?


In-class video: “Visualizing a Plenitude Economy.” Center for a New American Dream. (Based on Juliet Schor’s Plenitude: The New Economics of True Wealth.)

Recommended:


November 1: Global Environmental Regimes
What are the key political challenges in establishing global regimes to address ecological problems?
What are the key ingredients of an effective environmental regime?

Required:

Chapter 6, “Effective Environmental Regimes: Obstacles and Opportunities,” Pp. 271-318

Highly Recommended:
Chasek, Downie, and Brown. Pp. 179-200 on “Climate Change” and/or remaining cases of environmental regimes in chapters 3-5 that are of particular interest to you.

**November 8: Ecological Modernization**

Is modern society adapting to the environmental challenge?
Is further modernization of industrial capitalism the solution?
How are some governments trying to link environmental policies to their economic-growth strategy?
What are the limits of ecological modernization and the pursuit of “green growth” as a political strategy?

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


November 15: Is Capitalism Sustainable? Radical Critiques of Endless Growth & Accumulation

Why do critics believe capitalism is inherently anti-ecological, and that global equity and ecological sustainability require a transformation in our political-economic system?

Do eco-socialists and social ecologists propose viable alternatives for long-term change and more immediate reforms?

What can we learn from existing examples that reflect eco-socialist ideas?

Required:


In-Class Video, if time permits: “The Greening of Cuba.”

Recommended:


November 22: Market-Based Environmentalism

Do market-based approaches represent a pragmatic response to core environmental challenges, or simply reflect the interests and ideologies of business and conservative political actors? What are the main challenges in applying market-based ideas to global environmental problems such as climate change?

Required:

Dryzek, Chapter 6, “Leave it to the market.” Pp. 121-142.


Recommended:


**November 29: Review and Reflection**

Dryzek, Chapter 11. “Ecological Democracy.”
