**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Nations cannot solve their environmental problems through unilateral action and domestic policy alone. Governments, nongovernmental organizations, and editorial pundits frequently proclaim the need for international solutions to environmental problems ranging from preserving wetlands and wildlife to protecting the global atmosphere. In some issue areas, nations have signed aggressive international treaties but in others they have not. Although environmental problems certainly -- and, we hope, their solutions -- will increase in number in the future, solutions to many existing problems provide the experience to understand the solutions available, the processes by which they can be created, and how effective those solutions have been at solving environmental problems.

This course starts by outlining five perspectives on why environmental problems arise and how we can solve them. It then explores three processes of international policy development: identifying problems, designing and negotiating solutions, and implementing policies to change national behavior. We will use case studies to develop our understanding of these processes and ask questions such as: What conditions help countries negotiate treaties to resolve problems? What types of rules work best? How do we evaluate whether a treaty has been effective or successful? In short, we want to identify how nations will solve global environmental problems.

These questions require careful attention to causal analysis, i.e., to showing that one or more factors caused the outcome we observe and that if that factor had been absent, the observed outcome would not have occurred. Thus, a major element of this course will require that you identify and skeptically evaluate all causal claims (your own, mine, and those of authors you read). For example, this will require being initially dubious of claims that the International Whaling Commission has led to fewer whales being killed since 1980, that growing scientific knowledge caused countries to sign the ozone treaty, or that treaties ever influence behavior. I hope that developing your ability to think causally will be this course's most important contribution to your education.

**Word of warning:** Most past students have found this course—and particularly the final paper—to be particularly difficult but also very rewarding. The requirements to do well in this course are quite demanding.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

- Online readings. Required articles are available on the course's Blackboard website. These are numbered and sorted in the order they appear on the syllabus, though there may be a few sequencing errors.

**EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Identify distinctions among 5 theoretical perspectives on why international environmental problems arise.
- Understand the primary policy processes by which such problems are identified, international agreements are negotiated, and efforts are made to induce compliance and implementation.
- Demonstrate critical thinking and communication skills, including the use of counterfactuals, by writing a major research paper that requires linking clear theories regarding the influence of international environmental treaties to clear empirical evidence relevant to evaluating a particular treaty of interest to the student.

**ESTIMATED STUDENT WORKLOAD / HOW GRADES WILL BE DETERMINED**

Student workload involves 120 hours for this 4-credit course. Time and percent for components are detailed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class component</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance and participation: Those who ask questions and make comments will get better grades. Shy people cannot waive this requirement.</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism assignment: required but no points: Read Blackboard assignment and my plagiarism policy (below). Come in with questions.</td>
<td>0%</td>
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### Discussion Paper #1: Tragedy of the Commons
3-4 page paper responding to question regarding readings and material in lecture.  
**10%** 2

### Discussion Paper #2: Relative Treaty Effectiveness
3-4 page paper responding to question regarding readings and material in lecture.  
**20%** 3

### Treaty Assignment #1:
Details in Assignment Packet. Main value is to provide feedback for your final paper.  
**5%** 2

### Treaty Assignment #2:
Details in Assignment Packet. Main value is to provide feedback for your final paper.  
**10%** 5

### Treaty Assignment #3:
Details in Assignment Packet. Main value is to provide feedback for your final paper.  
**10%** 12

### Final research paper:
Undergraduates: Details in Assignment Packet. Write a research paper (15-20 double-spaced pages) evaluating whether a particular environmental treaty was effective.  
Grad students: Write a research paper (25-30 double-spaced pages) that carefully and rigorously evaluates whether a particular environmental treaty was effective, including thoughtful lit review (as least 20 citations), hypotheses, and evaluation of hypotheses with empirical evidence. Should be comparable to a first draft of a Masters thesis.  
**35%** 35

### Extra credit:
Present research on last day of class. Receiving full extra credit requires:
- a) email graph of dependent variable (with counterfactual line) by 5 pm, Tuesday of Week 10. Include name and treaty title on slide. Extra credit only if meet deadline.
- b) present research for 2 to 3 minutes on Thursday of Week 10, including explaining WHY you think your treaty was OR was not effective.  
**possible 2%** 2

### Important Note for Graduate Students:
Graduate students enrolled in PS577 must do more work than undergraduates and at a higher level of quality. Read the syllabus carefully and complete all readings and assignments required of graduate students.

### Assignment of final grades
Students will receive grades based on the following criteria:
- **A+**: if given at all, given to 1 or 2 students whose performance stood out as significantly stronger than all other students in the course
- **A**: all assignments completed in ways that demonstrate a particularly strong and nuanced understanding of almost all course concepts and the ability to clearly connect theories from the course to empirical evidence
- **B**: all assignments completed in ways that demonstrate solid understanding of most course concepts and the ability to adequately connect theories from the course to empirical evidence
- **C**: completed assignments demonstrate only a basic understanding of course concepts and/or one or more assignments missing
- **D**: missing many assignments and completed assignments demonstrate little understanding of material covered
- **F**: assignments completed account for less than 80% of total grade.

Expected distribution of grades: ~20% As, ~35% Bs, ~35% Cs, ~7% Ds, ~3% Fs.

### COURSE POLICIES

#### Late assignments
Late assignments will lose 2 points per day (at midnight): an assignment that arrives before midnight of the 1st day after it was due will lose 2 of 100 points, one that arrives midnight of the 2nd day after it was due will lose 4 of 100 points, etc. Please turn in all assignments, even if late, however.

**NOTE:** It is difficult to pass this course unless you turn in ALL assignments, since each is such a large portion of the final grade. Help me help you pass the course by turning in all assignments on time.

#### Grade complaints
I am happy to review contested grades. If you would like me to review an assignment, please let me know within one week of receiving the grade.

**Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, Fabrication, Cheating, and Misconduct:**
By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the University’s Student Conduct Code. You must read the three webpages linked on Blackboard for Assignment #1. Understanding these documents is a course REQUIREMENT.
that you MUST complete by the end of week 1. Everything in your assignments must be your own work. Neither ignorance of these policies nor the lack of an intention to cheat or plagiarize will be considered a legitimate defense. Raise questions you have with the professor before problems arise. I will flunk all students who plagiarize and will report them to University authorities. Unfortunately, I have done so two or three times in the past few years.

**Students with disabilities**

I as a professor, and the University of Oregon, are committed to creating inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if any aspects of my instruction methods or course design result in barriers to your participation. If you have a disability, I encourage you to contact Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu If you have already been in contact with Accessible Education Center and have a notification letter, please provide me with a statement from Accessible Education Center during the first week of class so that we can make appropriate arrangements. University policy requires that students present a notification letter from AEC to receive testing accommodations (see http://aec.uoregon.edu/students/current.html).
INTRODUCTION

Some Thoughts as You Begin the Course

- Sustainable development means “treating the earth as if we intended to stay” -- (Robert Gray, 1993).
- When asked whether he would like people in India to have the same standard of living as the British, Mahatma Gandhi responded “It took Britain half the resources of the planet to achieve this prosperity. How many planets will a country like India require?” -- (T. N. Khoshoo, 1995).
- A serious research study is “a study by someone whose mind could conceivably have been changed by the evidence” -- (Paul Krugman, 1993).

Week 1: Tuesday
Introduction

Week 1: Thursday
Introduction (continued)

PLAGIARISM ASSIGNMENT: By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the University’s Student Conduct Code. You must read the websites linked in the Announcements on the course Blackboard site. Also read the whole assignment packet. This will clarify expectations of the course and its level of difficulty. Make sure you read these by this day and understand what they imply about your conduct in this class regarding plagiarism and cheating. Raise any questions with the professor.

- Mitchell, Chapter 1.

Week 2: Tuesday

Identifying the influence of policy solutions: preparing for your paper

- These readings are crucial for understanding the final paper requirements and for doing a good job in evaluating the treaty you choose to study. Read these for this class but also re-read them several times during the term.
- Mitchell, Chapter 2.

PERSPECTIVES ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS

Week 2: Thursday -- If you have a Laptop PLEASE bring it to class for use in the simulation!

Economic and Legal Perspectives

- Garrett Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons” Conca: ch03.
- Xavier Basurto and Elinor Ostrom, “Beyond the Tragedy of the Commons” Conca: ch05.

We will simulate the Tragedy of the Commons online during class. Prepare your strategy BEFORE class. Start by playing the “Optimizing a Private Farm” game on the website. During the in-class game, you will decide how many cows you want to put on a commons to which all other students have access. Your goal is to maximize the milk your cows produce (so you can share that milk with homeless people). What strategy will you use to ensure that you and the rest of the class do not overgraze the commons? How will you convince others to adopt your strategy? What should you do in the meantime to make sure you still can give milk to homeless people this year?

Week 3: Tuesday

Ecophilosophical and Political Perspectives

- Mitchell, Chapter 3.
**Processes of International Environmental Management**

**Identifying Environmental Problems**

*Problem Identification and the Role of Science in Policy Making*

- Mitchell, Chapter 4.
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. 2014. Climate Change 2013: the physical science basis (WG1 Summary for Policymakers). Geneva: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

**Week 3: Thursday**

*Problem Identification and the Role of Nongovernmental Actors*

- Chico Mendes, “Fight for the Forest” Conca: ch07.

**Week 4: Tuesday**

*Science for Sustainability and a Scientific Perspective*

**TREATY ASSIGNMENT #1: due at beginning of class. See Assignment Packet.**


*Initial discussion on writing final paper and conducting a good causal evaluation of a treaty’s influence.*

- Re-read Mitchell and Bernauer from Week 2 readings, think about causal questions and feedback from professor, and come in with questions prepared. This should help you get started on your paper.

**Week 4: Thursday**

*Problem Identification and the Role of Nongovernmental Actors*

- Mitchell, Chapter 5.
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. 2014. Climate Change 2013: the physical science basis (WG1 Summary for Policymakers). Geneva: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

**Week 5: Tuesday**

*Negotiation Theory*


**Week 5: Thursday**

*Negotiation Practice*

- Mitchell, Chapter 5.

**Week 6: Tuesday**

*Ensuring Compliance and Effectiveness*

- Mitchell, Chapter 6.
Week 6: Thursday
Case Study – Relative Regime Effectiveness: Whaling and Ozone Protection

DISCUSSION PAPER: “Relative Effectiveness” due at beginning of class (< 1500 words – provide a word count). See Assignment Packet. I have provided more extensive readings than usual to help you prepare your discussion paper.


ISSUES AND DEBATES IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

Week 7: Tuesday
Multinationals, Free Trade, and the Environment


Week 7: Thursday

*TREATY ASSIGNMENT #2: due at beginning of class. See Assignment Packet.*

Final Paper Discussion

- Read online lecture notes and come in with questions you have regarding writing your final paper.

Week 8: Tuesday
Environment and Security

- UNEP, “From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The Role of Natural Resources and the Environment” Conca: ch23.

Week 8: Thursday
Sustainable Development


Week 9: Tuesday

*TREATY ASSIGNMENT #3: due at beginning of class. See Assignment Packet.*

Population

- Re-read first few pages of Mitchell, Chapter 3.
- 2009. Population control is good but even Sierra Club won't take it up.
- The Economist. 2009. Go forth & multiply a lot less.
Week 9: Thursday

Climate Change, Part 1

Watch one or more of these NSF videos:
- National Science Foundation. 2012. How do we know?
- National Science Foundation. 2012. The IPCC.

Week 10: Tuesday

**EXTRA CREDIT Deadline: Powerpoint slide for those presenting in class on Thursday due by email by 5 pm.**

Climate Change, Part 2
- Joe Thwaites, “Climate Change at the UN Security Council” Conca: ch27.
- Oxfam “Gender, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Climate Change Adaptation” Conca: ch29.
- Additional documents related to recent Climate Change meetings may also be placed on the Blackboard website.

CONCLUSIONS

Week 10: Thursday

The Future of Global Environmental Governance – Problems we will face and Solutions we will have
- Mitchell, Chapter 7.

**FINAL PAPER DUE at the beginning of class on the last day of class.**

**NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED!**