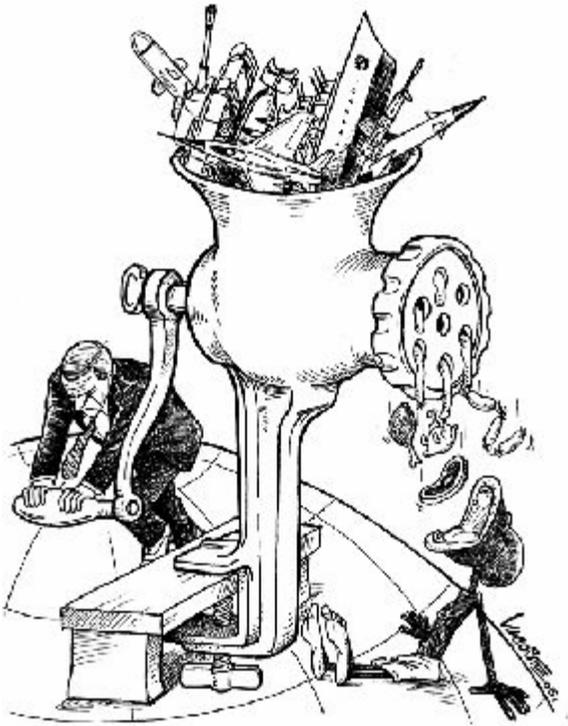


CUNY
Lehman College
Division of Natural and Social Sciences
Department of Political Science

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

LEH 301-R03

Spring 2007



“What had prosperity done for them?” In their haste, they overreached themselves: they threw money into the rivers, let it escape in smoke in the air, handicapped themselves with their own litter and filth, prematurely exhausted the agricultural lands upon which they depended for food and fabrics.

Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization*, 1934, pp.255.

From: *EINS Entwicklungspolitik Information Nord-Süd*.
[online] www.entwicklungspolitik.org. Retrieved on 25 July 2006.

Prof. Graulau

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the political dimension of diverse global environmental problems. It analyzes global environmental problems as a manifestation of the economic inequalities inherent to global accumulation and expansion of capitalism. It looks at how international organizations, financial institutions, trade agreements, corporations and capitalist ideologies transform global politics and governance into progressive environmental exploitation. The readings and materials of the course are aimed at provoking critical thinking on the relationship between environment and development.

The course is divided in sections that analyze diverse environmental constraints of the global South and East and their linkages to global capitalist processes. The first section is a historical overview of the main events in global environmental politics. The second section discusses contemporary global environmental agreements, treaties and negotiations in the areas of biodiversity, climate change, deforestation, resource depletion and energy. The third section discusses the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and their significance for understanding global environmental politics. The fourth section analyzes the interrelationship between trade and environmental agreements, drawing upon contemporary international disputes between rich and industrializing countries. The fifth section discusses environmental problems from a long-term historical perspective. The last section of the course analyzes global environmental politics from a critical political economy perspective.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the main concepts and actors of global environmental politics (i.e., sustainability, Brundtland Report, UN Millennium Development Goals, common good, environmental justice, World Trade Organization, World Social Forum).
2. Describe the recent history of global environmental politics.
3. Describe global environmental problems (i.e., biodiversity, climate change, deforestation) and international agreements.
4. Identify problems of environmental inequality between industrial and industrializing regions of the world economy.

PREREQUISITES

NONE

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

You are required to attend every class meeting and read the required materials.

EVALUATION

Final grade is divided as follows:

Mid-term exam: 25%

Final exam: 35%

A: 100-90

B: 89-80

C: 79-70

D: 69-60

F: 59 + Below

*Incomplete: Under

exceptional circumstance

Assignments:	15%
Quizzes:	15%
Film report:	<u>10%</u>
	100%

The **mid-term** and the **final exams** will be developed as open discussion questions. Examples of questions will be discussed prior to the date of examination. You will have the opportunity to answer similar questions in the classroom during the review sessions.

Quizzes are, as you wisely guess, without notice.

The film report will be a short essay (5 pages) about **The Burning Season**. The essay must present a concise explanation of the main conflict portrayed in the film and its political actors. Drawing upon the readings, it must analyze the outcome of the conflict (as portrayed in the film) and its meaning to global environmental politics.

COURSE MATERIALS

REQUIRED:

Global Environment Politics. Dilemmas in World Politics. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press. 2006. Fourth Edition.

Additional readings are contained in the Course reader (CR), unless otherwise noted.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The course abides to the CUNY Policy of Academic Integrity. It is your responsibility to be aware of it. It is available at http://www.lehman.edu/lehman/about/policies_pdf/CUNYAcademicIntegrityPolicy.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

SECTION I: INTRODUCTION TO GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

Week 1: The environment as an actor in global politics

→ Chapter 1: The emergence of global environmental politics (pp.1-40).

Week 2: Global, transnational, and regional environmental actors

→ Chapter 2: Actors in the environmental arena (pp.41-96).

Week 3: The history of environmental politics: The birth of sustainability

^{CR} The Brundtland Report, Excerpt.

SECTION II: GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL REGIMES

Week 4: Transboundary Air Pollution, Ozone Depletion and Climate Change

→ Chapter 3: The development of environmental regimes (pp.97-127).
Optional: Chapter 4: Effective environmental regimes: obstacles and opportunities (pp.197-207).

Week 5: International Toxic Waste Trade, Toxic Chemicals, Whaling and International Trade in Endangered Species

→ Chapter 3: The development of environmental regimes (pp.128-158)

Week 6: Biodiversity Loss, Fisheries Depletion, Desertification and Forests

→ Chapter 3: The development of environmental regimes (pp.159-196).

Optional: Chapter 4: Effective environmental regimes: obstacles and opportunities (pp.208-229)

Film: The Burning Season: The Chico Mendes Story (By John Frankenheimer, 1994)

Week 7: MID-TERM EXAM

SECTION III: ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: UNMDGS

Week 8: The United Nations Millennium Conference

^{CR} United Nations Millennium Declaration.

→ United Nations Millennium Development Goals, available at
<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

Week 9: Debating the UNMDGs: The statistical critique

^{CR} An Immeasurable Crisis? A Criticism of the Millennium Development Goals and Why They Cannot Be Measured. By Amir Attaran. In *Policy Forum* October 2005, Vol. 2, Issue 10. Pp. 955-961.

EXAM

SECTION IV: ENVIRONMENT AND TRADE

Week 10: Environmental-trade disputes between rich and industrializing countries:

The taste of tuna, shrimp and Basmati rice

^{CR} Trade and Environment Case Studies (Case Studies # 72, 61, 493), from Trade & Environment Database. By James R. Lee, American University, The School of International Service (2006).

Week 11: Environmental-trade disputes between rich and industrializing countries: the sweet taste of European chocolate, Everglades' sugar and Italian Parmigiano-Reggiano

^{CR} Trade and Environment Case Studies (Case Studies # 521, 106, 677-2003), from Trade & Environment Database. By James R. Lee, American University, The School of International Service (2006).

Week 12: North-South environmental clashes

→ Chapter 5: Economics, development and the future of global environmental politics (pp.233-278)

SECTION V: ENVIRONMENT & MODERNITY

Week 13: Environmental problems from a historical perspective

→ “The ecology of the modern Western world” by Charles Bowlus & “Science, technology and the urban environment” by Thomas F. Glick (pp.117-139). In *Historical Ecology: Essays on Environment and Social Change*. By Lester J. Bilsky, Editor (Kennikat Press, 1980). Available at the American Council of Learned Societies, History e-Book Project (Electronic Database to be accessed through the web page of Leonard Lief Library).

SECTION VI: CRITIQUE TO GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

Week 14: Environmental politics from a political economy perspective

→ “Is sustainable capitalism possible?” By James O’ Connor, In Martín O’Connor, Editor, *Is Capitalism Sustainable? Political Economy and the Politics of Ecology*. The Guildford Press, 1994. Pp. 152-175.

Week 15: Overview of the course and review for final exam

WEB PAGES TO EXPLORE FOR INFORMATION ON GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

Center for International Earth Science Information Network Environmental Treaties and Resource Indicators **Focus: Multilateral Treaties

<http://www.thecre.com/fedlaw/legal14/pidb-home.htm>

- a) Directions to access texts of Treaties:
 - i) Go to the left column, “ENTRI Thematic Guide”
 - ii) Go to “Environmental Treaties and Other Policy Instruments”
 - iii) There you will find the following sections: “Thematic Guide to Political Institutions and Global Environmental Change” & “International Environmental Agreements”.

Conservation International: Biodiversity Hotspots (Center for Applied Biodiversity Science): <http://www.biodiversityhotspots.org/xp/Hotspots>

Dollars and Sense: <http://www.dollarsandsense.org/index.html>

Green Politics Standing Group:
<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/GREENPOLITICS.html>
(List-serve and On-line discussion)

National Resources Defense Council: <http://www.nrdc.org/reference/laws.asp>

The Environment, Development and Sustainable Peace Initiative:
http://www.sustainable-peace.org/content/fr_home.html

The International Institute for Environment and Development: <http://www.iied.org/>

United Nations Environment Programme: <http://www.unep.org/>

World Resources Institute: Earth Trends: <http://earthtrends.wri.org/>