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Office hours: Tuesdays 1-3pm

IAFS 4500: Global Political Ecology



This course explores the relationship between politics (broadly defined) and the environment at the global level. We will consider a range of challenges and environmental issues that have explicit global impact and/or are nonetheless considered “global” because they are endemic in many places around the world. Drawing on the theoretical underpinnings of political ecology and case studies around the world, this course explores themes such as: global water politics; urbanization and city environments; marine policy and fisheries politics; the production and consumption of food; nature conservation; disaster governance; and carbon offsets to address climate change. In the process, we examine and critically evaluate differing theoretical frames employed by political ecologists, including approaches to environmental knowledge and discourse, political economy, and environmental justice among others. Students of the course will take positions on key global environmental debates, empirical evidence and theoretical perspectives through in-class discussions, reflection papers, a developing a final policy analysis paper.

Objectives and Learning Outcomes

A student completing this course will be able to:

- Discern and understand the core concepts and theorizations of differing political ecology approaches as applied to key global environmental issues and challenges (*readings, lectures, class discussions, mid-term*)
- Distill and become familiar with the multiple methods used by scholars and practitioners to research political ecology questions with global relevance (*mid-term, final paper*)
- Evaluate debates around major global environmental issues as learned through paradigmatic case studies from around the world (*class discussions, mid-term*)
- Understand major environmental challenges in the Global North and South and their policy possibilities (*final paper, class readings, mid-term*)
- Critically analyze empirical data pertaining to international affairs and key global environmental debates (*final paper, reflection papers*)
- Develop a policy analyses and briefing skills of a chosen key environmental issue with global consequence (*final paper and presentation*)
- Work with others to facilitate productive discussions and the application of course material through in-class participation and mini-presentations (*news presentation, class discussion*).
- Develop an in-depth paper analyzing a particular environmental issue and policy through a political ecology lens (*final paper*).

Assignments, Examinations & Grading

Class Participation & Citizenship (10%)

Students are expected to come to each section fully prepared, having thoroughly read the assigned readings for that section and prepared questions or comments for the group discussion (see discussion guidelines below, which will be factored into determining your participation grade). At times, I will ask students to informally prepare a position on a debate or paper in advance, which will be presented in class. Small quizzes may be given as part of the participation grade if needed, to ensure full participation in the readings. We will also frequently break into smaller groups and reconvene to report back during class time. Students are expected to distribute and share leadership of small-group work, so that everyone has a chance to contribute and report back when we share our small-group findings. Absences will result in a decrease in the participation grade.

Class and Discussion Participation

| CRITERIA | EXCELLENT | ADEQUATE | NEEDS WORK |
|--|--|--|---|
| Frequency of participation in class | Student initiates contributions at least once each class. | Student initiates contribution at least in half of the classes. | Student does not initiate contributions & needs instructor to solicit input. |
| Quality of comments | Comments always insightful & constructive; uses appropriate terminology. Comments balanced between general impressions, opinions & specific, thoughtful criticisms or contributions. | Comments are sometimes constructive, with occasional signs of insight. Grasp of the appropriate terminology. | Comments are uninformative. Lacking in appropriate terminology. Heavy reliance on opinion & personal taste, e.g., "I love it", "I hate it", etc. |
| Listening Skills | Student listens attentively and respectfully when others present materials, perspectives, as indicated by comments that build on others' remarks, i.e., student hears what others say & contributes to the dialogue. | Student is mostly attentive when others present ideas. Occasionally needs encouragement or reminders from the instructor to focus. | Student is often inattentive and needs repeated reminders to focus on the class discussion. Occasionally makes disruptive comments while others are speaking. Detracts from the discussion. Sleeps. |

This rubric assumes students' attendance in class. An absent student cannot receive any participation grade. Adapted from <https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/assessment/examples/courselevel-bycollege/cfa/tools/participationrubric-cfa.pdf>

Reading Response Paper (10%)

Due Date: TBA on Canvas by 11:59PM the Monday before Assigned Class

To facilitate your critical written engagement with the course content, once per term you will submit a short reflection paper on a specific pre-assigned reading from the course. This should be approximately two double-spaced pages (4-5 paragraphs). In the first two paragraphs, you should accurately summarize the article and the key points, theorizations and arguments put forth by the author(s). The last two paragraphs should be a critical appraisal of the reading (critique or praise of the argument backed by logical reasoning, connections to points made by other authors, and/or comparisons to earlier readings). This can include what you found particularly engaging and informative about the readings and points needing clarification. These reading responses will be used during class discussion so be prepared to summarize the key content of the author's arguments, as well as your comments. A schedule for your responses will be provided early in

the semester. Students must *submit their response papers on Canvas by 11:59PM the Monday before the class of the designated reading.*

Mid-Term Examination (30%)

Due: March 6th

The midterm exam will be an in-class exam covering the material from the first section of the course. It will include short essay questions.

Final Policy Analysis Paper Project (50%)

In consultation with me, you will develop a paper topic, extended abstract, and 15-page final paper that offers a policy-oriented analysis (that is, a report making policy recommendations) based on your research on a current issue relevant to global environmental politics. The goal is for you to gain some fluency in a substantive, real-world issue relevant to global political ecology and the themes of the course and communicate your analysis in both written and verbal form. In addition to the paper, you will also present a policy briefing relevant to your chosen topic as a way of informing the class on the progress of your project as well as key dimensions of your chosen issue. More details of the assignment will be provided in class.

Policy Paper Extended Abstract and Annotated Bibliography (10%)

Due: April 3rd in CLASS (3:30pm) and on Canvas

Students will submit a 2-page (double spaced) *extended abstract that outlines the topic of their policy paper topic, key arguments, and possible implications and recommendations* that is brought to class in hard-copy as well as submitted on Canvas. In addition, when you submit your abstract you will also submit a 2-page (double spaced) annotated bibliography. This is a bibliography that *provides a brief summary of your most important sources* and should include at least 5 relevant peer-reviewed articles/references they intend to utilize.

Policy Briefing Presentation (15%)

Due: Last 3 sessions of class, as assigned (TBA)

In-between the submission of your abstract and final policy paper, you will give a short policy briefing to the class that focuses on one or more elements of your paper. You will not be expected to summarize your paper, since it will not yet be completed, but rather offer the class a verbal briefing relevant to the topic of your paper, including slides. Please submit your slides via Canvas before 3:30pm on the day that you present.

Final Policy Analysis Paper (25%)

Due: May 1st by 11:59pm on Canvas

In consultation with me, you will develop a 15-page final paper that offers a policy-oriented analysis (that is, a report making policy recommendations) based on your research on a current issue relevant to global environmental politics. The goal is for you to gain some fluency in a substantive, real-world issue applicable to global political ecology and the themes of the course through conducting a policy analysis based on in-depth research. More details of the assignment will be provided in class.

Grading

Student grades will be determined on the basis of the following scale: 98-100=A+, 94-97=A, 90-93=A-, 87-89=B+, 84-86=B, 80-83=B-, 77-79=C+, 74-76=C, 70-73=C-, 67-69=D+, 64-66=D, 60-63=D-, 59 and below=F. If you need an extension, **discuss it with me at least two days in advance**, except in cases of documented medical or family emergency. Late assignments will be penalized one third of a grade for each day they are late; for example, an A paper that is submitted two days late will receive a B+. I grade as follows: 98-100=A+, 94-97=A, 90-93=A-, 87-89=B+, 84-86=B, 80-83=B-, 77-79=C+, 74-76=C, 70-73=C-, 67-69=D+, 64-66=D, 60-63=D-, 59 and below=F.

Readings

All readings will be posted and/or linked to via the course website on CANVAS.

Accommodation for Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students) (www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/students). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website and discuss your needs with your professor.

Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, you will need to notify me no less than one week in advance of an absence for religious observances, and give immediate notice if it conflicts with a scheduled presentation or assignment. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Classroom Behavior

In this class, we will all treat each other with respect and maintain a safe environment for learning and the exchange of ideas. Civil discussion of differing viewpoints is an essential part of the study of international affairs. I expect that we will all arrive on time and remain for the entire class. We will discuss technology use in class, but please respect your colleagues' need to concentrate. In order to avoid distracting them, please do not eat, sleep, surf the web, read the newspaper, text, play games, or have private conversations during class.

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation,

gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. CU's Sexual Misconduct Policy prohibits sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking or related retaliation. CU Boulder's Discrimination and Harassment Policy prohibits discrimination, harassment or related retaliation based on race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct under either policy should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127. Information about the OIEC, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment or related retaliation can be found at the [OIEC website](#).

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to [the academic integrity policy](#). Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, resubmission, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-735-2273). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code Council as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

Office Hours and Email

Coming to my office hours (listed above) for a face-to-face discussion is the best way to get immediate feedback. Email should be reserved for questions I can answer in a few sentences. I aim to reply to emails within 72 hours (excluding weekends).

***The use of laptops, tablets and phones is not permitted in class except during research/library tutorials.**

COURSE SCHEDULE & READINGS

Week 1: Course Overview and Introduction to Global Political Ecology

Welcome to the course! We begin the session with introductions and a mini-lecture on global political ecology. We will end with an overview of the course syllabus, expectations and guidelines.

Week 2: Introduction to Global Nature and Environmental Governance

This week we further examine global nature through employing a global political ecology lens. We begin by further orienting ourselves with political ecology framework through an introduction to global nature and environmental governance, and then turn to a more specific examination of carbon offsets. Come to class prepared to summarize the pros and cons and take a position on the carbon offsets debate.

Readings Theme 1: Introduction to Global Political Ecology

Robbins, P. (2011). "Chapter 1: The Hatchet and the Seed." *Political ecology: A critical introduction* (Vol. 16). John Wiley & Sons, pp 3-16.

Readings Theme 2: Global Environmental Governance: Carbon Offsets Debate (*Be prepared to take a position on carbon off-sets in class*)

Bumpus, A. G., & Liverman, D. M. (2008). Accumulation by decarbonization and the governance of carbon offsets. *Economic Geography*, 84(2), 127-155.

Schapiro, M. (2010). Inside the carbon-trading shell game. *Harper's Magazine*, pp. 31-39.

Week 3. Political Ecology of Global Drinking water

This week, we examine global water politics through considering the ongoing struggle to supply potable drinking water to the world's population. Through examining the ecological and political processes undergirding drinking water provisions in differing contexts, we consider how global policy discourse, privatization, and urban politics are shaping water challenges and inequities.

Readings Theme 1: Global Drinking Water Overview

Birkenholtz, T. 2016. "Drinking Water." In Jackson, Speiss and Sultana (Eds.). *Eating, Drinking: Surviving*. Springer, pp.23-30.

Goldman, M. 2007. How "Water for All!" policy became hegemonic: The power of the World Bank and its transnational policy networks. *Geoforum*. 38(5): 786–800.

Readings Theme 2: Urban Water Politics

Bakker, K. 2007. Trickle down? Private sector participation and the pro-poor water supply debate in Jakarta, Indonesia. *Geoforum*. 38(5): 855–868.

Meehan, K. (2013). Disciplining de facto development: water theft and hydrosocial order in Tijuana. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 31(2), 319-336.

Week 4. Waste and Discard Ecologies

The generation of municipal solid waste presents one of the most severe threats to urban health and sustainability globally. In many cities of the world, recycling work is carried out under dangerous and exploitative conditions by the urban poor. We will consider political ecological accounts of solid waste management and “poo politics”, as well as read and critically consider portions of Katherine Boo’s award-winning account of recycling and trash-work in a Mumbai slum.

Readings Theme 1: Theorizing Waste and Sanitation Politics

McFarlane, C., & Silver, J. (2017). The political city: “Seeing sanitation” and making the urban political in Cape Town. *Antipode*, 49(1), 125-148.

Nejuru, J. 2006. “The urban political ecology of plastic bag waste problem in Nairobi and Kenya. *Geoforum*, 37 (6): 1047-1058.

Readings Theme 2: Lived Experiences of Recyclers and Waste-Workers in a Mumbai Slum

Boo, Katherine. 2012. *Behind the beautiful forevers*. Random House LLC. (Prologue and Chapters 1 & 3)

Week 5. Disaster Governance and Environmental Justice

This week, we consider the political ecologies of environmental disasters by employing an environmental justice lens. We look at the historical origins and socio-political dimensions of environmental hazards, as well as non-human agencies, in shaping the production and responses to disasters, as well as their unequal outcomes. We do so through examining the case study of Hurricane Katrina, and watch Spike Lee’s documentary *When the Levees Broke*.

Readings Theme 1: Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Environmental Justice

Holifield, R. 2001. Defining Environmental Justice and Environmental Racism. *Urban Geography* 22 (1): 78-90

Readings Theme 2: Disaster Governance & Hurricane Katrina Case Study

Bullard, R. and B. Wright. 2009. Introduction and Chapter 1. *In Race, Place and Environmental Justice after Hurricane Katrina: Struggles to Rebuild and Revitalize New Orleans and the Gulf Coast*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. 1-48.

Week 6. The Political Ecology of Food: Fair Trade and Global Agri-politics

Over the next two sessions, we examine a set of frameworks and case studies for examining differing dimensions of the political ecology of food globally. We begin this week by taking on fair trade and global agri-politics, considering how differing political ecological imaginaries and moral economies serve to shape and regulate global food politics. We also evaluate a case study on fair-trade and organic certifications of coffee in small-scale plantations in Mexico and Central America.

Readings:

Goodman, M. K. (2004). Reading fair trade: political ecological imaginary and the moral economy of fair trade foods. *Political geography*, 23(7), 891-915.

Méndez, V. E., Bacon, C. M., Olson, M., Petchers, S., Herrador, D., Carranza, C., ... & Mendoza, A. (2010). Effects of Fair Trade and organic certifications on small-scale coffee farmer households in Central America and Mexico. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*, 25(3), 236-251.

Week 7. Political Ecology of Food 2: Documentary

This week we continue our examination of the political ecology of food, including screening portions of the documentary *Food, Inc.*, and considering the politics and practices of the U.S. food system. We also devote time to preparing for the mid-term.

Jarosz, L. (2015). 22. Contesting hunger discourses. *The International Handbook of Political Ecology*, 305-315.

Guthman, J. (2011). Excess consumption or over-production?: US farm policy, global warming, and the bizarre attribution of obesity. *Global political ecology*, 51-66.

Week 8: Mid-term Exam

This week students will take a mid-term exam covering material from the first seven weeks of class. This will include short-essay responses.

Week 9. Marine Politics and the Outlaw Ocean

This week we consider marine political ecologies and the world's oceans. We begin by examining the current crises in the world's oceans of illegal fishing and over-fishing. In addition, by applying a political ecology lens to case studies on fisheries, marine policy, and illegality we contemplate how the world's marine ecologies can become more socially and environmentally just.

Readings Theme 1: Introduction to Marine Governance, Politics and Over-Fishing

Mansfield, B. (2011) “‘Modern’ industrial fisheries and the crisis of overfishing” in Peet, R., Robbins, P. and Watts, M. (Eds.), *Global Political Ecology*, Routledge, pp.84-99.

Readings Theme 2: Case Studies of the Outlaw Ocean

Bondaroff, P., Reitano, T., & van der Werf, W. (2015). The illegal fishing and organized crime nexus: illegal fishing as transnational organized crime. *Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime and The Black Fish. Selected sections: pp11-26; 36-55*

Urbina, Ian (2015). The Renegade Trawler, Hunted for 10,000 Miles by Vigilantes, *New York Times*. Accessed at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/28/world/a-renegade-trawler-hunted-for-10000-miles-by-vigilantes.html>

Week 10: Research Meetings

During this session, each student will meet in designated time slots with Prof Truelove to discuss their final policy analysis paper topic. You will be informed in previous sessions of your time slot and how to prepare.

Week 11. Spring Break: No Class

Week 12: Extended Abstract Submission of Policy Paper and Peer Review

This week, students will bring their policy analysis abstract to class. Working in teams, they will give a brief verbal overview of their abstract, before exchanging it to be peer-reviewed during class.

Week 13. Class Work Period: Prepare for Policy Briefings and Final Policy Analysis Paper

Students will spend this period as a free work session to prepare their for their policy briefings and final paper.

Week 14. Policy Briefings

This is the first of several in-class sessions will students will present findings from their policy analysis to date through a verbal policy briefing on their selected research area. Further details regarding how to prepare and what to include in a verbal policy briefing will be provided in class.

Week 15. Policy Briefings

Week 16. Policy Briefings & Course Wrap-Up

In this final session, we wrap-up our policy briefings and complete course evaluations.

