

PSCI 3064: Environmental Political Theory

Fall semester 2011 • Tu & Th 2-3:15 pm • RAMY N1B23

Instructor: Steve Vanderheiden

Office: Ketchum 21 • Office Hours: Thursdays 11-1 and by appointment

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Course description:

This is a course in environmental political theory, which examines normative concepts and theories as they apply to the understanding and evaluation of contemporary environmental issues. Over the course of the semester, we shall consider accounts of environmental problems through discourses of development, modernization, and security, examine alternative frames for such issues as problems for ethics, economics, or political economy, and apply concepts such as justice, democracy, and rights to issues in environmental politics, considering the potential and limits of theorizing them in these terms. We shall also apply these theoretical tools and insights to issues of food production and consumption, urban planning, and climate change. Finally, the course includes a two day simulation on environmental governance, in which students will play the roles of major participants in ongoing international climate policy development processes.

The goals of the course are to better understand the normative bases of major contemporary environmental issues and movements, to critically assess the role of the underlying theories and concepts in shaping environmental politics, and to appreciate how environmental problems and goals rest on social and political theories. The course assesses a range of approaches to the study of current environmental politics, but does not advocate any particular view or value system.

Course requirements and grading:

There are three categories of graded components to the course:

1. **Exams** (45 points) – Three exams will be given during the course, with midterms held in class on September 27 and November 1, and a final exam on December 10. Exams will be worth 15 points apiece, and will include a mix of short answer and essay questions. A study guide will be distributed in class one week prior to each exam.
2. **Essays** (30 points) – Six short (two page) essays will be assigned over the course of the semester, in which students will be asked to critically respond to key course ideas and texts. Each essay topic will be assigned in one class meeting and will be due the next. Instructions for each essay will be provided with the topic, and each is worth 5 points.
3. **In-class exercises** (25 points) – Students will periodically be given individual and group projects in class during the semester, which will assess preparation for and understanding of course reading assignments. These, including a 10 point assignment associated with the climate governance simulation during the final week of class, are worth 25 points.

Texts:

There are three required texts for this course; all are available for purchase in the CU bookstore.

Gardiner, Caney, Jamieson & Shue, eds., *Climate Ethics: The Essential Readings* (OUP)

Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (Penguin)
Dauvergne, *The Shadows of Consumption* (MIT)

Reading assignments from these texts will be abbreviated on the syllabus as CE, OD, and SC.
Assigned texts will also be placed online in CULearn (or its successor), abbreviated as CUL.

University and course policies:

Disability accommodations: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on students' documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322,
<http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices>

Religious observances: Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Students needing to miss class or exams for religious observances must inform the instructor during the first two weeks of the term. See http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

Classroom behavior: Students and faculty share responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat all students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which they and their students express opinions. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. 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. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code

Discrimination and harassment: The CU Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Further information and campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>

Honor code: All students of CU Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). More information on the Honor Code can be found at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html> and <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/>

Excused absences: At the instructor's discretion, students may be given opportunities to make up points or exams missed as the result of documented illnesses (with a dated note from a health care provider) or other emergencies, religious observances, or official university activities. Wherever possible, students should inform the instructor in advance of such absences in order to make necessary arrangements. Absences resulting from discretionary events (such as non-emergency health care, non-essential travel, etc.) cannot qualify as excused. Students are responsible for obtaining class notes and informing themselves about missed announcements that result from excused absences. Attendance at the scheduled final exam is mandatory, except as allowed by the university's final exam policy.

Computers and electronic devices: As a matter of classroom decorum and to enhance the learning environment for all, the use of laptops and other electronic devices during lectures is prohibited. Students requiring laptops for note-taking can apply for an exemption to the ban if they can demonstrate the need for such devices and promise not to use them for other purposes. Such exemptions will be immediately revoked upon any violation of its terms.

Reading, lecture and exam schedule:

August 23: Introduction (no reading assignment)

August 25: Ecological limits, political implications

Club of Rome, from *The Limits to Growth*, in CUL

Arrow, et al, "Economic Growth, Carrying Capacity, and the Environment," in CUL

Ophuls & Boyan, from *Ecology and the Politics of Scarcity Revisited*, in CUL

August 30: Scarcity and its discontents

Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," in CUL

Ostrum, "The Nature of Common Pool Resource Problems," in CUL

September 1: Round up the usual suspects

"Who Killed the Electric Car?" (film), in class

First essay assignment (instructions online; due in class on Sept. 6)

September 6: Greening the development agenda

WCED, from *Our Common Future*, in CUL

Daly, "Sustainable Growth: An Impossibility Theorem," in CUL

Carruthers, "From Opposition to Orthodoxy," in CUL

September 8: Ecological modernization and CSR

Lovins, Lovins & Hawken, from *Natural Capitalism*, in CUL

Shellenberger & Nordhaus, from *Break Through*, in CUL

Clapp, "Global Environmental Governance for CSR and Accountability," in CUL

September 13: Environment as security imperative?

Homer-Dixon, "On the Threshold," in CUL

Buzan, et al, from *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, in CUL

Deudney, "The Case Against Linking Degradation and Security," in CUL

Second essay assignment (instructions online; due in class on September 15)

September 15: Economics: prospects and limits

Stern, "The Economics of Climate Change," in CE

Anderson & Leal, from *Free Market Environmentalism*, in CUL

Goodin, "Selling Environmental Indulgences," in CE

September 20: Political economy and globalization

Dauverge, chs. 1-2, in SC

Klein, from *No Logo*, in CUL

Athanasίου & Baer, from *Divided Planet*, in CUL

September 22: Science as message or messenger

IPCC, Executive summary to *Fourth Assessment Report*, in CUL

Mark Brown, from *Science in Democracy*, in CUL

Oreskes, from *Merchants of Doubt*, in CUL

September 27: First midterm (in class)

September 29: Democracy: obstacle or opportunity?

Dryzek & Stevenson, "Democracy and Earth System Governance," in CUL
Sabel, Fung & Karkkainen, "Beyond Backyard Environmentalism," in CUL
Lipschutz, "Power, Politics, and Global Civil Society," in CUL

October 4: Individual responsibility for the global environment

Gardiner, "A Perfect Moral Storm," in CE
Sinnott-Armstrong, "It's Not My Fault," in CE
Maniates, "Individuation: Plant a Tree, Ride a Bike, Save the World," in CUL

October 6: Justice: it's not me, it's us (or them)

UCC, *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States*, in CUL
Caney, "Cosmopolitan Justice, Responsibility, and Global Climate Change," in CE
Shue, "Global Environment and International Inequality," in CE

October 11: Rights as vehicles of justice

Caney, "Climate Change, Human Rights, and Moral Thresholds," in CE
Baer, "Greenhouse Development Rights," in CE
Stone, "Should Trees Have Legal Standing?" in CUL
Fourth essay assignment (instructions online; due in class on October 13)

October 13: Advertising and consumerism

DeGraff, from *Affluenza*, in CUL
Schor, from *The Overspent American*, in CUL
"Advertising and the End of the World" (film), in class

October 18: Framing: what you see is what you get?

Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness," in CUL
Nisbet, "Communicating Climate Change," in CUL
Callenbach, from *Ecotopia*, in CUL

October 20: Taking on the system

Wackernagel and Rees, from *Our Ecological Footprint*, in CUL
Lasn, from *Culture Jam*, in CUL
Foreman, from *Ecodefense*, in CUL
Fifth essay assignment (instructions online; due in class on October 20)

October 25: Cars and gasoline

Dauverge, chs. 3-10, in SC

October 27: Sprawl

Duany, Plater-Zyberk & Speck, from *Suburban Nation*, in CUL
Williamson, from *Sprawl, Justice, and Citizenship*, in CUL
Dagger, "Stopping Sprawl for the Good of All," in CUL

November 1: second midterm (in class)

November 3: Food I

Dauverge, chs. 15-18, in SC

"Food, Inc." (film), in class

November 8: Food II

Pollan, Introduction, chs. 1-7, in OD

November 10: Food III

Pollan, chs. 8-20, in OD

November 15: Consumer goods and services

Dauvergne, chs. 11-14, 19-24

Sixth essay assignment (instructions online; due in class on November 17)

November 17: Climate change I

Singer, "One Atmosphere," in CE

Jamieson, "Ethics, Public Policy, and Global Warming," in CE

Shue, "Deadly Delays, Saving Opportunities," in CE

November 29: Climate change II

Shue, "Subsistence Emissions and Luxury Emissions," in CE

Jamieson, "When Utilitarians Should be Virtue Theorists," in CE

Parfit, "Energy Policy and the Further Future," in CE

December 1: Climate change III

Baer, "Adaptation: Who Pays Whom?" in CE

Jamieson, "Adaptation, Mitigation, and Justice" in CE

Gardiner, "Is 'Arming the Future' with Geoengineering Really the Lesser Evil?" in CE

December 6: Environmental governance simulation (in class)

December 8: Environmental governance simulation (in class)

Simulation briefing/assessment paper due in class

December 10: Final exam, 1:30-4 pm

