

# Global Environmental Issues

Political Science 143D

International Studies 120

Planning, Policy & Design 136

University of California, Irvine  
Summer I, 2008

**Day/Time:** MW, 1-3:50p

**Location:** SSPA 1165

**Course Website – [www.asteback.com/GEP](http://www.asteback.com/GEP)**

**Instructor:** P. Brian Fisher

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**Office Hours:** By Appointment

## Course Background

This course examines the relationship between global political forces and environmental change. The focus is on the implications of local-global interactions for environmental management as well as the implications of environmental change for world politics. Changes in the political and economic systems have not only contributed to the rise of global environmental issues, but also fundamentally affect potential solutions. Examining the nature of environmental problems contributes to understanding why they rose on the agenda, whether or not they may remain at the top, and aids in identifying the technical requirements of their resolution. However, regardless of the nature of the problem, what solutions are possible let alone practical depends upon the nature of the changing political, social and economic systems.

## Class Format

The class sessions will consist of four main components:

**I. An Orientation to Global Environmental Politics:** The orientation will include an historical overview of environmentalism and the first attempt at global environmental governance. It also includes a survey of the key actors in global environmental governance and how those roles are shifting and expanding to address new environmental problems.

**II. Drivers of Global Environmental Problems:** This section of the course will investigate human impact on the environment and the historical reasons for an increased anthropogenic impact. We will review I=PAT, and how humanity can confront consumption and population growth as primary drivers of environmental change.

**III. Environmental Security and Justice:** In this section, we will review the two dominant problems that result from environmental change: insecurity and inequality. Two dominant paradigms attempt to address these fundamental problems that of human security and environmental justice. We examine these paradigms and that of human rights in addressing environmental problems.

**IV. Issues in Global Environmental Politics:** This section of the course will involve specific environmental issues involving land, water, air and biodiversity. The course will wrap up with a class on effective environmental action – that is, what can we do to protect the environment.

### Grading

The following weight will be given to coursework in the determination of final grades:

COURSEWORK	VALUE
<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>35 %</b>
<b>Video/Photo Investigation</b>	<b>20 %</b>
<b>Book Review/Presentation</b>	<b>20 %</b>
<b>Food Analysis</b>	<b>10 %</b>
<b>Ecological Source Analysis</b>	<b>10 %</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Participation</b>	<b>++</b>

### Course Materials

The following *required text* will be available in the UCI Bookstore:

**GEG** = James Speth and Peter Haas, *Global Environmental Governance*, Island Press, 2006.

### Readings

Each week's readings are broken down into two categories: **Priority One** and **Priority Two**. For **priority one** readings, you should read it thoroughly as you are responsible for all material within them. For **priority two** readings, you should (thoroughly) skim them, and you are responsible for core concepts and themes within them.

### Course Website

All students are responsible for visiting the "schedule" section of the course website on a regular basis. The attached reading list provides a general guide to the course readings; however, the actual assignment list and regular updates will be posted on the course website.

### Class Announcements

Check your UCI email account on a regular basis for any announcements concerning this class. If you have trouble accessing your UCI email account, an archive of class email announcements can be found on the course website (see top of page 1 for URL address).

### Final exam

The final exam will consist of a mixture of multiple choice, short answer/identification (based on concepts, historical and contemporary events, places, and people), and a longer essay question(s). You will be graded on practical knowledge and analytical abilities. Remember the difference in responsibility for priority one and two readings.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### Part I: Orientation to Global Environmental Politics

<b>Class 1 CLASS ORIENTATION</b>
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Monday, June 23

- Discuss Syllabus
- Discuss Hopes/Dreams
- FILM: The Lorax

#### Priority One Readings

- Bill McKibben (2004), "Introduction", *Walden* (HD Thoreau), Beacon Press, pp. vii-xxiii.
- Dr. Suess (1971), *The Lorax*.
- NDRC, "The Story of Silent Spring" (pdf)

<b>Class 2 HISTORY AND CONTEXT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS</b>
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Wednesday, June 25

- FILM: *Soylent Green*

#### Priority One Readings

- *GEG*, Chapter 1, pp. 1-11.
- J. R. McNeill (2000), *Something New Under the Sun*, New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Chapter 1 – Prologue: Peculiarities of a Prodigal Century, pp. 3-17.
- Ken Conca (2004), "Introduction: Three Decades of Global Environmental Politics," *Green Planet Blues*, Westview Press, pp. 1-12.
- Jared Diamond (2003), "The Last Americans: Environmental Collapse and the End of Civilization," *Harper's Magazine* 306 (1837) pp. 43-51.

#### Priority Two Readings

- Paul Wapner (2003), "Ecological Thinking: Studying Global Environmental Politics with a Wild Mind and a Mindful Heart," in Michael Maniates (ed.), *Encountering Global Environmental Politics*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 17-33.
- Rachel's Democracy & Health News #949, March 06, 2008, "The Coal Industry's Ace in the Hole"

### Part II: Drivers of Global Environmental Problems

<b>Class 3 ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY AND POLITICAL ACTORS</b>
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Monday, June 30

- DUE: ECOLOGICAL SOURCES ANALYSIS
- For Ecological Source Analysis:
  - Complete Environmental Scorecard

Take Ecological Footprint Quiz

Determine Your Electricity Profile (from EPA)

- VIDEO: James Gustav Speth, "Capitalism, the Environment, and Crossing from Crisis to Sustainability", Institute for International Studies, Berkeley, April 2008 (56m)

### Priority One Readings

- *GEG*, Chapter 3, pp. 52-81.
- *GEG*, Chapter 5, pp. 107-124.
- United Nations Environmental Program (2004), "Multilateral Environmental Agreements: A Summary," *Green Planet Blues*, Westview Press, pp. 143-155.
- Hardin, Garrett (1968), "The Tragedy of the Commons" *Green Planet Blues*, pp. 37-44.
- Burger and Gochfield (1998). "The Tragedy of the Commons at 30 years," *Environment* 40:10, 4-13, 26-7 (pdf).

### Priority Two Readings

- Michael Maniates (2007) "Going Green: Easy Doesn't Do It" Washington Post.
- World Commission on Sustainable Development (2004), "Sustainable Development," *Green Planet Blues*, Westview Press, pp. 227-264.

<b>Class 4 POPULATION AND CONFRONTING CONSUMPTION</b>
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Wednesday, July 2

- VIDEO: Annie Leonard (2008). "The Story of Stuff"
- VIDEO: Bill McKibben (2007). "The Downside to Economic Growth" (6m)
- VIDEO: NY Times (2007). "The Environmental Cost to China's Growth" (6m)
- FILM: World in the Balance (PBS)

### Priority One Readings

- *GEG*, Chapter 2, pp. 12-51.
- Thomas Homer-Dixon, *The Upside of Down* (Island Press, 2008), Chapter One, pp. 9-31.
- Thomas Princen, Michael Maniates, and Ken Conca (eds.), *Confronting Consumption*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002) pp. 1-17.
- Jennifer Clapp (2002), "The Distancing of Waste: Overconsumption in a Global Economy," *Confronting Consumption*, pp. 155-176.
- United Nations (2005) "Living Beyond our Means," *The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Report*.
- Lester Brown (2008) "Deteriorating Oil and Food Security." Chapter 2, *Plan B 3.0, Mobilizing to Save Civilization*, pp. 27-47.

### Priority Two Readings

- Michael Specter (Feb 25, 2008) "Big Foot" The New Yorker.
- Mark Bittman (Jan 27, 2008). "Rethinking the Meat-Guzzler" NY Times.

## Part III: Environmental Security and Justice

### Class 5 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND INEQUALITY

Monday, July 7

- VIDEO: Robert Bullard, "The Quest for Environmental Justice", UCSB (52m)
- FILM: Sinking Rights

#### Priority One Readings

- Parks and Roberts, "Environmental and Ecological Justice," *International Environmental Politics*, Bestill (ed), pp. 329-349.
- Bullard, Robert (2005), Chapter 14, "Addressing Global Poverty, Pollution, and Human Rights," *Quest for Environmental Justice*, pp. 279-297.
- Jamieson, Dale (2007) "Justice: The Heart of Environmentalism," *Environmental Justice and Environmentalism*, pp. 85-98.
- Lester Brown (2008) "Eradicating Poverty, Stabilizing Population." Chapter 7, *Plan B 3.0 Mobilizing to Save Civilization*, pp. 131-51.

#### Priority Two Readings

- McKibben, Bill (2007) *Deep Economy*, Introduction, pp. 1-4; Chapter 1, pp. 5-45.
- Nydia M. Velazquez, "In Search of Justice," *Sustainable Planet*, pp. 33-44.

### Class 6 ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY

Wednesday, July 9

- FILM: Darwin's Nightmare

#### Priority One Readings

- Larry Swatuk, "Environmental Security," in *International Environmental Politics*, Bestill (ed.) pp. 203-229.
- Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases."
- Robert D. Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy," *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1996.
- Richard Matthew (2005), "Man, the State and Nature: Rethinking Environmental Security," *Handbook of Global Environmental Politics*. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.
- Adil Najam (2006) "The Human Dimensions of Environmental Insecurity", Wilson Center, pp. 59-71.

#### Priority Two Readings

- Dick Bell & Michael Renner, "A New Marshall Plan? Advancing Human Security and Controlling Terrorism."

## Part IV: Environmental Issues

<b>Class 7 FOOD AND GMOS</b>
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Monday, July 14

- **DUE: FOOD ANALYSIS**
- FILM: Future of Food

### Priority One Readings

- Taking Sides, Issue 14: Genetic Engineering, and Issue 20: Organic Foods.
- Kerry H. Whiteside, *Precautionary Politics: Principle and Practice in Confronting Environmental Risk*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006) pp. 1-12.
- Miguel A. Altieri and Peter Rosset, "Ten Reasons Why Biotechnology Will NOT Ensure Food Security, Protect the Environment and Reduce Poverty in the Developing World (1999a)" *AgBioForum* 2(3-4): 226-236.
- Martina McGloughlin, "Ten Reasons Why Biotechnology Will Be Important to the Developing World," *AgBioForum*.
- Miguel A. Altieri and Peter Rosset, "Strengthening the Case for Why Biotechnology Will Not Help the Developing World: Response to McGlough, et al." *AgBioForum*.
- Andrew Hund, "Monsanto: Visionary or Architect of Bioserfdom? A Global Socio-Economic Examination of GMOs"

### Priority Two Readings

- Melissa Moore (1998). "12 Myths about Hunger," FoodFirst.
- Richard Manning, "The Oil We Eat: Following the Food Chain Back to Iraq," (2004) *Harper's Magazine*.
- Michael Pollan, "The Vegetable-Industrial Complex," [October 15, 2006] *The New York Times Magazine*.
- Bill McKibben, "The Cuba Diet," (2005) *Harper's Magazine*, April 2005, pp. 61-69.

<b>Class 8 BIOSPHERE AND CLIMATE CHANGE</b>
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Wednesday, July 16

- FILM: An Inconvenient Truth

### Priority One Readings

- IPCC (2007), 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment, "Climate Change 2007: A Synthesis," pp. 1-24.
- Pielke, et al (2008) "Dangerous Assumptions (of IPCC 2007)," *Nature* 45:2/3.
- Tim Flannery (2005), *The Weather Makers*, Chapters 2 & 3, pp. 19-33 (R).
- Fisher, PB (2008), "Just Climate Governance: Human Security and Climate Change in Tuvalu," pp. 1-20.
- Sachs, Jeffery (2008) "Sustainable Development: Climate Change After Bali," *Scientific American*.

## Priority Two Readings

- Epoch Times, "Inuit Culture, Frozen in Time, Now Melting Away", Aug 18-25, 2005.
- "The Sinking of Tuvalu," Feb. 13, 2005 (with pictures)
- Rosenthal (Nov 17, 2007) "UN Chief Seeks More Climate Change Leadership," NY Times.
- Max Boykoff (Feb 21, 2008). "The Real Swindle" Nature, pp. 1-2.
- Gristmill "What to Say to a Climate Skeptic"
- Denver Post, "West is Warming Epicenter"
- "Global Warming Report: Less Winter in West"
- Inconvenient Truth Study Guide (pdf)

<b>Class 9 WATER</b>
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Monday, July 21

## Priority One Readings

- Peter H. Gleick, "Chapter 1 - The Millennium Development Goals for Water: Crucial Objectives, Inadequate Commitments," from *The World's Water: 2004-2005*.
- Vandana Shiva, "Water Wars: Fighting Over the Source of Life," February 2008.
- Lester Brown (2008), "Emerging Water Shortages", Chapter 4, *Plan B 3.0 Mobilizing to Save Civilization*, pp. 68-84.

## Priority Two Readings

- Josh Clark, "Exactly What Happens If We Run Out of Water," *How Stuff Works*.
- United Nations (2006) "Water: A Shared Responsibility," *World Water Development Report 2*, Executive Summary, pp. 3-6; 10-14; 18-23; 43-45.

<b>Class 10 LAND AND ECOSYSTEMS</b>
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Wednesday, July 23

- **DUE: PHOTO/VIDEO INVESTIGATION PRESENTATIONS (PART I)**
- FILM: One More Dead Fish

## Priority One Readings

- Chasek, et al (2006) "Biodiversity Loss", "Fisheries Depletion", "Desertification", "Forests", *Global Environmental Politics*, pp. 159-195 (R).
- Lester Brown (2008) "Natural Systems Under Stress," Chapter 5, *Plan B 3.0, Mobilizing to Save Civilization*, pp. 85-105.
- Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Report (2005) *Ecosystems and Human Well Being, Summary for Policy Makers*, World Resources Institute, pp. 1-24.
- Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity (2000), *Sustaining Life on Earth*, pp. 2-20.

### Priority Two Readings

- "Bye-Bye Amazonia," Earth Day 2006.
- Lester Brown (2006) "The Earth Is Shrinking: Advancing Deserts and Rising Seas Squeezing Civilization", Earth Policy Institute.
- Janet Larsen (2003) "Deserts Advancing, Civilization Retreating" Earth Policy Institute.
- UN Division of Sustainable Development, *Trends in Sustainable Development 2008-2009*, Full Report, pp. 1-34.
- Josh Clark, "Exactly What Happens If We Run Out of Water," *How Stuff Works*.

## **Part V: Environmental Action and the Future of Environmentalism**

<b>Class 11 EFFECTIVE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION</b>
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**Monday, July 28**

- **DUE: PHOTO/VIDEO INVESTIGATION PRESENTATIONS (PART II)**
- FILM: The Eleventh Hour

### Priority One Readings

- *GEG*, Chapter 6, "Paths to the Future," pp. 125-150.
- Michael Maniates, "Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World?" in *Confronting Consumption*, pp. 43-66.
- Paul Wapner and John Willoughby (2005), "The Irony of Environmentalism: The Ecological Futility but Political Necessity of Lifestyle Change," *Journal of Ethics and International Affairs*, 19(3) pp. 77-89.
- Bill McKibben (2002) "Introduction to Sustainable Planet," *Sustainable Planet: Solutions for the Twenty-First Century*.

### Priority Two Readings

- Bill McKibben (2007), "The Durable Future," *The Durable Economy*, pp. 177-226 (R).
- Lester Brown (2008) "The Great Mobilization", Chapter 13--*Plan B 3.0, Mobilizing to Save Civilization*, pp. 265-287.

<b>Class 12 FINAL EXAM</b>
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**Wednesday, July 30**

- **FINAL EXAM, 1PM**