POLS 390B: Political Economy of the Global Environment  
DePauw University  
Spring 2013

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Office Hours: Mon (1-2), Wed (12-2), and by appointment.

Course Meetings: TuTh, 8:20-9:50, JSC 161

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed as a mid-level seminar. It focuses on the ways in which international economic processes shape global environmental governance. Course meetings will follow a seminar format. I will begin each section on the syllabus by providing context for the scheduled readings. Typically, more than half of each course meeting will be reserved for discussion. The first half of the course is a survey of global political economy, with a specific focus on the environment. Topics will include (1) the environmental consequences of current patterns of consumption, (2) the effect of international trade on global environmental issues, (3) the influence of foreign direct investment on environmental regulation (is there a “race to the bottom” in environmental regulation?), (4) the compatibility of environmental protection and economic growth, (5) whether current understandings of sustainable development are tenable, and (6) the effect of development finance on the environment.

When we return from Spring Break, we will examine a number of specific topics in greater detail. We will begin by taking an extensive look at the political economy of the international climate regime. We will spend the final month asking whether or to what extent environmental sustainability can be achieved in a capitalist global economy. Some of the specific issues that we will address include the effectiveness of corporate self-governance (e.g., corporate social responsibility) and the effectiveness of market mechanisms to promote environmentally-beneficial behavior (e.g., eco-labelling). We will conclude by attempting to identify more precisely the conditions under which corporate interests can or cannot be harnessed to promote environmentally-beneficial outcomes.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Each student’s final grade will be calculated using the following criteria:

Midterm Exam #1 (15%)  
Midterm Exam #2 (15%) non-cumulative  
Final Exam\* (20%) cumulative

Writing Assignment 1 & Presentation\*\* (15%)  
Final Paper\*\* (20%)  
  
Participation\*\*\* (15%)

\* The Final Exam will be optional for those with fewer than three absences. If you are satisfied with your grade at the end of classes, you do not need to take it.

\*\* More information about each of the writing assignments will be posted to Moodle.

\*\*\* This course places great emphasis on participation. I expect that students will complete all readings in advance of the course meeting for which they are assigned. The reading load for the course is fairly heavy; my best recommendation is to plan in advance.

In assessing participation, I prioritize quality over quantity. I am less concerned with the absolute quantity of your comments than with your ability to regularly offer comments that demonstrate critical engagement with the course material.

**REQUIRED TEXT**

Clapp, Jennifer and Peter Dauvergne. 2011. Paths to a Green World, 2e. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

**Additional readings will be posted directly to Moodle (M) or placed on reserve (R).**

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**JANUARY**

Wk 1 Tu 29 Introduction to Course

Th 31 Perspectives on Global Environmental Politics  
 *Read: Paths, Ch 1*

**FEBRUARY**

Wk 2 Tu 5 A Brief History of Global Environmental Governance  
 *Read: Paths, Ch. 2*

Th 7 no class, PEIO

Wk 3 Tu 12 Globalization and the Environment  
 *Read:* Paths, Ch 3

*Book 1:* Princen, *The Logic of Sufficiency  
 Book 2:* Princen, *Treading Softly  
 Book 3:* Dauvergne, *The Shadows of Consumption*

Th 14 Poverty, Economic Growth, and the Environment  
 *Read: Paths, Ch. 4  
 Dasgupta et al, “Confronting the Environmental Kuznets Curve” (M)  
 Broad, “The Poor and the Environment” (M)*

Wk 4 Tu 19 Global Trade and the Environment  
 *Read: Paths, Ch. 5  
 Read: Esty, “Bridging the Trade-Environment Divide” (M)*

*Book 4:* Clapp, *Toxic Exports  
 Book 5:* Falkner, *The International Politics of Genetically Modified Foods* Book 6: Vogel, *Trading Up*

Th 21 Global Investment and the Environment *Read: Paths, Ch. 6*

Wk 5 Tu 26 Global Finance for the Environment  
 *Read: Paths, Ch. 7  
 Heltberg & Nielsen, “Foreign Aid, Development . . .” (M)*

*Book 7:* Hicks et al, *Greening Aid*

Th 28 Midterm #1

**MARCH**

Wk 6 Tu 5 The Political Economy of Global Climate I  
 *Read: Climate of Injustice, Chs 1-2 (R)*

Th 7 The Political Economy of Global Climate II  
 *Read: Climate of Injustice, Chs 4-5 (R)*

Wk 7 Tu 12 The Political Economy of Global Climate III  
 *Read: Climate of Injustice, Chs 6-7 (R)*

*Book 8:* Victor, *Global Warming Gridlock*

Th 14 Is Climate Capitalism Possible?  
 *Read: Climate Capitalism, Chs 1-3 (R)*

*Book 9:* Falkner, *Business Power and Conflict in Int’l Environmental Politics  
 Book 10:* Clapp and Fuchs, *Corporate Power in Global Agrifood Governance  
 Book 11:* Paterson, *Automobile Politics*

Wk 8 Tu 19 Corporate Social (Environmental?) Responsibility  
 *Read: Climate Capitalism, Ch 4 (R)  
 Clapp, “ISO Environmental Standards” (M)  
 Prakash and Kollman, “Green by Choice?” (M)*

*Book 12:* Esty and Winston, *Green to Gold*

Th 21 Voluntary Environmentalism I  
 *Read: The Voluntary Environmentalists, Chs 1-2 (R)*

**\*\* SPRING BREAK \*\***

**APRIL**

Wk 9 Tu 2 Voluntary Environmentalism II  
 *Read: The Voluntary Environmentalists, Chs 3-4 (R)*

Th 4 Voluntary Environmentalism III  
 *Read: The Voluntary Environmentalists, Chs 5-6 (R)*

Wk 10 Tu 9 Open / Flex Date / Midterm Review

Th 11 Midterm 2

Wk 11 Tu 16 Critiquing Corporate Environmentalism I  
 *Read: The Market for Virtue, Chs 1-2(R)*

Th 18 Critiquing Corporate Environmentalism II  
 *Read: The Market for Virtue, Chs 3-4 (R)*

Wk 12 Tu 23 Critiquing Corporate Environmentalism III  
 *Read: The Market for Virtue, Chs 5-6 (R)*

Th 25 Do Eco-Labels Work?  
 *Read: Bernstein & Cashore, “Is Forest Certification a Legitimate . . .” (M)  
 Read: Gulbrandsen, “Overlapping Public and Private Governance” (M)  
 TBD?*

Wk 13 Tu 30 The Limits of Climate Capitalism I  
 *Read: Climate Capitalism, Chs 8-9*

**MAY**

Th 2 The Limits of Climate Capitalism II  
 *Read: Clapp,”Transnational Corporate Interests and Global . . .” (M)  
 Marcoux & Urpelainen, “The Influence of Innovation . . .” (M)  
 Murphy, “Business Dynamics of Global Regulatory . . .” (M)*

*Book 13:* Strasser, *Myths and Realities of Business Environmentalism*

Wk 14 Tu 7 The Future of Climate Capitalism  
 *Read: Climate Capitalism, Ch. 10 and conclusion*

*Book 14:* Meckling, *Carbon Coalitions*

Th 9 Open Date / Wrap-up / Final Exam Review(?)