



## CIEE Beijing, China

<b>Course title:</b>	Global Environmental Politics and Policy
<b>Course code:</b>	ENVI 3001 BJCH / POLI 3002 BJCH
<b>Programs offering course:</b>	Sustainable Development, Intensive Chinese Language
<b>Language of instruction:</b>	English
<b>U.S. semester credits:</b>	3
<b>Contact hours:</b>	45
<b>Term:</b>	Fall 2020

### **Course Description**

Global problems such as climate change, habitat destruction and the mass extinction of species, and ozone depletion require unprecedented levels of international cooperation and innovation yet traditional political institutions seem inadequate to handle current and future challenges. In this course, we will explore a range of intergovernmental, nongovernmental, and business responses to the challenges posed by global ecological interdependence with particular emphasis on issues related to environmental justice. Given China's critical role in causing and addressing these issues, we will explore how the Chinese government and society are affected by these issues and how they are attempting to address these challenges. Finally, we will reflect on how these global problems challenge our sense of ethical responsibility and personal efficacy.

### **Learning Objectives**

By completing this course, students will:

- Gain knowledge of the various “driving factors” of international environmental politics and policy including population change, economic development, changing attitudes and beliefs, political culture, and globalization.
- Learn about the major international environmental issues facing the world (including loss of habitats and biodiversity, climate change, ozone depletion, trade in toxic waste).
- Develop an understanding of international environmental policy processes, including the various governmental and non-governmental actors involved in these processes.
- Learn how global environmental issues are affecting China and what Chinese government agencies, businesses and NGOs are doing to address these issues

### **Course Prerequisites**

None

### **Methods of Instruction**

This is a seminar course that will involve a lot of class discussion. Short documentaries will be integrated into the classes, and there will be a couple of field trips and/or guest speakers.

*N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.*

### **Assessment and Final Grade**



1.	Ecological Footprint Paper	10%
2.	Reading Reflection Essays	30%
3.	Final Exam	30%
4.	Class Participation	30%
	TOTAL	100%

## **Course Requirements**

### **Ecological Footprint Paper**

After calculating your ecological footprint both in the U.S. and while in China, you will write a short paper (400-500 words) that analyzes your ecological footprint and which actions to reduce your footprint would be most effective and/or least inconvenient. This paper should be handed in one day before the class of week 4.

### **Reading Reflection Essays**

These are short assignments to get you thinking about the readings and site visits for that week. Your total answers need not be extensive (750-1,000 words total) but should show careful thought and consideration of the readings and the questions asked. Also, the essays should reflect not only that particular day's topic but should also address how the topic relates to previously-covered topics, and should explore how China is affected by the particular environmental topic.

Students can choose three topics of the readings and hand in three papers separately to the course teacher as early as possible.

### **Final Exam**

The final exam will help synthesize the materials and ensure that students have retained the most important aspects of the course. The final exam will be a mixture of concept IDs, short-answer "factual" questions along with questions that require short analytical responses. An exam review guide will be provided before the final exam.

### **Class Participation**

Class participation is an integral component of this course. You cannot do well in this course without attending punctually. Please arrive at class meetings on time and fully prepared, having completed the assigned readings, reviewed your reading and film notes, and ready to discuss. Your participation and discussion grade in class is worth 30% of your total grade and will be assessed on the following scale:

A- level: The student attends class, listens and speaks in a respectful manner, demonstrates familiarity with the reading and lecture material, and can articulate the three-pillar model and apply it to real world examples

B- level: The student attends class, listens and speaks in a respectful manner, and demonstrates familiarity with the reading and lecture material

C- level: The student attends discussion section and listens and speaks in a respectful manner

Per CIEE guidelines, each unexcused absence will cost 2% while the penalty for being late is 1% of your total grade. In addition, internet surfing, texting, or working on other courses during discussion



section constitutes a kind of mental absence and will lead to a loss of all participation points for that day.

### **Weekly Schedule**

#### **Week 1**

Class Introduction to the Course

Topics: What can I expect from this course, what is expected of me, and who are my classmates?

No readings

#### **Week 2**

Class Foundations of the Field and the State of Nature

Topics: What is global environmental politics? What are the disciplinary and philosophical roots of the field? What are the current debates within the field?

Wapner & Nicholson, "Introduction" and Section 1 (pp. 1-33) and Section 2, McKibben and Meyer (pp. 35-57).

Richard Heisenberg, "Beyond the Limits to Growth" in The Post-Carbon Reader, pp. 3-12.

#### **Week 3**

Class Ecological Literacy

Topics: What is ecological literacy, and what does it mean to think in terms of systems?

Wapner & Nicholson, Chapters 6-9 (pp. 48-96)

Donella Meadows, Thinking in Systems, Chapter 1 (pp. 11-33).

Hand in the Ecological Footprint Paper one day before the next class.

#### **Week 4**

Class Linking the Personal and the Global

Topics: How do individual decisions affect global environmental processes?

Wapner & Nicholson, Chapters 10-11 (pp. 97-110) and 27-29 (pp. 251-288);

William Ryerson, "Population: The Multiplier of Everything Else" in The Post-Carbon Reader, pp. 153-175;

Lisa Hymas, "I Am the Population." Grist, 9/27/2011.

#### **Week 5**



Class Population, Consumption & Technology

Topics: Which is more important in terms of ecological damage, population or consumption? What are the contradictory ways that technology can help and harm the environment?

Wapner & Nicholson , Chapters 22, 26 & 30 (pp. 211-219, 238-247 & 289-297).

MacNeill et al., "Shadow Ecologies of Western Economies" in Beyond Interdependence: The Meshing of the World's Economy and the Earth's Ecology, pp. 58-61.

Hardin, "Tragedy of the Commons."

### Week 6

Class Global Environmentalism – The Interstate System

Topics: How have environmental concerns been handled bilaterally and multilaterally by nation-states and the United Nations? How have environmental concerns affected the functioning of the interstate system?

Wapner & Nicholson, Chapters 12-15 (pp. 113-150)

### Week 7

Class Global Environmentalism – Civil Society

Topics: How did the environmental movement become a global social movement? What successes and failures have international environmental groups had when attempting to address transnational and global environmental issues?

Eliza Grizwold, "How Silent Spring Ignited the Environmental Movement" (New York Times, 9/23/12).

Wapner & Nicholson, Chapters 19-20 (pp. 183-210).

### Week 8

Class Field trip to The Nature Conservancy OR Friends of Nature

Topics: How have international NGOs affected China's environmental situation and policies? How have Chinese NGOs affected global environmental politics?

### Week 9

Class China's Role in Global Environmental Regimes: Wildlife & Ecosystems

Topics: How has China's presence in global environmental regimes helped and/or hindered the adoption and implementation of these specific regimes?

Chasek, et al. Global Environmental Politics, Chapter 5, "The Development of Environmental Regimes: Natural Resources, Species and Habitats" (pp. 203-270).



Oksenberg and Economy, 1998. "China's Accession to and Implementation of International Environmental Accords 1978-95" Executive summary, CITES, London Convention on Oceans, and Conclusion (pp.1-20).

### **Week 10**

Class

Global environmental politics & Science: Acid Rain & Stratospheric Ozone

Topics: How are pollution issues such as acid rain and stratospheric ozone easier or more difficult challenges than conservation issues such as habitat loss and biodiversity? How has China interacted with these specific environmental regimes?

Stoett, Global Ecopolitics, Chapter 5, pp. 85-105;

Wapner & Nicholson, Chapters 24-25 (pp. 228-237);

Oksenberg and Economy, 1998. "China's Accession to and Implementation of International Environmental Accords 1978-95: Montreal Protocol and Conclusion (pp.29-37)

### **Week 11**

Class

Race, Class, and Geopolitical Difference

Topics: Who is responsible for environmental harm? What are some of the major forms of environmental injustice? How are these injustices rooted in domestic and global politics?

Wapner & Nicholson, Chapters 22, 23, and 26.

### **Week 12**

Class

Global Climate Change: From Science to Politics and Beyond

Topics: What are the particular challenges of mitigating and adapting to global climate change? How is science used to bolster arguments and counterarguments for action and inaction?

Wapner & Nicholson , Chapters 35-36, pp. 328-338.

IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, Summary for Policy Makers [available at [http://ipcc.ch/publications\\_and\\_data/ar4/syr/en/contents.html](http://ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/syr/en/contents.html)];

G. Velders et al., Preserving Montreal Protocol Climate Benefits by Limiting HFCs;

Coral Davenport, "Industry Awakens to the Threat of Climate Change," New York Times 01/24/2014

The Guardian, "EU Leaders Agree to Cut GHG Emissions by 40% by 2030", 10/24/2014

Mark Landler, "US and China Reach Climate Accord", New York Times 11/12/2014



### **Week 13**

Class Energy & Environmental Security

Topics: What is energy security? How should we conceptualize environmental security? What are the specific security concerns raised by environmental degradation?

Homer-Dixon, "So Long, Cheap Slaves" from *The Up Side of Down* (pp. 77-100)

Richard Heinberg, "The Oil Price Crash of 2014" from *The Post-Carbon Reader*

Richard Douthwaite, "Money and Energy" from *The Post-Carbon Reader*.

### **Week 14**

Class Ecology, Economics, Politics, and Geoengineering

Topics: How should we bring ecological concerns back into politics at both the domestic and global level? How can economics be used to help reduce environmental harm and promote environmental conservation and recovery? What roles can technology and geoengineering play in the future?

Wapner & Nicholson, Chapters 16-18 (pp. 151-184) and Chapters 31-35

### **Week 15**

Class Final Exam

## **Course Materials**

### **Readings**

Pamela Chasek, et al., *Global Environmental Politics*, Sixth Edition (Westview Press, 2013).

Coral Davenport, "Industry Awakens to the Threat of Climate Change," *New York Times* 01/24/2014

Eliza Grizwold, "How Silent Spring Ignited the Environmental Movement" (*New York Times*, 9/23/12);

The Guardian, "EU Leaders Agree to Cut GHG Emissions by 40% by 2030", 10/24/2014

Richard Heinberg and Daniel Lerch (eds.), *The Post Carbon Reader* (University of California Press, 2010).

Thomas Homer-Dixon, *The Upside of Down: Catastrophe, Creativity, and the Renewal of Civilization* (Island Press, 2008).

Lisa Hymas, "I Am the Population." *Grist*, 9/27/2011.

Mark Landler, "US and China Reach Climate Accord", *New York Times* 11/12/2014

Donella Meadows, *Thinking in Systems: a primer*. (Earthscan, 2008).



Michel Oksenberg and Elizabeth Economy, "China's Accession to and Implementation of International Environmental Accords 1978-95" in Edith Brown Weiss and Harold K. Jacobson, editors, *Engaging Countries: Strengthening Compliance with International Environmental Accords* (The MIT Press, 1998).

Peter Stoett, *Global Ecopolitics: Crisis, Governance and Justice* (University of Toronto Press, 2012).

IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, Summary for Policy Makers [available at [http://ipcc.ch/publications\\_and\\_data/ar4/syr/en/contents.html](http://ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/syr/en/contents.html)];

G. Velders et al., Preserving Montreal Protocol Climate Benefits by Limiting HFCs; *Science*, 02/24/2012.

Paul Wapner and Simon Nicholson (eds.), *Global Environmental Politics: From Person to Planet* (Paradigm Publishers, 2014).

### **Online Resources**

IPCC Fourth Assessment Report, Summary for Policy Makers [available at [http://ipcc.ch/publications\\_and\\_data/ar4/syr/en/contents.html](http://ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/ar4/syr/en/contents.html)]

### **Media Resources**

People's Daily (<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/home.html>)

Xinhua (<http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/>)

China Daily (<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/>)

Global Times (<http://www.globaltimes.cn/>)

People's Liberation Army Daily (<http://english.chinamil.com.cn/>)

South China Morning Post (<http://www.scmp.com>)

New York Times (<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/world/asia/index.html>)

Wall Street Journal China Real Time Report (<http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime>)

Washington Post (<http://www.washingtonpost.com>).

Financial Times – China (<http://www.ft.com/world/asiapacific/china>)

China Digital Times (<http://www.Chinadigitaltimes.net>)