1. Course Description and Philosophy

Environmental problems like deforestation, biodiversity loss, climate change, and ocean and marine resource degradation have emerged as some of the most intractable problems that society faces. They transcend international borders, are scientifically complex, and generally involve large sets of diverse actors and power dynamics from global to local scales. In this first year seminar we will examine how policies, actions, and behaviors impact the environment and how these politics of the environment play out on a global scale.

This collaborative seminar will introduce students to the diverse ways in which different social science disciplines, epistemologies, and methodologies shape the ways in which we understand global environmental problems and solutions. While our primary assigned reading materials approach the topics through a political science lens, through individual research assignments and integrated peer assessments, students will be exposed to variety of approaches that will help us think about other ways of understanding a problem. By the end of the course, students will have a broad understanding of the nature of global environmental politics as well as specific knowledge related to a topic of their choosing.

2. Learning Objectives

As a first-year seminar, the overarching objective of this course is to cultivate critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. By the end of this course students will be able to:

(1) Prepare appropriately to participate effectively in class discussion, including challenging and offering substantive replies to others' arguments, comments, and questions, while remaining sensitive to the original speaker/writer and the classroom audience.
(2) Demonstrate the ability to perform close and critical readings of scholarly sources, their own writing, and the writing of their peers.
(3) Evaluate, credit, and synthesize sources, including distinguishing opinions and beliefs from researched claims and evidence and recognize that kinds of evidence will vary from subject to subject. For instance, some fields call for quantitative support while others work more commonly with quoted, textual evidence.
(4) Identify and analyze how different disciplines approach similar questions related to global environmental politics
(5) Advance their ideas and communicate more effectively with their readers by taking a piece of writing through the process of revision.
3. **Our Contract**  
By enrolling in this course, you and I are entering into a contract with each other. I will work hard to be prepared, enthusiastic, fair, and respectful of every student and their opinions. I will be accessible and try my best to return graded materials after no more than one week. By enrolling in the class, you have agreed to (1) attend and prepare for class, (2) participate by asking questions and joining in class discussions, (3) read the assigned material and complete assignments on time, (4) comply with class policies established in this syllabus, and (5) uphold Northwestern University’s commitment to academic integrity (see http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/).

4. **Course Requirements**  
This seminar is a writing intensive course. As such, the course requirements include a series of assignments that build on each other to help each student develop and hone the research and writing skills necessary to complete an independent research paper. Self and peer assessment is integrated throughout the course. All assignments should be posted to Canvas. Please refer to Canvas for updates on due dates and additional supplementary assignments. Course requirements include:

- **Engagement (20%)**: The class discussion portion of your grade includes active, informed, and engaged participation during each meeting, completing in-class and supplementary assignments thoughtfully and on time, and integrating insights from your research project and current news into our regular discussions. This component of the course contributes to learning objectives 1, 2, and 3.

- **Peer Assessment (20%)**: Throughout the seminar we will engage in regular peer assessments as a central component of our learning. Research shows that peer assessment provides a valuable learning experience through which students enhance their own work and deepen their skills and knowledge through ongoing, reflexive analysis. Most of our peer assessment activities will take place in class, although some will involve drafting comments outside of class, including a 2-3 page written peer assessment **due Mar. 1 at 11:00 am**. Detailed guidelines for how to read and provide feedback on the work of your peers will be provided. This component of the course contributes to learning objectives 1 and 2.

- **Research Project Phase 1 (20%)**: Each student will identify, cultivate, and deliver an individual research project aimed at discovering the complexities of an issue in global environmental politics. A list of potential topics is included in the detailed assignment packet provided at the beginning of the quarter. This component of the course contributes to learning objectives 2, 3, and 5. The research project consists of seven steps:
  - **Step 1**: Identify and Propose a Topic, **due Jan. 9 at 11:00 am**: 1-2 paragraph summary of the topic you are interested in researching.
  - **Step 2**: Finding and Evaluating Sources, no assignment due. This is a library session.
  - **Step 3**: Proposal and Research Plan, **due TUESDAY Jan. 17 at 5:00 pm**: 1-2 page proposal with a succinct statement of your proposed argument, the questions
you intend to address, and some plan for addressing/researching these questions

- Step 4: Abstract and Annotated Bibliography, due Feb. 6 at 11:00 am: 100-250 word abstract, plus bibliography with at least 10 peer-reviewed sources listed, 6 of which should be annotated (100 words each)
- Step 5: Synthesizing Your Sources, no assignment due. This is an in-class exercise to help you summarize and synthesize the most important research for your project. It will form the basis for the literature review component of your paper.
- Step 6: Introduction, Literature Review, and Outline, due SUNDAY Feb. 12 at 8:00 pm: 2-4 paragraph introduction and 2-3 page literature review essay

- Research Project Phase 2 (40%)
  - Step 7: Research Paper, full draft (6-8 pages) due FRIDAY Feb. 24 at 5pm, final draft (10-12 pages) due Mar. 15 at noon

5. Course Materials
The following materials are required for this course; we will read each of the required books in their entirety. Student Enrichment Services offers advice on how to find and afford our course materials. Please visit http://www.northwestern.edu/enrichment/ for more information on their services.

  a. The readings from this book are noted as GEP in the reading assignments
  a. The readings from this book are noted as Timber in the reading assignments
(3) Additional materials available through Canvas.

6. Policies
While technology in the classroom has its advantages, it is often distracting to your fellow classmates. During class meetings, all laptops, tablets, phones, and recording devices must be turned off and put away. Please talk with me if you have questions or concerns about this policy or require accommodations.

Grading:
All grades will eventually be scaled to a 100-point system: A (93-100); A- (90-92); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76); C- (70-72); D+ (67-69); D (63-66); D- (60-62); F (<60).

In calculating course grades, any missing assignment, quiz, or paper will be counted as a zero—something that will seriously affect your course grade. If you have questions or concerns about your grades, please come to my office hours or schedule an appointment to see me. Please do not wait until the end of the quarter to ask how you can improve your grade.
Citation and Plagiarism:
Please refer to Northwestern’s resources on academic integrity for guidance on how to properly use and credit research in your work.
http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/.

Suspected violations of academic integrity will be reported to the Dean's Office.
For more information on Northwestern’s academic integrity policies, see
http://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/handbook/integrity/index.html.

Attendance:
Attendance in this course is critical for your learning and success. For each unexcused absence beyond three, your grade will be lowered by a full letter grade. For example, a fourth absence will change a grade from an A to B, a fifth from B to C, and so on. Absences will be excused only for documented physical or mental illness, accident, or emergency as determined by the Dean of Students. If you are late to class, please enter quietly; I’d prefer a minor disruption to you missing an entire class.

Late Assignments:
Assignments turned in late without a valid extension will lose one partial letter grade for each day, e.g. an A- paper turned in one day late will become a B+. Extensions must be requested before the due date. No extensions will be granted the day an assignment is due except for documented medical or personal emergencies. Computers crashing, file corruption, and other technology problems are not generally considered valid excuses for late work.

Accommodation:
Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with AccessibleNU (accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; 847-467-5530) and provide professors with an accommodation notification from AccessibleNU, preferably within the first two weeks of class (by January 11). All information will remain confidential.

Disclaimer: This syllabus is a living document and is designed to guide our learning. In the spirit of reflexivity, I reserve the right to adjust the schedule, readings and assignments as appropriate and/or necessary. Updates will be posted on our course Canvas site.
7. Class Schedule and Assignments

**Section 1: The State of the Global Environment (Weeks 1-3)**

Class #1 (Tuesday, 1/3): Introductions
(1) GEP p. 1-33

Class #2 (Wednesday, 1/4): Climate, Extinction, Water, and Food
(1) GEP, p. 35-72

Assignments due: Personal Assessments

Class #3 (Monday, 1/9): Causes of Environmental Harm
(1) GEP, p. 73-109
(2) Timber, p.111-136
(3) Gosnik, K. Ways of Reading Handout.

Assignments due: Step 1: Identify and propose a topic; Current News in Global Environmental Politics

**Class #4 (Wednesday 1/11): Conducting Research in Global Environmental Politics

**meet in Library Classroom B234**


(3) Dartmouth College *Institute for Writing and Rhetoric* “Coming up with your topic.” Available at: http://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/materials-first-year-writers/coming-your-topic

**NO CLASS: Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Monday, 1/16)**

***DUE DATE (Tuesday, 1/17 at 5:00 pm) Step 3: Proposal and research plan***

Class #5 (Wednesday, 1/18): Case Study: Forests
(1) Timber, p. 1-26
Section 2: Actors in Global Environmental Politics (Weeks 4-6)

Class #6 (Monday, 1/23): Markets
   (1) GEP, p. 151-183
   (2) Recommended: Gulbrandsen, Lars H. "Overlapping public and private governance: Can forest certification fill the gaps in the global forest regime?" Global Environmental Politics 4, no. 2 (2004): 75-99.

Assignments due: Current News

Class #7 (Wednesday, 1/25): Case Study: Markets and Forests
   (1) Timber, p. 27-110

Class #8 (Monday, 1/30): States and the International System
   (1) GEP, p. 113-150

Assignments due: Current News

Class #9 (Wednesday, 2/1): Civil Society
   (1) GEP, p. 185-209
   (2) TBD

Class #10 (Monday, 2/6): Sources Discussion (including Step 5: Synthesizing your sources)
   (1) TBD

Assignments due: Step 4: Abstract and annotated bibliography

Class #11 (Wednesday, 2/8): Identity, Rights, and Justice in Global Environmental Politics
   (1) GEP, p. 211-246
Section 3: Institutions and Approaches for Global Environmental Governance (Weeks 7-9)

***DUE DATE, Sunday 2/12 at 8:00 pm: Step 6: Outline, literature review and introduction***

Class #12 (Monday, 2/13): Strategic Approaches

(1) GEP, p. 251-296

Class #13 (Wednesday, 2/15): Case Study: Strategic Approaches and Forests

(1) Timber, p. 137-163

Assignments due: Current News

Class #14 (Monday, 2/20 (ISA)): Guest Speaker TBD

(1) TBD

Class #15 (Wednesday, 2/22 (ISA)): NO CLASS

***DUE DATE: Friday, 2/24: Step 7: Full draft due at 5:00 pm***

Class #16 (Monday, 2/27): Political Imagination

(1) GEP, p. 297-345

Assignments due: Current News

Class #17 (Wednesday, 3/1): Paper drafts discussion

(1) Assigned Papers for Peer Review
(2) Reading on writing peer review TBD

Assignments due: Peer assessments

Section 4: Concluding Thoughts and Wrap-Up

Class #18 (Monday, 3/6): Paper drafts discussion (cont.); Evaluations and Wrap-Up

Assignments due: Evaluations

Wednesday, 3/8: NO CLASS – READING WEEK

Wednesday, 3/15: Final Research Paper Due, incl. cover letter on responses to comments. Due at noon.