

Global Environmental Politics, POL 531
Spring 2010

Faculty: George A. Gonzalez

Office: 312-A Jenkins Bldg.

Ph.#: 305-284-1738

E-mail: George.Gonzalez@miami.edu

Office Hours: Mondays: 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
 Tuesdays: 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.
 Thursdays: 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Welcome to *Global Environmental Politics*! In this course we will be addressing how environmental issues are dealt with in the international arena. In this era of late capitalist development environmental questions are becoming especially paramount. The extent to which the global economy relies on fossil fuels raises environmental as well as economic controversies. Additionally, the rate at which humanity can now extract natural resources, convert wilderness into cities and farmland, and pump pollution into the environment has profound environmental as well as economic implications. The world's ability or inability to cope with the environmental and economic impacts of the global forces of production will determine whether humankind will have a stable environment and economy into the near future.

To help us gain a grasp of the environmental challenges facing the globe I have assigned four books:

Nadeau, Robert L. 2006. *The Environmental Endgame: Mainstream Economics, Ecological Disaster, and Human Survival*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Paehlke, Robert C. 2003. *Democracy's Dilemma: Environment, Social Equity, and the Global Economy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Perelman, Michael. 2003. *The Perverse Economy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillian.

Newman, Peter, Timothy Beatley, and Heather Boyer. 2009. *Resilient Cities: Responding to Peak Oil and Climate Change*. Washington, DC: Island Press.

All of these books are available in the University Bookstore.

This course is a seminar, which means that much of the course is driven by class discussion and idea sharing. As such, one-fourth of the course grade is determined by class presentations.

Each student is expected to give two presentations. It will be based on some portion of the course literature, and, ideally, the presentations will spark class discussion. The other components of the course grade will be derived from a take-home mid-term and final exam, as well as of a review of a book of your choosing on environmental politics and policy. Each of these assignments will comprise one-fourth of your final grade. The review essay should be 7 to 10 pages in length, double-spaced, and based on a book that I must pre-approve. Ideally, the book you choose should be on global or international environmental issues.

I do not assume you have any prior knowledge of environmental politics or issues. The only prerequisite for this course is an open mind and a willingness to apply yourself.

Course Outline

January 25: Introduction to Course and Approaches to Environmental Sustainability

February 1, 8, and 15: The Ideology of the Market

Reading: Perelman Book

February 22, March 1, and 8: The Globalization of the Environment and Economy

Reading: Nadeau Book

March 22: Mid-Term Exam Due

March 22, 29, and April 5: Economic and Political Reform of the Global System

Reading: Paehlke Book

April 19: Term Paper Due

April 12, 19, and 29: Global Urban Zones and Sustaining the Environment

Reading: Newman, Beatley, and Boyer Book

Final Exam: Monday, May 10th, 8:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.