

Daniel Lipson  
Winter 2006 – MW 10-11:35am, F 10-10:40am  
Office hours (212F Dewing): MWF 12:30-1:30pm, W 4:15-5:15pm & by appt.  
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## **Environmental Policy & Politics**

### **Course Purpose and Goals**

The natural environment plays a paradoxical role in the United States. For as long as humans have existed, our lives have been intimately connected with the natural resources upon which we depend. Yet much of modern history tells the story of humans' attempts to conquer – rather than sustain – the natural environment.

Our forefathers were in awe of the bounty of forests, freshwater, frontier, and wildlife; and they designed a political vision that was based in the value of protecting citizens' ability to horde and use as much of these resources as they could. Thus, it is not surprising that the United States leads the world in consumption, production, and, consequently, pollution – most noticeably its contribution to global climate change. Nor ought it to be surprising that the U.S. government continues to resist international treaties to curb global warming. While our nation was founded on the assumption of unlimited natural resources, Americans will soon need to come to terms with the scarcity of clean drinking water, affordable energy, rainforests, and other vital resources.

This course will analyze the role of American politics, economics, and culture in the formation of domestic and international environmental policies and laws. The class will weave together a pattern of interconnected forces that contribute to the quality of our planet's water, land, air, and human life. We will read case studies on such varied topics as the growth of the water depletion that has resulted from the rapid growth of American cities and agribusinesses in the American West; the impacts that the growth of the fast food industry has had on the natural environment and human well-being; the role American oil dependency and depletion have played with respect to global warming and wars; and the health damage that results from spreading toxic sludge onto farm fields.

By the end of this course, you will have developed the knowledge base to make sense of the political and policy problems that have contributed to the degradation of the environment, and the political and policy solutions needed to conserve and preserve the very resources that humans need to sustain life for generations to come.

### **Course Requirements and Grading\***

The course requires a combination of reading, participation, and writing. You will complete four papers in addition to a group presentation. For the group presentation, you will pair up with one or two other students and brief the class about an environmental policy that is in the news. Attendance and participation are crucial to the success of this class. Your grades will be based on your performance in the following assignments:

| Assignment                              | Week                        | Date       | Grade |
|---|-----------------------------|------------|-------|
| <i>Paper #1</i>                         | 5                           | Mon Jan 30 | 20%   |
| <i>Paper #2</i>                         | 7                           | Wed Feb 15 | 20%   |
| <i>Paper #3</i>                         | 9                           | Wed Mar 01 | 20%   |
| <i>Paper #4</i>                         | 11                          | Mon Mar 13 | 20%   |
| <i>Group Presentation</i>               | You will be assigned a date |            | 10%   |
| <i>Participation &amp; Assignments*</i> | Throughout course           |            | 10%   |

\* I may also require additional writing and oral assignments during class meetings, and your grade will be contingent on completing these assignments.

### Required Reading

**Books:** The following books are available for purchase at the bookstore and on reserve at the library.

- Heinberg, Richard. 2003. *The party's over: oil, war and the fate of industrial societies* New Society Pub.
- Kraft, Michael E. 2004. *Environmental policy and politics*. 3rd ed. New York: Pearson Longman.
- Reisner, Marc. 1993. *Cadillac desert: the American West and its disappearing water*. Rev. and updated ed. New York, N.Y., U.S.A.: Penguin Books.
- Schlosser, Eric. 2002. *Fast food nation: the dark side of the all-American meal*. 1<sup>st</sup> Perennial ed. New York: Perennial.
- Wilson, Duff. 2001. *Fateful harvest: the true story of a small town, a global industry, and a toxic secret*. 1st ed. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.


### Course/College Policies:

**Academic Integrity:** I expect that you will perform your own work in all assignments and appropriately cite sources when you relying on other authors' arguments. Plagiarism of any kind will be dealt with severely – failure of the course is possible. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, please ask me prior to turning in work.

**Physical and Learning Disabilities:** I will do everything I can to accommodate verified physical and learning disabilities. If you have a physical or learning disability that may impede your performance, please see me as soon as possible.

**Late-Work Policy:** I deduct 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g. from a B to a B-) for every day late, including day one.

## Course Schedule and Reading Assignments:

|         |          |   |                 |  |         |
|---------|----------|---|-----------------|--|---------|
| Week 01 | Mon 1/02 | <b>No class</b>   |                 |  |         |
|         | Wed 1/04 | <b>Introduction</b>   |                 |  |         |
|         | Fri 1/06 | <b>Environmental Problems and Politics</b>  |                 |  |         |
|         |          | Kraft   | Chapter 01      | Environmental Problems & Politics                                    | 01- 25  |
|         |          | <i>Web</i>  | <i>Stone</i>    | <a href="#">Causal Stories &amp; the Formation of Policy Agendas</a> | 281-300 |
| Week 02 | Mon 1/09 | <b>The State of the Environment</b>   |                 |  |         |
|         |          | Kraft   | Chapter 02      | Judging the State of the Environment                                 | 28- 60  |
|         |          | <i>Web</i>  | <i>Lindblom</i> | <a href="#">The Market as Prison</a>                                 | 21- 28  |
|         | Wed 1/11 | <b>The Policy-Making Process</b>  |                 |  |         |
|         |          | Kraft   | Chapter 03      | The Policy-Making Process and the Environment                        | 64- 91  |
|         |          | Wilson  | Chapter 01      | Small Town Stories   | 09- 55  |
|         | Fri 1/13 | <b>No class – we will make it up</b>  |                 |  |         |
| Week 03 | Mon 1/16 | <b>No class – MLK Jr. Holiday</b>   |                 |  |         |
|         | Wed 1/18 | <b>The Evolution of Environmental Policy</b>  |                 |  |         |
|         |          | Kraft   | Chapter 03      | The Evolution of Environmental Policy                                | 94-119  |
|         |          | Wilson  | Chapter 02      | Suspicious   | 56- 92  |
|         | Fri 1/20 | <b>Group Presentation #1</b>  |                 |  |         |

|         |          |  |                         |   |
|---------|----------|--|-------------------------|---|
| Week 05 | Mon 1/30 | <b>Environmental Protection Policy: Controlling Pollution</b>          |                         |   |
|         |          | <b>Paper #1 due</b>  |                         |   |
|         |          | Kraft  | Chapter 05              | Environmental Protection Policy: Controlling Pollution 121-163                        |
|         |          | <i>Web</i>   | <i>Drew &amp; Oppel</i> | <a href="#"><i>How Industry Won the Battle of Pollution Control at EPA</i></a> 01- 07 |
|         | Wed 2/01 | <b>Cadillac Desert – The American West and Its Disappearing Water</b>  |                         |   |
|         |          | Reisner  |                         | Introduction 01- 15   |
|         |          | Reisner  | Chapter 01              | A Country of Illusion 16- 53  |
|         |          | Reisner  | Chapter 02              | The Red Queen 54-107  |
|         | Fri 2/03 | <b>Group Presentation #3</b>   |                         |   |
| Week 06 | Mon 2/06 | Reisner  | Chapter 03              | First Causes 108-124  |
|         |          | Reisner  | Chapter 04              | An American Nile (I) 125-150  |
|         |          | Reisner  | Chapter 05              | The Go-Go Years 151-175   |
|         | Wed 2/08 | Reisner  | Chapter 10              | Chinatown 344-392   |
|         |          | Reisner  | Chapter 11              | Those Who Refuse to Learn 393-451   |
|         | Fri 2/10 | <b>Group Presentation #4</b>   |                         |   |
| Week 07 | Mon 2/13 | <b>Energy and Natural Resource Policies</b>                            |                         |   |
|         |          | Kraft  | Chapter 06              | Energy and Natural Resource Policies 168-210  |
|         | Wed 2/15 | <b>The Party’s Over: Oil, War and the Fate of Industrial Societies</b> |                         |   |
|         |          | <b>Paper #2 due</b>  |                         |   |
|         |          | Heinberg   |                         | Introduction 01- 08   |
|         |          | Heinberg   | Chapter 01              | Energy, Nature, and Society 09- 42  |
|         |          | Heinberg   | Chapter 02              | Party Time: The Historic Interval of Cheap, Abundant Energy 43- 80                    |
|         | Fri 2/17 | <b>Group Presentation #5</b>   |                         |   |
| Week 08 | Mon 2/20 | Heinberg   | Chapter 03              | Lights Out: Approaching the Historic Interval’s End 81-122                            |
|         |          | Heinberg   | Chapter 04              | Non-Petroleum Energy Sources: Can the Party Continue? 123-166                         |
|         | Wed 2/22 | Heinberg   | Chapter 05              | A Banquet of Consequences 167-204   |
|         |          | Heinberg   | Chapter 06              | Managing the Collapse: Strategies and Recommendations 205-242                         |
|         | Fri 2/24 | <b>Group Presentation #6</b>   |                         |   |

Week 09 Mon 2/27 **Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal**

|                      |                      |        |
|----------------------|----------------------|--------|
| Schlosser            | Introduction         | 01- 12 |
| Schlosser Chapter 01 | The Founding Fathers | 13- 30 |
| Schlosser Chapter 02 | Your Trusted Friends | 31- 58 |
| Schlosser Chapter 03 | Behind the Counter   | 59- 90 |

Wed 3/01 **Guest lecture: Ken Bowers on Reducing our Ecological Footprint**

**Paper #3 due**

Fri 3/03 **Group Presentation #7**

Week 10 Mon 3/06

|                      |                             |         |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|---------|
| Schlosser Chapter 04 | Success                     | 91-110  |
| Schlosser Chapter 05 | Why the Fries Taste So Good | 111-132 |
| Schlosser Chapter 06 | On the Range                | 133-148 |
| Schlosser Chapter 07 | Cogs in the Great Machine   | 149-168 |

Wed 3/08

|                      |                        |         |
|----------------------|------------------------|---------|
| Schlosser Chapter 08 | The Most Dangerous Job | 169-192 |
| Schlosser Chapter 09 | What's in the Meat     | 193-224 |
| Schlosser Chapter 10 | Global Realization     | 225-254 |

Fri 3/10 **Conclusion**

|                  |   |         |
|------------------|---|---------|
| Kraft Chapter 08 | Environmental Policy and Politics for the<br>Twenty-First Century | 169-192 |
|------------------|---|---------|

Week 11 Mon 3/13

**Paper #4 due**

*\* This calendar serves only as a guide. As needs are assessed, revisions will be made.*