

Cours spécialisé, Bachelor, Sciences Po Grenoble, Spring Semester 2023-2024

Environmental politics

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Overview

Scientific consensus is clear about the severity of climate and biodiversity crises, calling for ambitious and transformational changes to mitigate the consequences and adapt to inevitable changes wrought by these crises. Emerging environmental issues have led to the establishment of a broad range of institutions and policies, and Western democracies increasingly prioritize environmental issues such as air pollution, biodiversity threats and global climate change in their political agendas. Nevertheless, the effects of global environmental crises continue to accelerate, exacerbating vulnerabilities throughout social and natural systems, prompting Green social movements and political parties to contribute relevant critiques of the historical development and maintenance of industrialized economies.

The goal of this course is to explore the articulation between environmental attitudes and worldviews, and how they contribute to shaping green political action in a context in which the imminence of a global ecological crisis is no longer in doubt. Readings, lectures, and class work will help shed light on ecologism as a distinctive ideology that developed in reaction to the ecological crisis. Each course session will address one of the many state and non-state actors and political issues that characterize ecologism, and sessions will be divided into two distinct sections. The first section, "Ecology and society," will introduce the concept of political ecology and its myriad forms within socio-political movements. The second section, "Environmental policy and institutions", will focus on the actors and systems that govern environmental policymaking, nationally and globally. This course primarily addresses ecologism in Western democracies.

Course objectives

At the end of the lecture, each student will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the ways that Western societies have reacted to the environmental crisis.
- Compare the politicization of the environment in different geographical and cultural contexts.
- Identify political institutions, policy processes, and power relations that bring about environmental policy outputs and outcomes.

Format

This course is mainly lecture-oriented, but students are strongly encouraged to participate in class discussions. Each class will start with a 20-minute collective reflection on the week's assigned readings, which correspond to current events linked to the theme of the day. This discussion will be followed by a lecture, during which questions, disagreements and collective debates are more

than welcome! All readings and other teaching materials can be downloaded on the course website.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact the course lecturers*:

- esther.hathaway@iepg.fr
- pascale.dufour@umontreal.ca

**Please review the syllabus before asking a question that has already been answered!*

Coursework and grading

Readings and discussion (0%)

This CS requires no mandatory attendance, so readings and discussion will not be graded. **This does not mean that they do not matter.** On the contrary, students are expected to come to class having completed the 5-10-page readings the lecturer will hand out each week. Staying up to date with the readings is essential for understanding the lectures and engaging in class discussions. This class will indeed provide the opportunity to raise questions and deepen your understanding of concepts covered in lectures.

Presentation (40%)

A short video recording will be due halfway through the course, on one of the topics addressed in sessions 2, 3 or 4. More details will be given at the beginning of the course.

Final Essay (60%)

The final project for this course is a short essay on the topic of your (limited but large) choice, based on three words selected from the list below—with a minimum of one from each of the two categories (see below).

- A working outline will be due for session 7 and should include: keywords, main question, basic structure (bullet points accepted), and a preliminary bibliography. (10%)
- The final written paper consists of a 1,500-word (+/- 100 words) essay. (50%)

CATEGORY 1	CATEGORY 2
Environmental justice Environmental organizations Public opinion on environmental issues Green party(ies) Agriculture Corporations Health Energy	A country, region, or town of your choosing

Essays should follow a clear structure and focus on an overarching question or puzzle (*problématique*). In other words, this is not a simple descriptive comparison (e.g., Green parties and Green movements in the UK; Green parties in the UK and Green parties in France). Your final reference list must be properly formatted according to either Harvard or APA style guidelines and must contain at least five sources tied to information presented in class lectures and discussions, including two news articles and three peer-reviewed, academic articles. Final papers can be written in French or in English and must be uploaded to Chamilo by midnight on Thursday, April 25th.

Course outline

Part 1: Ecology and society

Session 1: The environment: whose problem is it, anyway?

25 January

An introduction to Political Ecology

Reading:

Adam Vaughan, "Human impact has pushed Earth into the Anthropocene, scientists say", *The Guardian*, 7 Jan 2016.

Session 2: When the environment and daily life converge

1 February

Reading:

Alexia Renard, "As vegan activism grows, politicians aim to protect agri-business, restaurateurs", *The Conversation*, 23 February, 2020

Session 3: Indigenous resistance in Canada: environmental struggles

8 February

Reading:

Climate Atlas of Canada, "Indigenous Knowledges and Climate Change", 13 March, 2022

Session 4: Ecofeminist currents: how to conceive and build a "future earth"

15 February

Reading:

Jeanne Burgart Goutal, Laury-Anne Cholez, "Fighting the patriarchy to save the planet", *Green European Journal*, 17 August, 2021.

Session 5: Who knows what, and why? Citizens and environmental knowledge

7 March

Readings:

Jason Mark, "Naomi Klein: 'Big green groups are more damaging than climate deniers'", *The Guardian*, 10 September 2013.

Emily Holden, "How the oil industry has spent billions to control the climate change conversation", *The Guardian*, 8 January 2020.

Part 2: Environmental governance

Session 6: Environmental problems and environmental policy

14 March

Readings:

Lucas David, "Why aren't environmentalists supporting a carbon tax in Washington state?", *The Conversation*, 30 October 2016.

Warren Cornwall, "Europe's deadly floods leave scientists stunned", *Science*, 20 July 2021.

Session 7: Green parties and greening parties

21 March

Reading:

Rupert Read, Bennet Francis, "Green Parties, Green Future: lessons from history for Green politics", *The Ecologist*, 8 December 2015.

Homework:

Take the IRDS Political Coordinates Test at: <https://www.idrlabs.com/fr/coordonnees-politiques/test.php> . Bring your results with you!

Session 8: Global environmental politics

28 March

Readings:

Royce Kurland, "The race for rare earth minerals: can Australia fuel the electric vehicle revolution?", *The Guardian*, 16 April 2021.

Daniel Michaels, "What Is the Paris Climate Agreement and Why Is Biden Rejoining Now?", *the Wall Street Journal*, 2021.

Session 9: Life in a climate changed world

4 April

Readings:

Michael Paul Nelson, Jeremy T. Bruskotter, John A. Vusetich, "Does nature have value beyond what it provides humans?", *The Conversation*, 2 October 2015.

Homework:

Calculate your own carbon footprint using the ADEME calculator: <https://nosgestesclimat.fr/>. Bring your results with you!

If you're interested, take this quiz to find out ways you can address climate change:

<https://yaleclimateconnections.org/2022/10/what-can-you-do-about-climate-change-take-this-quiz-to-find-out/#Fight-future>