Welcome to university in the age of COVID

Below you will find all the standard details about the class, but before that, some important things to think about.

1) This is a changing situation which will require flexibility, patience and kindness.
2) Communication will be essential to the success of the course. If you have concerns or issues, please let me know, and I will address any issues as quickly and as best I can.

Course Description

The proliferation of global institutions and international actors and the absence of central enforcement mechanisms are hallmarks of addressing environmental problems. This course examines the law, politics and policy of global environmental issues including energy, climate and biodiversity. The course aims to provide a broad overview of the key concepts, actors, debates and issues in global environmental politics. It demonstrates the complexities both of the nature of the problems as well as the solutions.

The course has five parts. First, we examine the extent of environmental degradation and different lenses for understanding its causes and solutions. Second, we examine the actors and institutions of global environmental politics, to understand how environmental problems are created, law is made, and policy is implemented. In short, we ask, “who solves global environmental problems and how?” Third, we turn to understanding the conditions under which environmental lawmaking is successful. Fourth, we look at linkages between environmental issues and economic globalization. In the final section of the course, we consider critical approaches to environmental governance.

Course Format and Delivery

This course will be entirely online. It will have asynchronous and synchronous components, both are required.

Asynchronous

There will be two 20-minute (approximately) podcasts per week, available via downloadable .mp3. There will be accompanying slides that you can review before or after you listen to the podcast, but you
needn’t watch the slides as I speak. In other words, you don’t have to sit at a computer to listen to the lectures.

**Synchronous**

Many of the synchronous classes will feature a speaker. This person will speak for 30-40 minutes, and then we will have time for questions and discussions. **Please come with questions!** The weeks that we do not have a speaker, the synchronous portion of the class will be devoted to discussing the readings, current events and answering questions. **The synchronous portion of the class will meet every week from 12-1:00 PM and attendance is required.** I will record these classes and make files available electronically, though they may be quite large.

**Learning objectives**

By the end of the semester, you should:

- Be able to identify the major actors in global environmental politics and their roles;
- Understand different types of legal, market and informal policy mechanisms for addressing environmental problems;
- Be able to explain the political challenges to international cooperation on transboundary environmental problems;
- Locate and use independent evidence to explain the nature of those challenges.

**Readings**

You are expected to complete all of the readings for every class, before the synchronous portion of the class.

Readings will be available online through the library, and on the class’s Quercus website. These are denoted by “**UofT-e**” and “**Quercus**” on the syllabus, respectively. Those denoted with **Quercus Reserve** can be found by clicking the Library Course Reserves tab on the left side of the Quercus home screen.

**Assignments**

For a full description of the assignments, see “Assignments” document in Quercus. These include rubrics for the response papers and the participation requirements.

There will be four assignments for the class.

1) **Bi-weekly quizzes** (30%) To be completed on Quercus before the synchronous portion of the class. These will be short, timed quizzes (20 minutes), which test whether you have listened to the lectures and completed the readings. **There will 6 of them throughout the semester.** Each one is worth 5% of your grade.

2) **Take home final** (30%). This will be an open-book, open-note test covering the entire semester. You will have 48 hours to complete it.

3) **Two speaker response papers** (30%). We will have a number of speakers over the course of the semester. In these 300-400 word response papers, you will relate the speaker’s comments to at least one of the course readings (though they don’t necessarily have to be the readings for that week).
4) In the news memo (10%). Global environmental politics is happening everywhere, all the time. As such, I would like you to write one brief paper which responds to a news article in a major news outlet. (This includes publications like The New York Times, The Guardian, The Financial Times, The Global and Mail, The Washington Post, The Independent. If you have a question about whether your source is a major news outlet, please ask the TA).

Deadlines and late penalties
All deadlines are final. For each day an assignment is late, there will be a 3% reduction in your grade. I may make exceptions under extenuating circumstances, such as illness or family emergency. However, these will require documentation, which is to complete the ACORN self-declaration and send me a screen shot as confirmation.

ask students to complete this self-declaration and to send you a screen shot as confirmation

. If there are other issues that you think may affect your ability to turn in assignments on time, I suggest you contact me as early as possible. I am not inclined to give extensions to those who ask the night before.

Accessibility
Students who require special arrangements should contact the Student Accessibility Services at (416) 978 8060. Their email is accessibility.services@utoronto.ca. Some students find that they must wait to contact and secure approval from Accessibility Services: in these cases, you should still contact me in advance, to let me know you might require accommodations for assignments.

Email and communication
I will hold weekly electronic office hours on Wednesday from 1-3PM, and I will be very glad to meet with you at those times to discuss readings, lectures, assignments, essays, and more. You must sign up for office hours using the course calendar on Quercus. There will be a link in Quercus to zoom for the meeting.

I have also listed my email address in the contact information at the start of the syllabus; however, please consider several things when reaching out to me by email:

• Please check (and double-check) that the answer to your query is not in the syllabus before you contact me with questions.
• You are expected to write from your University of Toronto email account. If you write from another email account (Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo, etc.), I might not answer;
• I generally use email to address simple yes/no questions and to make arrangements about logistics; if you have any substantive concerns, please come to my office hours;
• I will do my best to respond to your messages, but please don’t expect a rapid response. I will not be responding daily to emails about the class and will not check my email on evenings and weekends. As such, please plan ahead if you need to reach out to me.
• If you write to request an extension or accommodation the night before an assignment is due, I am unlikely to accommodate your needs or offer assistance.
• Please treat emails as a professional form of communication; I expect proper grammar, sentences, and greetings and sign-offs in your messages, and you can expect the same from me. Please include a greeting, and please address me as Prof. Green. A sign-off is also appropriate (“sincerely,” “thanks,” “cheers,” followed by your name).
Please read the policy on academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense that can result in loss of credit, suspension, and possibly expulsion from the university. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Department.

If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please consult this page from the Writing center. You can also make an appointment with me to discuss.

Plagiarism includes:
- copying sentences or fragments from any source without quotes and references
- not citing a source used in your papers
- citing internet information without proper citation
- presenting someone else’s work as your own
- inadvertently copying verbatim from any source.
Schedule of Classes

WEEK 1. 14 Sept: Why are international environmental problems so hard to manage?

*Synchronous portion*: Overview of class content and mechanics

WEEK 2. 21 Sept: What is international environmental law?
Questions: How does sovereignty help or hinder cooperation? What forms does IEL take? How does domestic politics influence the content of IEL?
- Charter of the United Nations, Chapters 1&2. Peruse others as you wish.
- O’Neill, Kate. 2017. *The Environment and International Relations*. Chapter 4. Quercus Reserve [*Please note that only the 2009 edition is available as an e-book through the library, as such, I will upload the chapters from the most recent edition that are assigned.*].

*Synchronous portion*: Current events, questions and discussion.

WEEK 3. 28 Sept: Developing countries and the changing landscape of IEL.
Questions: What role do developing countries play in IEL? How has it changed over time?
- The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development

*Synchronous portion*: Speaker, Prof. Jonas Nahm, Assistant Professor, Energy, Resources and the Environment, Johns Hopkins University

WEEK 4. 5 Oct: International Organizations
Questions: What is the role of international organizations in making and implementing IEL?

Synchronous portion: Speaker, Prof. Erin Graham, Associate Professor of Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame

WEEK 5. 12 Oct: Civil society – Inside and outside the negotiating halls
Questions: What is civil society? What role does it play in IEL?


Synchronous portion: Catherine Abreu, formerly of Climate Action Network Canada.

WEEK 6. 19 Oct: Effectiveness of IEL: Successes and Failures


Synchronous Portion: Prof. Ron Mitchell, Professor of Political Science, University of Oregon. Check out his awesome data on international environmental agreements here.

WEEK 7. 26 Oct: Climate change: What are the obstacles to decarbonization?

• Busby, Joshua. 2018. Warming World. Foreign Affairs. (July / August issue) UofT-e / Quercus
• Colgan, Jeff, Jessica F. Green and Thomas Hale. 2019. The Existential Politics of Climate Change, Global Policy.

Synchronous portion: Discussion of readings

WEEK 8. 2 Nov: The Paris Agreement and the Road Ahead
Questions: How has the climate change regime changed over time? Are there indications of progress?
• Read the headline statements from the most recent IPCC report, released in August. IPCC 1.5

Synchronous portion: Prof. Bryce Rudyk, New York University School of Law.

WEEK 9. 10 Nov: NO CLASS FALL BREAK

WEEK 10. 16 Nov: Trade, Investment and the Environment
Questions: How does the global trade regime help or hinder progress on global environmental problems?
• O’Neill Chapter 6, pp 139-44 and 153-164 AND Chapter 8 pp. 207-219.
• Klein, Naomi. 2014. This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the climate. Simon & Schuster. Chapter 2. Quercus.
• C2ES, Cap and Trade Basics
• Read these two short pieces about border tax adjustments here and here

Synchronous portion: Prof. Kyla Tienhaara, Assistant Professor, York University, Canada Research Chair in Economy and Environment.

WEEK 11. 23 Nov: Private Authority
Questions: Can non-state actors solve global environmental problems? Through what mechanisms?

Synchronous portion: Prof. Janina Grabs, Assistant Professor, Business and Society, ESADE Business School

WEEK 12. 30 Nov: Eco-socialism and the Green New Deal
• Democratic Socialists of America, An EcoSocialist Green New Deal. Available here.

Synchronous portion: Prof. Alyssa Battistoni, Assistant Professor, Political Science, Barnard College.
WEEK 13. 7 Dec: Other tools for change: Divestment and Direct Action


Synchronous portion: Prof. Andreas Malm, Senior Lecturer, Department of Human Geography, Lund University