

International Environmental Policy

Code: 104479
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
International Relations	OT	4

Contact

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Teachers

Olivia Isabell Glombitza

Teaching groups languages

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Prerequisites

No prerequisites are required.

Objectives and Contextualisation

The environment has been a major topic in international relations for nearly half a century now. Typically of a cross-border nature, environmental problems have been identified as a quintessential policy area for international cooperation - interests, ideas and institutions play out at the international level and shape the *who gets what* in this domain. This has particularly been the case since the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm), which is generally taken as the first significant instance of global environmental diplomacy. Since then, states, intergovernmental organizations, businesses, NGOs and scientists have all deployed considerable resources to foster, influence or derail negotiations on international agreements regarding climate change, biodiversity, bio-safety, acid rain, stratospheric ozone, desertification, trade in endangered species, hazardous wastes, whales, the Antarctic, or marine pollution, among other environmental issues.

This course addresses both the analytical and empirical components of international environmental politics. Sessions are designed to link analytical and conceptual discussions (the study of actors, power, interests, institutions, ideas, etc.) with the presentation of specific international negotiations, conferences and regimes.

Competences

- Act with ethical responsibility and respect for fundamental rights and duties, diversity and democratic values.
- Analyse, establish and argue the legal rules applicable to international phenomena.
- Analyse international society and its structure and understand its importance for real-life problems and professional practice.
- Analyse the behaviour of international actors, both state and non-state.
- Analyse the production and implementation of public policies related to the international sphere, in particular foreign policy and security and defence policy.
- Apply knowledge of the structure and operation of international institutions to problems and/or practical cases, either real or simulated.
- Apply quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques in research processes.
- Identify data sources and carry out rigorous bibliographical and documentary searches.
- Identify the main theories of international relations and their different fields (international theory, conflicts and security, international politics, etc.) to apply them in professional practice.
- Make changes to methods and processes in the area of knowledge in order to provide innovative responses to society's needs and demands.
- Produce and prepare the presentation of intervention reports and/or proposals.
- Students must be capable of applying their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional way and they should have building arguments and problem resolution skills within their area of study.
- Students must be capable of collecting and interpreting relevant data (usually within their area of study) in order to make statements that reflect social, scientific or ethical relevant issues.
- Students must be capable of communicating information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- Students must develop the necessary learning skills to undertake further training with a high degree of autonomy.
- Students must have and understand knowledge of an area of study built on the basis of general secondary education, and while it relies on some advanced textbooks it also includes some aspects coming from the forefront of its field of study.
- Take account of social, economic and environmental impacts when operating within one's own area of knowledge.
- Take sex- or gender-based inequalities into consideration when operating within one's own area of knowledge.
- Use metatheoretical data to argue and establish plausible relation of causality and establish ways of validating or rejecting them.

Learning Outcomes

1. Analyse and explain the international agenda management in areas of human rights, environment and cooperation for development and humanitarian aid, and the role of the different actors in it.
2. Analyse and explain the role of different actors in the implementation of actions and public policies in areas of human rights, environment and cooperation for development and humanitarian aid.
3. Analyse how the operational rules of international society apply to topics related to human rights, environment and cooperation for development and humanitarian aid.
4. Analyse the indicators of sustainability of academic and professional activities in the areas of knowledge, integrating social, economic and environmental dimensions.
5. Analyse the operation of the main international institutions in areas related to human rights, environment and cooperation for development and humanitarian aid and the application of the respective regimes and regulations.
6. Analyse the sex- or gender-based inequalities and the gender biases present in one's own area of knowledge.
7. Apply quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques in research processes.
8. Apply the bases of international theories and their different focuses to problems related to human rights, cooperation for development, humanitarian aid and international policies for the environment.
9. Communicate using language that is not sexist or discriminatory.
10. Consider how gender stereotypes and roles impinge on the exercise of the profession.
11. Critically analyse the principles, values and procedures that govern the exercise of the profession.
12. Evaluate the impact of topics related to human rights, environment, cooperation for development and humanitarian aid in foreign policies and public policies of the main states.

13. Evaluate the impact on the policies and actions of the main states and international actors of the main treaties and legal rulings, of different types, which regulate areas of human rights, environment, cooperation for development and humanitarian aid.
14. Explain the explicit or implicit code of practice of one's own area of knowledge.
15. Identify data sources and carry out rigorous bibliographical and documentary searches.
16. Identify the principal forms of sex- or gender-based inequality and discrimination present in society.
17. Identify the social, economic and environmental implications of academic and professional activities within the area of your own knowledge.
18. Produce and prepare the presentation of intervention reports and/or proposals.
19. Propose new experience-based methods or alternative solutions.
20. Propose new ways to measure success or failure when implementing ground-breaking proposals or ideas.
21. Propose projects and actions in accordance with the principles of ethical responsibility and respect for fundamental rights, diversity and democratic values.
22. Propose projects and actions that incorporate the gender perspective.
23. Propose viable projects and actions that promote social, economic and environmental benefits.
24. Propose ways to evaluate projects and actions for improving sustainability.
25. Students must be capable of applying their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional way and they should have building arguments and problem resolution skills within their area of study.
26. Students must be capable of collecting and interpreting relevant data (usually within their area of study) in order to make statements that reflect social, scientific or ethical relevant issues.
27. Students must be capable of communicating information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
28. Students must develop the necessary learning skills to undertake further training with a high degree of autonomy.
29. Students must have and understand knowledge of an area of study built on the basis of general secondary education, and while it relies on some advanced textbooks it also includes some aspects coming from the forefront of its field of study.
30. Use analytical tools for international regimes for problems such as human rights, environment and cooperation for development and humanitarian aid.
31. Use metatheoretical data to argue and establish plausible relation of causality and establish ways of validating or rejecting them.
32. Weigh up the impact of any long- or short-term difficulty, harm or discrimination that could be caused to certain persons or groups by the actions or projects.
33. Weigh up the risks and opportunities of one's own ideas for improvement and proposals made by others.

Content

At the end of the course students will be familiar with the basic analytical tools and empirics of international environmental politics. More to the point, students will develop a critical understanding of key areas of international environmental politics in terms of the outcomes of negotiations, the objectives of actors, their motives, the resources they are able to mobilize, alliances, and the interests at play. In addition, the course also helps students to develop the capacity to understand, discuss and use some of the most relevant analytical and conceptual approaches to the study of international environmental politics which are often specific variations of broader approaches to global governance more generally.

BLOCK I: Cooperation, institutions and a bit of history

1. International environmental problems, collective action problems and cooperation
2. Change and continuity in the history of international environmental politics
3. Regimes, not organizations, and why that matters
4. The cycle of international environmental negotiations

BLOCK II: Actors, power, interests and preferences

5. States in international environmental politics: power, preferences and interests
6. Environmental NGOs: voice, access, and direct action
7. Companies and private authorities: the transnational governance sphere
8. International environmental politics and the UN system

BLOCK III: Negotiations, cooperation and conflict

9. Climate: the many changes of climate politics
10. Ozone: the model of environmental negotiations
11. Whales: a tale of three transnational actors
12. Biodiversity: North and South
13. Palm oil: private authorities
14. Acid rain: the role of knowledge and science
15. The debate on environmental security

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lectures	30	1.2	5, 3, 2, 1, 8, 20, 29, 28, 30, 32, 12, 13
Seminars	20	0.8	5, 3, 2, 1, 7, 31, 9, 18, 15, 33, 20, 28, 27, 26, 12, 13
Type: Supervised			
Case studies	16	0.64	5, 3, 2, 1, 7, 31, 9, 18, 15, 33, 20, 28, 27, 25, 26, 30, 12, 13
Debates, discussions and quizzes	4	0.16	5, 3, 4, 2, 1, 8, 7, 31, 9, 18, 33, 24, 19, 20, 23, 28, 27, 25, 26, 30, 12, 13
Type: Autonomous			
Student-led preparation of group exercise	30	1.2	5, 3, 11, 4, 2, 1, 7, 9, 18, 14, 15, 17, 33, 24, 19, 20, 23, 29, 27, 25, 26, 30, 32, 12, 13
Student-led study	50	2	5, 3, 4, 2, 1, 8, 31, 15, 17, 24, 20, 23, 29, 28, 25, 26, 30, 12, 13

See table above

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Final exam (open book)	35%	0	0	5, 3, 11, 2, 1, 8, 31, 9, 14, 17, 21, 29, 28, 27, 25, 26, 30, 32, 12, 13
Mid-term exam (open book)	35%	0	0	5, 3, 11, 4, 2, 1, 8, 31, 9, 14, 21, 29, 28, 27, 25, 26, 30, 32, 12, 13
Participation in class	10%	0	0	5, 3, 2, 1, 27, 26, 30, 12, 13
Seminars	20%	0	0	5, 3, 11, 4, 2, 1, 6, 7, 31, 9, 18, 14, 15, 17, 16, 33, 24, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 28, 27, 26, 30, 10, 32, 12, 13

The evaluation of this course consists of the following:

1. A partial exam covering the first part of the course programme mid-way through the course: 35% of the final grade.
2. A partial exam covering the second part of the course programme at the end of the course (on the last day of class): 35% of the final grade.
3. Seminars: 20% of the final grade.
4. Continuous assessment: participation in class and activities programmed by the teaching staff, such as quizzes, debates, text commentaries, etc.: 10% of the final grade.

Important considerations:

In order to pass the course, it is necessary to obtain a minimum grade of 5 in each of the partial exams and the weighted average final grade of the course also needs to result in a minimum grade of 5. If failing to overcome the threshold, students will be able to take part in a retake exam if they have participated in assessment activities equivalent to 60% of the final grade. The retake exam will take place on the date of the retake exam scheduled by the faculty.

Single assessment:

Students who have so requested in due time and form, may participate in a single assessment activity consisting of an exam (70% of the grade) and a practical activity (30% of the grade). This single assessment activity will take place on the last day of class at the end of the term. To pass the single assessment activity, it is necessary to obtain a minimum grade of 5. In case of failing to overcome the threshold, the assessment activity can be retaken on the date of the retake exam scheduled by the faculty.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) - Restricted use:

For this course, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies is permitted exclusively for support tasks, such as proofreading, editing, or translating texts authored by the student. The student must clearly identify which parts have been generated using this technology, specify the tools used, and include a critical reflection on how these tools have influenced both the process and the final outcome of the activity. Failure to be transparent about the use of AI in this graded activity will be considered a breach of academic honesty and may result in a partial or total penalty on the grade for the activity, or more serious sanctions in severe cases.

Bibliography

- Pamela S. Chasek and David L. Downie (2021), *Global Environmental Politics*, Routledge.
- Pamela S. Chasek, David L. Downie and Janet Welsh Brown (2017), *Global Environmental Politics*, Westview Press.
- Paul G. Harris (2022), *Routledge Handbook of Global Environmental Politics*, Routledge.
- Michele M. Betsill, Kathryn Hochstetler, Kathryn, and Dimitris Stevis (eds) (2014), *Advances in International Environmental Politics*, Palgrave.

Software

No software in particular.

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PAUL) Classroom practices	1	English	first semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	1	English	first semester	morning-mixed