

Syllabus for Spring 2009
“Nations --- the Challenge to International Sustainable Development”
Political Science 390
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Environmental problems that transcend national and regional boundaries pose complex challenges to the goal of international sustainable development, often defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations. In the absence of an effective global governance structure, we rely on nation states to take the lead in addressing such problems. But their parochial national interests often lead them to act in ways that degrade the global commons and frustrate achievement of international sustainable development goals.

Useful international management tools to counter these tendencies have been slow to evolve. The picture is further complicated by the presence of other important stakeholder groups. Three such groups are transnational corporations (“TNCs”), international environmental and humanitarian groups and philanthropies (“NGOs”), and multilateral organizations such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization (“multilaterals”).

The course is divided into three parts intended to progress the general to the more specific aspects of the topic as follows:

- **First Part, The Fundamentals** --- We begin with an examination of the characteristics that limit nation states’ effectiveness in resolving transnational environmental problems, with emphasis on national and cultural self-interests, and on the complexities of nation states’ relationships with the other stakeholders.
- **Second Part, Some Illustrative Challenges** --- We will then take up several key challenges to international sustainable development, as follows:
 - **Trade versus Environment** --- Tension between rules-based free trade and environmental/biodiversity protection has existed for many decades in the structure of the World Trade Organization and its predecessor, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. We will study the famous Shrimp-Turtle case as illustrative of that tension, and we will discuss the current trends that some interpret as evidence of a more environment-friendly WTO.
 - **Ocean Fisheries** --- The decline of ocean fisheries due to overfishing around the world has posed a serious threat to the survival of many food species of fish. Individual nations have often seen it as in their interests to exclude fishing in their waters by foreign nationals, but this is only --- at best --- a solution to overfishing in

coastal waters. We will examine the ocean overfishing question from the nation state perspective of the United States and from the perspectives of other stakeholders.

- **Climate Change** --- The scientific debate is essentially over as to whether anthropogenic changes in climate are occurring. The Kyoto Protocol, negotiated pursuant to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, represents the main thrust of international attempts to date to bring the problem under control, and has had scant success. Exactly what is this problem, how did Kyoto purport to address it, and why is it not succeeding? What are the alternatives to Kyoto? How do selected nation states' national interests interfere with progress on this vital issue?
- **Third Part, Climate Change Key Players** --- As perhaps the most pressing threat to international sustainable development existing at present, climate change warrants especial attention. The United States and China are the two largest emitters of greenhouse gases, and for this reason warrant special attention. Without their participation in a global solution to the problem the outlook is gloomy indeed. We will wrap up with an in-depth investigation of the potential for US-Chinese cooperation and leadership in addressing climate change.

Prerequisites: No specific course prerequisites, but an interest in international environmental issues and at least a general familiarity with foreign relations is helpful. Students should have fulfilled the SCS writing requirement or taken equivalent writing courses.

Teaching Method: Discussion-based, with introductory lectures. Students will be expected to attend all classes and participate actively in discussion.

Evaluation Method: Grades will be based on class participation (33 1/3 %), two short papers of from 3 to 4 pages (taken together, 33 1/3 %), and a research paper of from 10 to 12 pages (33 1/3 %). The participation component will be influenced to a significant degree on class attendance.

Required Reading:

- "Meeting Global Challenges: International Cooperation in the National Interest," a report of the International Task Force on Global Public Goods, 2006, 117 pp. Available at www.gpgtaskforce.org
- Hirst, Paul, "Globalization and the Nation State: Nation-Building in the Globalisation Process" 2002, 9 pp. Available at http://www.sef-bonn.org/download/veranstaltungen/2002/2002_symp_textbeitrag_hirst_en.pdf
- Sampson, Gary P. "The WTO and Sustainable Development," United Nations University Press 2005, 306 pp. plus index [selections will be read]
- "America's Living Oceans: Charting a Course for Change," a report of the Pew Oceans Commission, 2003, 166 pp. Available at http://www.pewtrusts.org/our_work_detail.aspx?id=130 [selections will be read]
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report, 52 pp. Available at http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4_syr.pdf
- Kyoto Protocol and related materials. Available at http://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol/items/2830.php

- Lieberthal, Kenneth and Sandalow, David, “Overcoming Obstacles to U.S.-China Cooperation on Climate Change,” Brookings Institution, 2009, 84 pp. Available at http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2009/01_climate_change_lieberthal.aspx
- “A Roadmap for US-China Cooperation on Energy and Climate Change,” Pew Center on Global Climate Change and Asia Society, 2009, 58 pp. Available at http://www.asiasociety.org/taskforces/climateroadmap/US_China_Roadmap_on_Climate_Change.pdf
- Miscellaneous short pieces posted from time to time on Blackboard course site

Optional Supplemental Reading:

- Kaul, Conceicao, Goulven & Mendoza (ed.), “Providing Global Public Goods: Managing Globalization” (Oxford University Press 2003), 614 pp.
- WWF, “The Promotion of Sustainable and Equitable Fisheries Access Agreements in the Western Indian Ocean Region,” 2005, 81 pp. Available at <http://assets.panda.org/downloads/fisheriespartnershipagreementsreport.pdf>
- Testimony of Jennifer Haverkamp Senior Counsel, EDF, before the Senate Committee on Finance, “International Aspects of a Climate Change Cap and Trade Program,” February 14, 2008. Available at http://www.edf.org/documents/8251_Haverkamp_Testimony_Finance_Senate.pdf
- Miscellaneous short pieces posted from time to time on Blackboard course site

Course Schedule:

First Class: Wednesday, April 1: Student introductions. Introductory lecture on sustainable development, concept of nation states since the Peace of Westphalia, “Tragedy of the Commons,” etc. Discussion.

Assignment for Second Class:

Second class: April 8: Lecture on global public goods, international institutions, international law, etc. Discussion. **STUDENTS SUBMIT PROPOSED FIRST PAPER TOPICS to be approved by email**

Assignment for Third Class: read Part III of “Meeting Global Challenges: International Cooperation in the National Interest.” and “Globalization and the Nation State: Nation-Building in the Globalisation Process.”

Third class: April 15: Continuation of last week’s lecture and discussion.

Assignment for Fourth Class: read through p. 143 of “The WTO and Sustainable Development.”

Fourth class: April 22: Lecture and discussion of WTO. **FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE. STUDENTS SUBMIT PROPOSED SECOND PAPER TOPICS to be approved by email**

Assignment for Fifth Class: read p. 144 to end of “The WTO and Sustainable Development.”

Fifth class: April 29: Continuation of last week's lecture and discussion of WTO.

Assignment for Sixth Class: read "America's Living Oceans: Charting a Course for Change"

Sixth class: May 6: Lecture on ocean overfishing problem from US perspective. Discussion.
SECOND SHORT PAPER DUE. STUDENTS SUBMIT PROPOSED RESEARCH PAPER TOPICS to be approved by email.

Assignment for Seventh Class: Read IPCC Synthesis Report

Seventh class: May 13: Lecture and discussion of climate change.

Assignment for Eighth Class: Read Kyoto Protocol and related materials.

Eighth class: May 20: Lecture and discussion of Kyoto Protocol, alternatives to Kyoto.

Assignment for Ninth Class: read "Overcoming Obstacles to U.S.-China Cooperation on Climate Change," and "A Roadmap for US-China Cooperation on Energy and Climate Change."

Ninth class: May 27: Discussion of potential US-China cooperation. **RESEARCH PAPER DUE.**

Assignment for Tenth Class: **None**

Tenth and last class: June 3: Final review and discussion.