International Environmental Policy
EAS 563

Winter 2021
Tuesday/Thursday 2.30pm – 4pm Eastern
Permanent Link to Zoom Class Session: https://umich.zoom.us/j/93827649306

Instructor: Michael Lerner
lernerm@umich.edu
Office Hours: Wed, 9.30am – 11am
Schedule appointments at: https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/michael-lerner/office-hours/
Permanent Link to Zoom Office Hours: https://umich.zoom.us/j/95283781262

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the design and implementation of international policy relating to climate change, biodiversity conservation, and other pressing environmental challenges. Through a case study approach, we will consider how treaties, standards, and programs leverage information, incentives, and institutions to promote sustainability transitions. We will focus in particular on how national governments, corporations, non-governmental organizations, foundations, and local populations shape the formulation and implementation of environmental policy. Students will learn about major issues and concepts in international environmental governance and acquire skills in designing, analyzing, and communicating policy interventions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Become familiar with the range of international environmental agreements, standards, and programs, how they work to change behavior, and their strengths and weaknesses
- Build skills in designing, evaluating, and communicating policy interventions to promote transitions to environmental sustainability
- Gain awareness and understanding of the relevant actors and institutions, issues and debates, and professional opportunities to contribute to the formulation and implementation of international environmental policy
1. General Course Policies

Important additional information on the following general course policies can be found at this link: https://tinyurl.com/general-course-policies

- Academic and Professional Integrity
- Student Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
- Religious and Academic Conflicts
- Students Representing the University of Michigan
- Grade Grievances

1.1. Policy for Unexcused Late Assignments

Late assignments are subject to an automatic penalty of 15% and will not be accepted after 7 days. Extensions can only be granted under exceptional circumstances, such as documented family or medical emergencies, and require the written permission of the instructor.

1.2. Writing Help

The Sweetland Writing Center offers a variety of writing workshops (to groups and individuals), seminars, and courses specifically designed for graduate students. Their web address is: http://lsa.umich.edu/sweetland/graduates/writing-workshop.html.

2. Remote Course Logistics

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this course will take place remotely. Please read the following information carefully.

2.1. Class Sessions

2.1.1. Meeting on Zoom

- The class will meet on Zoom (umich.zoom.us).
  - We will use the same link every time:
    - https://umich.zoom.us/j/93827649306
  - Please make sure you have the latest version of the app on your computer:
    - https://zoom.us/support/download
- I will always try to stay on the line for a few minutes after class in case you need to ask me something
- I will post a recording of the lecture to Canvas
2.1.2. Attendance

- Attendance and active participation in the live class sessions is expected.
- To ask for an excused absence from the live class discussion, please send me an email before the start of class with a reason for your absence. An unreasonable number of unexcused absences will detract from your class participation grade.
- If you are located in a time-zone that makes attendance in the live class session infeasible, please contact me and we can arrange an accommodation.

2.1.3. Participation

- Please review the [Expectations for Zoom Class Sessions](#) document
- To indicate that you would like to ask a question or comment, use the Raise Hand icon or type “stack” in the chat
- To respond to a Yes/No question, use the Yes/No (green check/red cross) icons
- To let me know you stepped away from the computer, use the Away (clock) icon.

- If you encounter technical difficulties when attending the class, that’s okay.
  - First, wait a minute or two to see if it resolves itself.
  - Second, check that you are using the right link.
  - Third, check that your internet connection is working.
  - Fourth, restart the app and try everything again.
  - If it’s still not working, send me a chat in Zoom or an email ([lernerm@umich.edu](mailto:lernerm@umich.edu)) to let me know you are trying to work through some technical difficulties.

2.2. Office Hours

- Office hours will be on Zoom
- We will use a different link than the one for class sessions
  - [https://umich.zoom.us/j/95283781262](https://umich.zoom.us/j/95283781262)
- Sign up for office hours slots on my calendar
  - Please sign up at least 24 hours in advance, although I will try to accommodate meeting requests made later than that.
  - [http://sites.lsa.umich.edu/michael-lerner/office-hours](http://sites.lsa.umich.edu/michael-lerner/office-hours)

2.3. Communication

2.3.1. Communication from Me

All class-wide communication will be done on Canvas.

2.3.2. Getting in touch with Me

If you would like to ask your question more privately, send me an email with the course number in the subject line.
For example: [EAS 563] Question about the next assignment

If you have a question you think everyone would benefit from hearing the answer to, ask it on Canvas using the Discussions page.

3. Course Requirements

3.1. Grades

- Class participation – 10%
- Pop reading quizzes – 9% total
- Additional facts – 3 x 2% (6% total)
- Case analyses – 3 x 10% (30% total)
- Sustainability transition case
  - Proposal – 5%
  - Presentation – 10%
  - Case narrative – 15%
- Practitioner interviews OR Research paper – 15%

3.2. Overview of Assignments

Note: More information and rubrics for all of these assignments can be found on Canvas

Class participation
Your class participation grade consists of attendance, asking and answering questions in full-class discussion, and your contributions to small-group work. If you need to miss class, please send me an email prior to the class session with the reason for your absence.

Pop reading quizzes
There will be occasional pop quizzes on the readings. The quizzes will be short and take place in class. If you are not in class due to an excused absence, contact me for an accommodation.

Additional facts
For each case, you will be asked to supplement the case study by identifying one additional fact that is a) not provided in the case and b) “decision critical” for making a recommendation. In one paragraph, you will be asked to characterize the knowledge gap in the case, describe the fact, and interpret its implications for making a recommendation.

Case analyses
For each case, you will be asked to write a 500 word (+/- 50 words) analysis in which you summarize the case, identify the decision problem, analyze and evaluate alternatives using relevant criteria, make and justify a recommendation, and outline a course of action.

Sustainability transition case
As part of a small group, you and your team members will create an original case study on a sustainability transition relating to agriculture, population, energy, forests, nutrition, or another
topic of your group’s choice (subject to my approval). There will be two class sessions dedicated to designing and executing your case study, but groups will also be expected to meet outside of class to complete the assignment. Each group will be responsible for producing 1) a 1500-word proposal (+/- 150 words), 2) a 10-15 minute presentation, and 3) a polished case study narrative of approximately 2500 words in length (+/- 250 words). You will also receive feedback a draft of your narrative during an in-class peer review session.

**Practitioner interview (Option 1 of 2)**
You will be asked to identify three environment and sustainability policy practitioners and conduct and record 20–30-minute interviews touching on 1) the respondent’s career path, 2) the respondent’s job responsibilities, achievements, and challenges, and 3) the respondent’s perspective on concepts and themes relevant to the course. You are encouraged to identify people in positions that you think are exciting and/or you would want to work in 5–10 years from now. Please let me know who you plan to contact beforehand to minimize duplicated interview requests and I would be happy to brainstorm potential interview subjects with you. In addition to uploading the recordings over the course of the semester, you will also be responsible for submitting a reflection of 750 words (+/- 75 words) that synthesizes and compares your interview subjects’ perspectives.

**Research paper (Option 2 of 2)**
You will be asked to write an original research paper of 2500 words (+/- 250 words). The paper may be on a topic of your choosing relating to concepts and themes relevant to the course (subject to my approval).

*Note: Students may, but are neither obliged nor encouraged, to complete both the practitioner interviews and the research paper. If you choose to do so, you will receive the highest grade of the two assignments.*

### 4. Key Dates and Deadlines

- **March 16**: Sustainability case proposal due at 9am Eastern
- **March 29**: Draft sustainability case narrative due at 5pm Eastern
- **April 15**: Sustainability case presentations in class
- **April 20**: Sustainability case narrative due at 9am Eastern
- **April 27**: Practitioner interviews and research papers due 9am Eastern
## 5. Quick Reference Class Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Jan 19</td>
<td>Introductions + Levers of behavior change</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jan 21</td>
<td>Case method + Governing drinking water</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jan 26</td>
<td>Tradeoffs and decisionmaking in environmental governance</td>
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<td>Jan 28</td>
<td>Policy interventions in environmental governance</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Agreements</strong></td>
<td>Feb 2</td>
<td>Overview: International environmental agreements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Feb 4</td>
<td>Case #1: REDD+ climate emissions mitigation</td>
<td>Additional fact #1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Feb 9</td>
<td>Guest speaker: Katherine Browne</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Feb 11</td>
<td>Guest speaker: Danae Maniatis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Feb 16</td>
<td>Discussion: Climate emissions and REDD+</td>
<td>Case analysis #1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Feb 18</td>
<td>Model UNFCCC Negotiation</td>
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<td>Feb 23</td>
<td>Sustainability transitions work day</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Standards</strong></td>
<td>Feb 25</td>
<td>Overview: International environmental standards</td>
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<td>Mar 2</td>
<td>Case #2: Oleg and Oleg Foundation and Sustainable Agricultural Commodities</td>
<td>Additional fact #2</td>
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<td>Mar 4</td>
<td>Guest speaker: Diana Jue-Rajasingh</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mar 9</td>
<td>Guest speaker: Nicole Ryan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mar 11</td>
<td>Discussion: Role of information and standards in environmental governance</td>
<td>Case analysis #2</td>
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<td>Mar 16</td>
<td>Debate: Is intensification the solution to food security?</td>
<td>Sustainability transition proposal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mar 18</td>
<td>Sustainability transitions work day</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Programs</strong></td>
<td>Mar 23</td>
<td>Overview: International environmental programs</td>
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<td>Mar 25</td>
<td>Case #3: Bird’s Head Seascape: Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Areas</td>
<td>Additional fact #3</td>
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<td>Mar 30</td>
<td>Guest speaker: Rosina Bierbaum + Case study narrative peer review</td>
<td>Sustainability transition case draft</td>
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<td>Apr 1</td>
<td>Guest speaker: Chris Cosslett</td>
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<td>Apr 6</td>
<td>Discussion: Role of project-based interventions in biodiversity conservation</td>
<td>Case analysis #3</td>
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<td>Apr 8</td>
<td>Debate: Is the use of force necessary to protect biodiversity?</td>
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<td>Apr 13</td>
<td>Flex day</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Apr 15</td>
<td>Sustainability transition case presentations</td>
<td>Sustainability transition case slides</td>
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<td>Apr 20</td>
<td>Wrap-up</td>
<td>Sustainability transition narrative</td>
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Practitioner interviews and research papers due Monday, April 27
6. Detailed Class Schedule
Note: All readings are posted on Canvas. All assignments must be submitted on Canvas.

Unit 0: Introduction

Tuesday, January 19
Introductions + Levers of behavior change

Required reading:

Thursday, January 21
Case method + Governing drinking water

Required reading:

Suggested reading:
• How to Write a Case Study + Requirements
• Framework for case analysis
• Guide to case analysis

Tuesday, January 26
Tradeoffs and decisionmaking in environmental governance

Required reading:

Suggested reading:
• If interested in the strategy of activist groups
• If interested in how local institutions fit into global environmental policy
Thursday, January 28
Policy interventions in environmental governance

Required reading:


Suggested reading:

- If want a more technical discussion of interest groups and federalism in policy

Unit 1: International environmental agreements

Tuesday, February 2
Overview: International environmental agreements

Required reading:


Suggested reading:

- If interested in the US role in climate negotiations
• If interested in how developing countries evolved on environmental governance

• Why treaty non-compliance is met with cooperation and negotiation

• If interested in varied design of international agreements

*Thursday, February 4*

Case #1: REDD+ climate emissions mitigation

Assignments:
  • Additional fact #1

Required reading:
  • Case #1: REDD+ in a global climate agreement

Suggested reading:
  • Argues to pay directly for conservation outcomes

  • Background on potential of forests for climate mitigation

  • History of REDD+

  • Why developing states have not been unified on REDD+

  • If interested in strategy of indigenous groups on REDD+
Tuesday, February 9
Guest speaker: Katherine Browne (personal website)

Assignments:
• Prepare one question in advance for Katherine. If you cannot attend the live session, please send me your question by email.

Required reading:

Thursday, February 11
Guest speaker: Danae Maniatis (LinkedIn bio)

Assignments:
• Please fill out this survey to let me know if you can make it: https://forms.gle/NY4KdMFTaXx3GLZb6.
• Prepare one question in advance for Danae. If you cannot attend the live session, please send me your question by email.

Required reading:

Tuesday, February 16
Discussion: Climate emissions and REDD+

Assignments:
• Case analysis #1

Thursday, February 18
Model UNFCCC Negotiation

Required reading:
• Briefing statement [specific to your group]
Tuesday, February 23
Sustainability transitions work day

Assignments:
- Sign up for a sustainability transition group (link to sign up sheet)

Required reading:
- Group-specific sustainability transition readings [see Canvas]
  - Agriculture
  - Population
  - Energy
  - Forest
  - Nutrition
Unit 2: International environmental standards

Thursday, February 25
Overview: International environmental standards

Required reading:
- Round Table on Responsible Soy Association. “What is the Round Table on Responsible Soy Association?” responsiblesoy.org – [Link to webpage] [especially videos]
- Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil. “About Us” rspo.org – [Link to webpage] [slideshow and video]

Suggested reading:
- If interested in environmental standards in trade agreements
- Why developing countries adopt stringent environmental standards
- If interested in voluntary environmental standards
Tuesday, March 2
Case #2: Oleg and Oleg Foundation and Sustainable Agricultural Commodities

Assignments:
- Additional fact #2

Required reading:
- Case #2: Oleg and Oleg Foundation and Sustainable Agricultural Commodities

Suggested reading:
- On the limits of sustainability certifications
- On the potential for rivalries among private environmental partnerships

Thursday, March 4
Guest speaker: Diana Jue-Rajasingh (personal website)

Assignments:
- Prepare one question in advance for Diana.

Required reading:

Tuesday, March 9
Guest speaker: Nicole Ryan

Assignments:
- Prepare one question in advance for Nicole.

Required reading:
- Dell, Rebecca. "Making the Concrete and Steel We Need Doesn't Have to Bake the Planet." *New York Times* March 4 (2021).
Thursday, March 11
Discussion: Role of information and standards in environmental governance

Assignments:
• Case analysis #2

Tuesday, March 16
Debate: Is intensification the solution to food security?

Assignments:
• Sustainability transition proposal

Required reading:

Suggested reading:
• *If interested in the concept of food security*
• *If interested in the concept of food sovereignty*
• *If interested in (sustainable) agricultural intensification*
**Thursday, March 18**
Sustainability transitions work day

**Tuesday, March 23**
No class – Well-being break

**Unit 3: International environmental programs**

**Thursday, March 25**
Overview: International environmental programs

Required reading:
- One of the following GEF Good Practice Briefs (to be assigned):

Suggested reading:
- *If interested in international development aid for the environment*
- *On the rise of public-private partnerships and the environment*

**Tuesday, March 30**
Guest speaker: Rosina Bierbaum (bio) + Case study narrative peer review

Assignments:
- Draft sustainability case study narrative [due March 29 at 9am]
- Prepare one question in advance for Rosina.

Required reading:
- Peer-review group member’s sustainability case study narrative draft

Thursday, April 1
Guest speaker: Chris Cosslett (LinkedIn bio)

Assignments:
- Prepare one question in advance for Chris.

Required reading:

Tuesday, April 6
Case #3: Bird’s Head Seascape: Biodiversity Conservation and Protected Areas

Assignments:
- Additional fact #3

Required reading:
- Case #3: Can Indonesia sustain financing of the Bird’s Head Seascape? https://www.learngala.com/cases/indonesia-conservation

Suggested reading:
- More background on Bird’s Head Seascape

Thursday, April 8
Discussion: Role of project-based interventions in biodiversity conservation

Assignments:
- Case analysis #3

Suggested reading:
- On the importance of impact evaluation for biodiversity conservation

- *If interested in the role of impact evaluation in NGO conservation strategy*

**Tuesday, April 13**

Debate: Use of force is necessary to protect biodiversity

**Required reading:**


**Suggested reading:**

- *If interested in the people-oriented vs. conservation-oriented debate*

**Thursday, April 15**

Sustainability transition case presentations

**Assignments:**

- Sustainability transition case group presentations

**Tuesday, April 20**

Wrap-up

**Assignments**

- Sustainability transition case narrative

**Practitioner interviews (#1, #2, #3, Reflection) and research papers due Tuesday, April 27**
Expectations for Zoom Class Sessions

In this class, we’ll be having synchronous class sessions via Zoom. The guidelines below will help you be successful and help us have a good, productive class environment that minimizes distractions and disruptions.

Zoom Class Session Expectations:

- **Test your audio**
- **Test your video** and adjust your camera angle beforehand so we’re not staring up your nose or down at your torso
- Review what is visible around you/in the background and remove anything that is inappropriate for class
- If possible, use headphones with a microphone to minimize audio feedback and echoing (when talking, be careful that the microphone doesn’t brush up against your clothing and make loud noises)
- Attend class from a comfortable, yet appropriate location with good internet access (lounging on your bed is too casual; a coffee shop may be too noisy or have a bad internet connection)
- Wear clothing that is appropriate for class
- Limit the number of users connected to your home internet network to ensure a stable connection during your Zoom Class Session
- Close other browser windows, unless they’re needed for class, to save bandwidth
  - If you notice problems with your connection, turn off your camera to save bandwidth
- Mute your microphone when you’re not talking (this eliminates background noise that can be distracting)
- Limit exposure to distractions such as your phone, alarms, pets, and roommates
- If you have questions during class, unmute yourself and ask at a time that is least disruptive
- Participate in the discussion
- Be respectful of others
- Be prepared to take notes