

PSC 349: Global Environmental Politics

DePaul University, Fall, 2011

Instructor: Phillip Stalley
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Class time & location: T/Th, 2:40-4:10, SAC 288
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Course Description:

PSC 349 introduces you to the key issues and political challenges in global environmental protection. We begin by examining the main approaches and theoretical concepts used to understand global environmental issues. During this time we explore some fundamental questions to help you determine your own views about the nature of global environmental challenges. Can free markets and economic growth solve environmental problems or is free-market capitalism the very source of the planet's environmental challenges? Do strains on natural resources constitute an impending crisis or is there a tendency within the environmental community to overstate the seriousness of environmental challenges? To what extent should environmental principles such as sustainable development guide public policy?

In the second part of the course, we explore some of the overarching issues in global environmental politics. Many of these topics involve the relationship between the industrialized North and the developing South. We ask questions such as: does free trade hurt or harm the environment? Do we need a World Environmental Organization to offset the influence of the World Trade Organization? What is the relationship between environmental scarcity and conflict? We finish the class by looking at specific environmental issues, including population growth, climate change, and the protection of biodiversity.

Course Objectives:

This course has two goals. The first is to familiarize you with the main issues, questions, and debates in global environmental politics. The second is to help each of you enhance your critical thinking skills. I am less concerned with the content of your environmental views than with the process through which you draw your conclusions. You can decide that ecological degradation is the single most important issue in international relations, one among many important challenges, or an over-hyped claim of "gloom and doom" environmentalists. What is most important is that you examine arguments—both your own and others'—with a critical eye. This involves exploring underlying assumptions, presenting evidence to support your claims, considering alternative points of view, and thinking through the implications of your conclusions. I

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hope that this course will give you the tools necessary to engage in this kind of analytical thinking and so become critical thinkers about environmental politics.

Reading Materials:

There are two required texts for this course. Both are available in the DePaul bookstore:

- Clapp, Jennifer and Peter Dauvergne. 2011. *Paths to a Green World*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Conca, Ken, Michael Albery & Geoffrey Dabelko ed. 2010. *Green Planet Blues: Environmental Politics from Stockholm to Rio*, Boulder: Westview Press.

You will also typically be required to read an article or chapter not in one of the required texts. In such cases, the reading will typically be available via e-reserve. A link to the e-reserve system is available on D2L.

iClicker:

During class, we will use iClickers. For those of you who have not previously used an iClicker, it is a remote device that allows you to answer questions posted via power point during class. It is designed to facilitate student involvement, foster interaction between students and the teacher and generally to make class more entertaining. The iClicker will be used to determine your attendance and participation grade, so it is imperative that you always bring it to class.

You have two options regarding the iClicker. First, you can purchase an iClicker at the start of the quarter and bring your iClicker to each class session. They are available at the DePaul bookstore or on Amazon.com. Purchased new they cost approximately \$40 and can be sold back to the bookstore at the end of the quarter. Second, you can purchase a web-based clicker. There are various subscription options- a six-month subscription is \$10. This option requires you either to bring a laptop and connect to the web via DePaul's wireless network or use a compatible cellular device (e.g. iPhone, DROID). A full list of compatible devices is available here: <http://www.iclicker.com/dnn/Products/webclicker/tabid/156/Default.aspx>

If you choose the web-based option, you will need to create a web clicker account, which you can do by clicking here: <https://webclicker.iclicker.com/>. I am allowing you the option of the web-based clicker to help you save money, but I fully expect that you will still respect the class rules regarding the proper use of cell phones and laptops in the class (*see section on classroom etiquette below*).

Desire to Learn (D2L):

We will make frequent use the D2L system. For those of you not familiar

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with D2L, it is a web-based system used for posting course materials and enhancing communication between professors and students. A copy of the syllabus, as well as many other course materials including assignments and readings will be posted on D2L. D2L will be updated frequently, so you should visit it often. In class, I use power point and will typically (but not automatically) make my power point lecture slides available via D2L. **It is important that you recognize that these slides are intended to help you take better notes, not to serve as a substitute for your own.** There is no guarantee that I will post them.

Grades:

- Midterm Exam (20%)
- Final Exam (25%)
- Research paper (25%)
- Research paper deadlines (10%)
- Debate and position paper (5%)
- Attendance (5%)
- Performance points (10%)

Course Requirements:

Reading. Like most social science courses, this class will require you to spend several hours a week reading. You are expected to read all assignments before class and to come prepared to discuss the readings. Discussion is a significant component of the class and you must do the reading if you are to be an active participant. The particular form of discussion will change from class to class. Sometimes I will randomly call on students, other times we will have a debate or small group discussions. You will frequently be quizzed on the reading via the iClicker.

In addition to the assigned readings, you are expected to keep up with environmental news preferably by reading a newspaper such as the *Chicago Tribune*, *New York Times* or *Washington Post*. You should not feel pressured to digest every resource available; you simply need to stay abreast of current events. If some particular article or op-ed piece catches your interest, I encourage you to email it to me or bring it to class for discussion. At least one question on the midterm and final will be based on events that occur during the course of the quarter.

Exams (45%). Both the midterm and the final will be based on any materials presented in the reading and/ or in lecture. The exams will typically have two parts. The first is an in-class section consisting of short answer questions (multiple choice, true/false, etc.). The second is a take-home essay(s). You usually have 48

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hours to complete the take-home essay(s).

Research Paper (25%) + deadlines (5%) + writing fellow program (5%). The research paper requirements are described in greater detail in D2L, but the general assignment is to write a well-researched, analytical paper that makes an argument about a topic related to global environmental politics. You may choose one of three options. The **first** is to write a 12-15 page paper on the global environmental politics of everyday things. In this assignment you will choose an imported item that you use in your everyday life (e.g. cell phone, coffee, t-shirt), evaluate the environmental impact of the product over its entire lifecycle (production to disposal), and analyze the political obstacles to a more environmentally-friendly version of your selected product. Your overall goal is to formulate an argument about whether and how this product can be made more environmentally-friendly. Your **second** option is to choose a specific international environmental issue (e.g. transnational hazardous waste) and a country (e.g. China) or set of countries (e.g. Sub-Saharan Africa) affected by that issue. You are then to write a 12-15 page paper that makes an argument about whether the current set of international organizations and institutions governing this issue are sufficient from that country's point of view. Your **third** choice is to select a topic yourself. You are free to choose any topic, but it must be relevant to the class.

The paper will have a **series of due dates** that will include: topic proposal (**9/27**), annotated bibliography (**10/4**), rough draft (**10/20**), and final draft (**11/8**). In addition you will have **two meetings** with someone from the Writing Fellows Program (*described below*).

Ten percent of your overall grade will be based on meeting each of the three paper deadlines and your two meetings with the Fellows Program. If you complete each of these assignments on time, you receive a 100% (5 of 5), if you complete four of the assignments, you receive 80%, etc.

If you are having trouble selecting a topic, or would like help of any kind on the paper, please come see me or send me an email. I'm more than happy to help at any stage of the process. On D2L, you will find a list of common weaknesses I often find in students' papers. Please read this document before you write your paper, as you are writing it, and again after you complete it.

Writing Fellows. Writing is a central part of this course. Because writers improve by sharing their work with others and individual pieces of writing improve through a process of drafting and revision, each of you in our class this quarter will work with a Writing Fellow. The Writing Fellows program assigns a peer tutor to each student in this course. Your Writing Fellow will provide you with extensive support on two papers this quarter.

Fellows will make thoughtful and extensive revision-oriented comments upon both your annotated bibliography and your rough draft. They will also then confer one-

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on-one for one hour with each of you. The goal of this whole process is to help you make smart, significant revisions to your papers *before* the papers are turned in for a grade. Overall, your Writing Fellow will help you to learn more about the standards for written products in this course, and about the process of writing and revision. **It is mandatory that you meet with your Writing Program Fellow** both for your annotated bibliography and your rough draft.

Turn-It-In. Please be aware that each student's research paper will be verified using ***Turn-It-In*** technology in order to ensure that the work is the student's own creation and not in violation of the University's Academic Integrity Policy. Submission of work in this course constitutes (1) a pledge that the work is original and produced uniquely for this course and (2) consent to have originality verified. You will need to set up a turn-it-in account and submit your paper both to me and to turn-it-in. Instructions are posted in D2L under the "paper" tab. Failure to submit your paper to *Turn-It-In within 48 hours of the due date* will result in a one letter grade deduction from your final grade. Any student that does not submit their paper to *Turn-It-In by the time I return the papers will automatically receive an F.*

Debate and position paper (5%): On several Thursdays during the quarter, we will conduct a debate on that week's topic. You will be given a statement that will form the basis of the debate (the debate topics are posted and described in D2L). For each debate, approximately students will be assigned to lead the discussion and all students will be expected to participate. For each debate, there will be a "pro" and "con" team. I will not participate in these debates—the sessions will be entirely run by you.

You are also required to write a 3-4 page paper on debate topic for which you serve as a discussion leader. In the debate you will be assigned to either "pro" or "con", but in your paper you are free to argue either side. For both the debate and the paper, you do not need to conduct additional research and can draw primarily from the assigned and recommended reading. Your paper is due the day of the debate.

Attendance (5%). At the start of class, I will pass around a sign-in sheet. If you come late, it is your responsibility to make sure you sign it. If you do not sign it, you will be considered absent regardless of whether you actually attended. Your grade for attendance will simply be the percent of times you attended.

Performance points (10%): Because I want to help you to actively engage the class and material, I have made class discussion a significant component of this course. All classes will be a mix of lecture and discussion and I will frequently solicit your opinions about the readings. You should always come to class prepared to discuss that day's reading and having reviewed your notes from the previous class.

In a typical class, I will ask several questions that you will answer with your iClicker. These questions are designed either to quiz your knowledge of material covered in the reading/lecture or to solicit your opinion about a particular topic. By answering

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these questions, you earn performance points. The number of performance points awarded will vary depending on whether you answer a question correctly. You get two points just for answering the question and an additional point for answering it correctly. If I ask three questions in a class and you answer two correctly, you receive 8 (of 9) points. If over the course of the quarter, I ask 30 questions and you answer only half of them correctly, you will receive an 83 percent for the performance point portion of your grade (75 out of a possible 90 points). The above should make it clear that it is overwhelmingly in your interest to attend each class session and participate actively.

For a more detailed description of how the iClicker performance points can influence your final grade, see the tables at the end of the syllabus.

Policies and Procedures:

Office hours. I will hold regular office hours twice a week (listed above). You are strongly encouraged to drop by anytime during those hours and do not need an appointment. If you cannot meet me during office hours, I am happy to meet you some other time. I hope that each of you to come by my office at some point during the quarter. I enjoy talking with students and would like to help each of you do as well as possible in the class. If you have any questions about the material, assignments, or my expectations, please do not hesitate to come by my office or send me an email. I am happy to read a draft of your research paper and go over it with you during office hours.

Work/ Grading. As you look over the syllabus, it should be obvious to you that you must be prepared to work hard in this class. Like all courses, the value of this course will stem directly from the work you put into it. I will give my best to this class and I expect you to do the same. For all graded papers and essays, the grading scale will be based on (a) accuracy of factual information; (b) ability to synthesize and use facts analytically to make a concise argument or point; (c) clarity of expression (i.e. organization, basic grammar, word choice, etc.); (d) completion of all aspects of the assignment. Originality and imagination should be based on these essentials and not substituted for them. The grading scale will be as follows:

A/A-	Outstanding work; well organized and well-argued; without significant error or omission;
B	Very fine work; well-organized and well-argued with only occasional error or omission; B papers are above average;
C	Satisfactory or solid work; made some use of evidence, but there are clear problems of organization, presentation, or interpretation;
D	Passing, but barely acceptable; clear problems with length, facts, organization, etc.;
F	Serious deficiencies, frequent factual errors and obvious

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problems with organization.

Absences/ Make-ups/ Extensions. Make-up exams and extensions will be given only in extreme circumstances. Late papers will be deducted a full letter grade for each day the paper is late; the 24-hour period begins with the class session in which the paper is due. This means that if the paper is due in class on a Tuesday and you turn it in Wednesday evening, your paper is considered two days late and an "A" paper will receive a "C". This should make it clear that it is overwhelmingly in your interest to turn your paper in on time.

If you know that you will be absent on a particular day for a school-related or religious reason, please inform me in advance. All absences will be considered unexcused until written documentation is provided (e.g. note from student health) and written documentation must be given within a week of the absence.

You can either give the documentation to me directly or, if you feel uncomfortable sharing personal details with me, can go to the Dean of Students Office (DSO). The DSO will have you fill out an absence notification form and at that time you can ask the DSO to send me an email requesting flexibility in offering an extension or make-up. For those of you unfamiliar with the Dean of Students Office, it provides a variety of services for students dealing with personal, family or health challenges. You can learn more about the absence notification process and the DSO at: <http://studentaffairs.depaul.edu>

Disabilities: Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate reasonable accommodation based on your needs, contact me as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class), and make sure that you have contacted the:

- PLS Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-1677, Student Center #370, and/or
- The Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-1677, Student Center #370

Academic Dishonesty. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. All violations will be reported to the Academic Affairs Office. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please see the **Code of Student Responsibility in the Student Handbook**, which is available on the website of the Dean of Students Office. Please be aware that any written work submitted in this course may be verified using **Turn-It-In** technology in order to ensure that the work is the student's own creation and not in violation of the University's Academic Integrity Policy. Submission of work in this course constitutes a pledge that the

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work is original and consent to have the work submitted to verify that fact.

Classroom etiquette: As a courtesy to your fellow students and to me, it is important that you conduct yourself in a manner that does not distract from the learning environment. This means that you should make every effort to avoid:

- Arriving late and/or leaving early
- Habitually exiting and entering the classroom in the middle of class
- Eating, using a cell phone (or any other electronic device), or talking during class
- Anything else that distracts your fellow classmates or me

Feedback. I highly value student input into the class and throughout the quarter will seek your opinions about various aspects of the course. At various times during the quarter you will be asked to turn in a form that asks you to detail any course material that you are having trouble understanding. In addition, after the midterm we will conduct a mid-course evaluation that will allow you to describe what you like most and least about the course. All of these feedback mechanisms will be anonymous so that you can feel comfortable fully expressing your opinion.

CLASS SCHEDULE & READING ASSIGNMENTS:

8-Sept: Introduction

- Read the syllabus.
- Look over the debate topics in D2L.

I. Understanding Global Environmental Politics

13-Sept: Approaches to GEP: market liberals to social greens

- "Peril or Prosperity? Mapping Worldviews of Global Environmental Change" (*Paths to a Green World*, pgs. 1-17).
- Introduction, (*Green Planet Blues*, pgs. 1-14).

15-Sept: An Additional Approach? Skeptical Environmentalism

- Lomborg, Bjorn. 2001. "Ch. 1, The Litany", *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, pgs. 3-32.

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- Pope, Carl and Bjorn Lomborg, 2005. "State of Nature", *Foreign Policy*, July/August, pgs. 67-73.

SKIM:

- **The January, 2002, issue of *Scientific American***, (Vol. 286, issue 1) published four article rebutting Lomborg's *Skeptical Environmentalist*. Lomborg was allowed a one page response, which he deemed inadequate and published on his website a 30+ page response.

20-Sept: Concepts: tragedy of the commons

- Hardin, Garrett. "The Tragedy of the Commons" (*Green Planet Blues*, pgs. 38-45).
- Burger, Joanna and Michael Gochfeld. 1998. "The Tragedy of the Commons Thirty Years Later" *Environment*, 40(10), pgs 4-13, 26-27.
- Buck, Susan J. "No Tragedy of the Commons" (*Green Planet Blues*, pgs. 46-54).

22-Sept: Concepts: sustainable development

- The Sustainability Debate (*Green Planet Blues*, pgs. 199-246, skip pgs. 237-242).

27-Sept: DEBATE #1: Should the precautionary principle be a basis for public policy?

- "Is the Precautionary Principle a Sound Basis for International Policy" (Issue 1, *Taking Sides*, pgs. 2-20).
- "Is Sustainable Development Compatible with Human Welfare?", Issue 2, *Taking Sides*, pgs. 20-34).
- **TOPIC PROPOSAL IS DUE IN CLASS**

RECOMMENDED:

- Ronald Bailey, "Debunking Green Myths," *Reason* (February 2002)
- David Pimentel, from "Skeptical of the Skeptical Environmentalist," *Skeptic* (vol. 9, no. 2, 2002).

II. Questions and Issues in Global Environmental Politics

Issue #1: Economic Growth vs. Environment Protection

29-Sept: Environment & Development: The Environmental Kuznets Curve

- Galeotti, Marzio. 2007. "Economic Growth & the Quality of the Environment: Taking Stock", *Environment, Development, & Sustainability*. Issue 9, pgs 427-454.
- "Economic Growth in a World of Wealth and Poverty", (Ch. 4. , *Paths to a Green World*, pgs. 83-117).

4-Oct: DEBATE #2: Limits to Growth? Should countries limit economic growth in order to protect the environment?

- Castro, "Environment and Development: The Case of Developing Countries" (*Green Planet Blues*, pgs. 30-37).
- Meadows et al, "Limits to Growth" (*Green Planet Blues*, pg. 25-29).
- Peluso, "Coercing Conservation" (*Green Planet Blues*, pg. 326-337).
- Meadows et al, *Limits to Growth: Thirty Year Update*. White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing. Chapter 1, Overshoot, pgs. 1-17.
- **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY IS DUE IN CLASS**

6-Oct: Catch Up & Review

11-Oct: Midterm

Issue #2: Trade, Investment, & the Environment

13-Oct: In Search of Pollution Havens: trade, multinationals, & the environment

- "Trade and the Environment", (*Paths to a Green World*, Ch.5, pgs. 119-155)

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18-Oct: Do multinational corporations promote an environmental race to the bottom?

- "Global Investment & the Environment", (*Paths to a Green World*, Ch.6 pgs. 157-188)
- Kim, Jim Yong, Joce Millen, Alec Irwin, and John Gersham ed. *Dying for Growth: Global Inequality & the Health of the Poor*. Maine: Common Courage Press. Ch. 8, only pgs. 177-185, 192-200.
- Wheeler, David. 2002. "Beyond Pollution Havens", *Global Environmental Politics* 2(2): 1-10
- Drezner, Daniel. 2000. "Bottom Feeders", *Foreign Policy*, No. 121. pgs. 64-70.

Issue #3: Global Environmental Governance
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20-Oct: Research Paper Discussion

- No new reading. Hurray!
- **ROUGH DRAFT IS DUE IN CLASS**

25-Oct: Who Rules? key actors in global environmental governance

- "The Globalization of Environmentalism", (*Paths to a Green World*, Ch. 3, pgs. 45-82)
- Chasek, Pamela S., David Downie, Janet Welsh Brown. 2006. *Global Environmental Politics*. Boulder: Westview Press. Chapter 3, "The Development of Environmental Regimes: 11 Case Studies", pgs. 97-101, 106-115 [ozone], 128-143 [toxic waste] & Chapter 4, "Effective Environmental Regimes: Obstacles & Opportunities", pgs. 197-214.
- **ROUGH DRAFT IS DUE IN CLASS**

27-Oct: DEBATE #3: World Environmental Organization

- Desombre, Elizabeth. 2006. Ch. 2, "UN Environmental Machinery", *Global Environmental Institutions*. Routledge Press: New York. pgs. 7-20.
- Najam, Adil. 2003. "The Case Against a New International Environmental Organization." *Global Governance*, 9: 367-84.
- Biermann, Frank. 2000. "The Case for a World Environmental

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Organization." *Environment* 42(9): 22-31.

Issue #4: Climate Change

1-Nov: Climate Change

- Snow, Donald. 2010. "Global Warming: Facing the Problem, Kyoto, and Beyond" in *Cases in International Relations*. New York: Pearson, pgs. 235-251.
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment Report Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report Summary for Policymakers, pgs. 1-22, available at: http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/syr/ar4_syr_spm.pdf

3-Nov: DEBATE #4: Confronting Climate Change

- Speth, James Gustave. 2004. "Afterword", *Red Sky At Morning: America and the Crisis of the Global Environment*. New Haven: Yale University Press. pgs. 203-229 (*skim*).
- Lomborg, Bjorn. 2007. *Cool It: The Skeptical Environmentalists Approach to Global Warming*. Alfred K. Knopf: New York, pgs 1-53.
- Making Changes for Our Children: Testimony of AL GORE, 45th Vice President of the United States", Delivered to the U.S. House of Representatives Energy & Commerce Committee Subcommittee on Energy & Air Quality and the Science & Technology Committee Subcommittee on Energy & Environment, Washington, D.C., March 21, 2007.

Issue #5: Population vs. Consumption

8-Nov: Population Growth

- Malthus, Thomas. 1798. "Book 1, Chapter 1: OF the Checks to Population in the Less Civilized Parts of the World and in Past Times" *An Essay on the Principle of Population*. JM Dent and Sons: London, 1958. pgs. 5-12.
- McKee, Jeffrey K. 2004. "Forecasting global biodiversity threats associated with human population growth." *Biological Conservation*, 115 (1): 61-64.

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- Kahl, “Demography, Environment, and Civil Strife” (*Green Planet Blues*, pgs. 256-266)
- Sen, Amartya “Population: Delusion and Reality,” *New York Review of Books*, September 22, 1994.
- **RESEARCH PAPER IS DUE IN CLASS**

10-Nov: **DEBATE #5: Should the US support population control programs in the developing world?**

- Princen, Thomas Michael Maniates, and Ken Conca. 2002. “Confronting Consumption”, in Thomas Princen, Michael Maniates, and Ken Conca ed. *Confronting Consumption*, MIT Press: Cambridge, MA, pgs. 1-14.
- Diamond, Jared. 2008. “What’s Your Consumption Factor?”, *New York Times*, January 2.
- Read the sections on “ecological footprint” at www.footprintnetwork.org/ & calculate your own ecological footprint (under the “footprint for you” tab)
- Gore, Albert, Jr. “The Sole Remaining Superpower vs. the Population Bomb,” *New Perspectives Quarterly*, 16(2) (1999) pgs. 34-35.
- Connelly, Matthew. *Fatal Misconception: The Struggle to Control World Population*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pgs. TBA.
- Epstein, Helen. 2008. “The Strange History of Birth Control”, *New York Review of Books*. August 18.
- Hardin, Garrett, 1974. *Lifeboat Ethics: A Malthusian View*.

Issue #6: Biodiversity Protection
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15-Nov: **Biodiversity**

- Speth, James Gustave. 2004. “Lost in Eden”, *Red Sky At Morning: America and the Crisis of the Global Environment*. New Haven: Yale University Press. pgs. 23-42.
- Desombre, Elizabeth. 2006. Ch. 2, “Species and Conservation”, *Global Environmental Institutions*. Routledge Press: New York. pgs. 42-68.
- Humphreys, David. 2003. Life Protective or Carcinogenic Challenge? *Global Forests Governance under Advanced Capitalism*. *Global Environmental Politics* 3 (3):40-55.

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Tuesday, Nov 22, Final Exam
2:45-5:00 p.m.

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TABLE 1: iClicker Grading—you don't have to answer every question correctly to earn a high grade

You receive two points for answering a question plus one additional point for answering it correctly. Assume we have 15 classes and I ask 4 questions per class for a total of 60 questions....

Percent of questions you answer correctly	Points for correct answers	Points for incorrect answers	Final Score (points)	Final Score (%)
100%	$60 * 3 = 180$	--	180	100%
75%	$45 * 3 = 135$	$15 * 2 = 30$	$135 + 30 = 165$	$165/180 = 92\%$
50%	$30 * 3 = 90$	$30 * 2 = 60$	$90 + 60 = 150$	$150 / 180 = 83\%$

TABLE 2: iClicker Grading—if you miss class, it is unlikely you will earn a high grade

You receive two points for answering a question plus one additional point for answering it correctly. Assume we have 15 classes and I ask 4 questions per class for a total of 60 questions AND on the days you attend you answer every question correctly...

# of classes you miss	Points for correct answers	Final Score	Final Score (%)
0	$60 * 3 = 180$	180/180	100%
1	$56 * 3 = 168$	168/180	93%
3	$48 * 3 = 144$	144 / 180	80%
5	$40 * 3 = 120$	120/ 180	66%

The Bottom Line: The iClicker counts as 15 percent of your grade. Come to every class, do the reading, and the iClicker will significantly increase the odds that you receive an A for the class.