

UNDERGRADUATE SEMINAR: INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW IN THE HIMALAYA

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Global climate change and other environmental concerns have resulted in a broad spectrum of national and international laws regarding the pressing need to reduce carbon emissions and other toxic pollution, protect natural resources and biodiversity, regulate the use of water, and manage the production of energy. This course provides an overview of the major international agreements, judicial decisions, and regulatory regimes that affect the protection of our environment. International agreements both complement and are complicated by national interests and state-level laws and regulations, especially in countries like the United States, China, the European Union, and India. This course will examine examples of how different countries establish laws to protect the environment, with a special focus on India to understand the priorities of the state in protecting the environment while making use of natural resources to promote economic growth and development. Students will be exposed to the dynamics between national and international environmental law, challenges to the enforcement of environmental regulations, and current events shaping the global environmental landscape.

This course is comprised of 3 units:

1. Foundations of International Environmental Law
2. National actors on the International Environmental stage
3. Case studies: Specific environmental issues and the regimes designed to address them

The course will include the following assignments and grade weights. Details and individual rubrics will be provided for each assignment.

Reading Assignment Guide: 20%. Students will be given prompts ahead of each class period designed to guide and enhance their interaction with assigned reading materials. Written responses to these prompts will be graded on good faith completion. Lowest grade will be dropped. (Units 1, 2, 3)

Current Events: 20%. Students will research and present one current event relating to an environmental issue, facilitating a brief class discussion on the matter. Each student will be assigned a class date for this assignment. (Units 1, 3)

Discussion Leads: 20%. Students will be assigned one national entity and, along with a group, lead a class discussion on the relevant environmental challenges, laws, policies, and international posture. Each student will submit a 1-page executive summary of their discussion material. (Unit 2)

Final Paper: 40%. Students will complete a final reflection and research paper based on their excursions in the program and the content of the course, due on April 10.

Class Schedule

1. 1/13	No class - complete out of class reading
2. 1/15	No class - complete out of class reading
3. 1/20	No class - complete out of class reading
4. 1/22	No class - complete out of class reading
	<i>Unit 1 - Foundations of International Environmental Law</i>
5. 2/10	Introduction to the course; discussion of environmental challenges/issues and the role of law in addressing them; history and philosophy of international environmental law; sources of international law; interaction between international and national law.
6. 2/12	Overview of major international environmental treaties; general principles of international environmental law; foundational environmental judicial decisions and arbitrations with international impact; role of non-state actors, including NGOs and other organizations, in environmental protection.
7. 2/17	Obstacles to effective environmental policy and global governance; challenges to securing treaty compliance; legal liability for environmental harm, including rules on state responsibility; competing interests of state sovereignty and economic development.
	<i>Unit 2 - National actors on the international environmental stage</i>
8. 2/24	United States and the European Union. Student-led discussion of national laws and participation in international environmental governance mechanisms.
9. 2/26	China and the "global south." Student-led discussion of national laws and participation in international environmental governance mechanisms.
10. 3/2	India. Discussion of national laws and participation in international environmental governance mechanisms.
	<i>Unit 3 - Case studies: Specific environmental issues and the regimes designed to address them</i>
11. 3/4	Climate change, ozone depletion, and transboundary air pollution.
12. 3/11	Water pollution and scarcity.
3/12 - 3/30	HIEP Conference; Spring Break
13. 3/31	Energy regulation, including fossil fuels, nuclear energy, and renewable resources.
14. 4/2	Biodiversity; Free trade and the environment.
4/10	Final assignments due

Readings

Axelrod, R.S. & Vandeveer, S.D. (Eds.) (2020). *The global environment: Institutions, law, and policy*. (5th Ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Kandpal, P.C. (2018). *Environmental governance in India*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications, Inc.