University of St.Gallen

# Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Autumn Semester 2024

# 7,379: Global Environmental Politics

# ECTS credits: 4

## Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)
decentral - Portfolio, --, -- (100%)
Examination time: Term time

## Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer
7,379,1.00 Global Environmental Politics -- English -- Hofmann Benjamin

## Course information

### Course prerequisites

**The course welcomes students from diverse disciplinary backgrounds.** Prior knowledge in relevant areas, including International Relations, International Law, Climate Solutions, or Corporate Sustainability, is helpful but not required. Participants are expected to be familiar with good scientific practice, especially correct citation and referencing for term papers.

**The course is suitable for students who wish to develop their thinking in a safe, diverse, and collaborative setting** with targeted inputs and guidance by the lecturer. The course is not suitable for students who look for front-of-class teaching or who do not have the capacity to participate regularly.

### Learning objectives

Upon successful completion of the course, students can: (1) **explain** the major concepts of global environmental politics; (2) **apply** these concepts to analyze causes of and potential solutions to environmental problems; (3) **synthesize and discuss** state-of-the art scientific findings in global environmental politics; (4) **translate** these findings into sound policy recommendations or strategies; and (5) **present** their thoughts and analyses in a clear, concise, and structured manner both orally and in writing. They also **reflect** on this entire learning journey.

### Course content

**Few challenges are as far-reaching as the major environmental problems humanity faces these days.** Human-made climate change threatens to make some parts of our planet uninhabitable while adding significant stress in others. A dramatic loss of biological diversity puts our ecosystems at risk. Deforestation proceeds almost unabated, ocean fisheries continue to be depleted, plastic floats in our oceans, and chemical pollutants pose long-term risks to human health. States have developed international agreements and organizations like the Paris Agreement, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, or the UN Environment Programme to tackle these problems. Likewise, non-state actors like business and NGOs have created eco-labels (e.g., FSC and MSC) and other arrangements to limit environmental impacts. Yet, overall progress in global environmental protection still seems limited.

**In this course, we seek answers to two fundamental questions: what are the causes of the environmental challenges we confront and which political solutions can address them effectively?** We approach these questions by both learning basic concepts and tools in the field of global environmental politics and applying them to specific cases of environmental problems. Moreover, students will deepen their knowledge of state-of-the-art research on a specific theoretical aspect of global environmental politics and develop policy recommendations for the chosen environmental problem.

## Course structure and indications of the learning and teaching design

The course is a held as a weekly seminar. It will take a **workshop-like format with short inputs by the lecturer and ample space for student interaction** (group sessions, short pitches, plenary discussions, etc.) and continuous feedback. Do not expect a traditional lecture.

**The first part of the semester is problem-oriented**. Students will learn how to **analyze global environmental problems from a political science perspective**. This includes distinguishing different types of problems, understanding interests of states and other actors, identifying salient norms, and describing international environmental regimes as well as forms of non-state governance. Students will form groups, apply these concepts and tools to an environmental problem of their choice, and present the case study results in class. Possible topics include deforestation, illegal wildlife trade, pesticide pollution, marine plastic pollution, greenhouse gas emissions from aviation and shipping, hazardous waste, etc. (list of topics can be adapted to students' interests). Students will work on this assignment partly in and partly outside of class.

**The second part of the semester is solution-oriented**. Students will **deepen their knowledge in selected theoretical topics of global environmental politics** that can inform solutions to environmental problems. Possible topics include the effectiveness of international environmental agreements and regimes, the fragmentation of global environmental governance, the divide between Global North and Global South, business power, the influence of NGOs, and the role of science (list of topics can be adapted to students' interests). Students individually choose one topic, review major scientific findings on it, and derive policy implications for the problem they analyzed in the first part of the semester. Students will work on this assignment partly in and partly outside of class. Exchange within and across groups will be facilitated through joint discussions about focus topics (e.g., international mechanisms to mitigate climate change).

In line with the learning objectives, the course will also serve to **train cross-cutting skills** like finding an interesting narrative for presentations, reading and writing academic papers, and moderating or participating in evidence-based debates.

## Course literature

Core readings for each class as well as recommendations on high-quality academic journals will be made available on the e-learning platform. For a general introduction into the topic, **the following works are recommended**:

- Frank Biermann, *Earth System Governance: World Politics in the Anthropocene* (MIT Press, 2014)
- Jennifer Clapp & Peter Dauvergne, *Paths to a Green World: The Political Economy of the Global Environment* (2nd edition, MIT Press, 2011)
- Peter Dauvergne & Leah Shipton. *Global environmental politics in a turbulent era* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2023)
- Robert Falkner (ed.), *The Handbook of Global Climate and Environment Policy* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013)
- Paul G. Harris, *Routledge handbook of global environmental politics* (2nd edition, Taylor & Francis, 2022)
- Ronald B. Mitchell, *International Politics and the Environment* (SAGE, 2010)
- Jean-Frederic Morin, Amandine Orsini, and Sikina Jinnah, *Global Environmental Politics: Understanding the Governance of the Earth* (Oxford University Press, 2020)
- Hayley Stevenson, *Global Environmental Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2017)
- Johannes Urpelainen, *Global environmental politics : the transformative role of emerging economies*. (Columbia University Press, 2022).

## Additional course information

**About the lecturer:** Benjamin Hofmann is a Postdoctoral Researcher in Environmental Social Science at Eawag, the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology, and Lecturer in Political Science at the University of St.Gallen. He has work experience from an international organization in sustainable transport. His research covers science-policy interactions, business influence, and international relations in areas such as pesticides, oceans, and energy/climate. If you have any questions about the course, please reach out to benjamin.hofmann@unisg.ch

# Examination information

## Examination sub part/s

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## 1. Examination sub part (1/1)

### Examination modalities

| | |
|---|---|
| Examination type | Portfolio |
| Responsible for organisation | decentral |
| Examination form | Mixed form |
| Examination mode | -- |
| Time of examination | Term time |
| Examination execution | -- |
| Examination location | -- |
| Grading type | -- |
| Weighting | 100% |
| Duration | -- |

### Examination languages

Question language: English
Answer language: English

### Remark

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### Examination-aid rule

no regulation necessary

- For written examinations at home (term paper), courses without credits, etc., no specific rules for examination aids are required.
- The regulations of the University of St. Gallen and the rules of academic work (sources and aids must always be identified) are applicable in a subsidiary fashion.
- All written work must be accompanied by a declaration of authorship.

### Supplementary aids

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## Examination content

**The portfolio consists of three elements, with their weighting for grading given in brackets:**

**Group presentation (group grade – 35%):** Students sign up for a global environmental problem which they analyze using the political science concepts and tools from the first part of the course (list of problems will be provided but can be extended). They search for high quality scientific literature and primary sources to identify causes and potential solutions to the problem and summarize their findings in a short and concise presentation with visual support. Each student is expected to present. Information on presentation dates and detailed requirements will be provided in class.

**Term paper (individual grade – 45%):** Students will sign up for a specific theoretical topic of global environmental politics in the second part, for which they review state-of-the-art research (list of topics will be provided but can be extended). They will search for recent high-quality scientific publications on this topic, structure, summarize, and critically discuss and reflect on the most important findings, and derive policy options or strategies that can be applied to the environmental problem they analyzed in the first part of the semester. Each student is expected to write a paper. Information on deadline (at the end of the semester) and detailed requirements will be provided in class.

**Active preparation, participation, and reflection (individual grade – 20%):** This part of the grade considers the process performance around the two other assignments, including regular preparatory tasks on which students post in an online forum, constructive contribution to in-class workshop settings, and completion of reflection and feedback assignments. Information on deadlines and detailed requirements will be provided in class.

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## Examination relevant literature

Core readings or smaller research tasks for class discussions will be made available via the e-learning platform (as uploads or links) at the beginning of term or at least four days before each class. Identifying the relevant literature for group presentations and individual papers is a part of the assignment itself, so students will be required to do their own research. Where the literature research proves to be particularly challenging, students may approach the lecturer for help or advice.

**Recommended journals:** Global Environmental Politics, Earth System Governance, International Environmental Agreements, Environmental Politics, Global Environmental Change, Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability, Nature (incl. field-specific sections), Science, Ambio.

## Please note

Please note that only this fact sheet and the examination schedule published at the time of bidding are binding and takes precedence over other information, such as information on StudyNet (Canvas), on lecturers' websites and information in lectures etc.
Any references and links to third-party content within the fact sheet are only of a supplementary, informative nature and lie outside the area of responsibility of the University of St.Gallen.

Documents and materials are only relevant for central examinations if they are available by the end of the lecture period (CW51) at the latest. In the case of centrally organised mid-term examinations, the documents and materials up to CW 42 are relevant for testing.

Binding nature of the fact sheets:

- Course information as well as examination date (organised centrally/decentrally) and form of examination: from bidding start in CW 34 (Thursday, 22nd August 2024);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for decentralised examinations: in CW 12 (Monday, 18 March 2024);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised mid-term examinations: in CW 42 (Monday, 14 October 2024);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised examinations: two weeks before ending with de-registration period in CW 45 (Monday, 04 November 2024).