

POLITICAL SCIENCE 405Q

GLOBAL ECOPOLITICS

Spring, 2009

Professor: Dennis Pirages, WRI – B215
Dennis.pirages@unlv.edu

Office Hours: Mon., Wed. 12:30 – 2:00; Tues. 3:00 – 5:00 and by appointment

Lecture: 2:30 – 3:45 Mon., Wed.

Required Books:

Lechner and Boli, The Globalization Reader
Pirages and DeGeest, Ecological Security
Brown, Plan B 2.0

Course Requirements:

Participants are expected to attend lectures, complete assigned readings in a timely manner and actively participate in class discussion. In addition, each participant is expected to read a book from a list to be supplied and to complete a written review (approximately 1000 words) of the book to be summarized in a ten minute class presentation. Final grades will be determined as follows:

Mid-term examination 35%
Final examination 45%
Participation and book review 20%

Jan. 12: Introduction to the study of global ecopolitics.

Jan. 14: Characteristics of contemporary global politics - From international to global relations - An acceleration of history - The loss of time and distance barriers - The need for theory and anticipatory thinking in making foreign policy - Globalization and new sources of insecurity.

Assignment: Pirages and DeGeest, Chapt. 1.

Jan. 21: A theoretical framework for studying global ecopolitics - Key concepts in ecopolitics – The decline of the state - Human populations as a basic unit of analysis - Evolutionary processes and human well-being - Four dimensions of ecological security.

Jan. 26: Four aspects of globalization - The erosion of sovereignty - The question of identity - Change drivers in global politics - Three revolutions in human affairs – Realism, idealism and global ecopolitics – The diminishing margin for error.

Assignment: Lechner and Boli, Part V.

Jan. 28: Demographic change and insecurity - Four aspects of demographic change - A demographically divided world – Dynamics of population growth - The population explosion in historical perspective - Demographic momentum - The theory of demographic transition.

Assignment: Pirages and DeGeest, Chapt. 2; Brown, Chapt. 1.

Feb. 2: An impending population implosion - Unforeseen implications of zero population growth - The graying of OECD countries - Aged dependency ratios - Inter-generational conflict - Future entitlements - The North-South age gap - World population 2050 - The Chinese dilemma.

Feb. 4: People in motion - Migration - Refugees - Push and pull factors - U.S. immigration dilemmas - Continuing urbanization - The ecology of mega-cities - Differential population growth and conflict.

Assignment: Brown, Chapt. 6, 11.

Feb. 9: Human societies and natural resources – Neo-Malthusians vs. technological optimists - Renewable and nonrenewable resources - Energy as the most critical resource - Three aspects of the contemporary global energy problem - Income and fund energy sources.

Assignment: Pirages and DeGeest, Chapt. 4.

Feb. 11: A long-term perspective on energy supplies - An introduction to petroleum geology – Petroleum and natural gas reserves - Patterns of new discoveries - The economics of global energy problems – A brief history of the international petroleum market - The Seven Sisters - The rise of OPEC – OPEC politics – “downstream facilities” and market control.

Assignment: Brown, Chapt. 2.

Feb. 18: The contemporary oil market - Impact of oil price cycles – lagging refinery capacity – Economic growth and peak oil? - Toward a renewable global energy economy – US energy “non-policy” - Nuclear power and nuclear proliferation - Iran and North Korea.

Assignment: Brown, Chapt. 10.

Feb. 23: World food problems - The political economy of feast and famine - Energy, water and food - The fossil fuel linkage - Components of the world=s diet - The problem of effective demand - The food chain.

Assignment: Pirages and DeGeest, Chapt. 5; Brown, chapt. 3.

Feb. 25: The cyclical nature of world food problems - The political economy of food production - The world food market - Major importers and exporters - Russian agriculture problems - Production on marginal land - Irrigation and food production.

March 2: Global food politics - Food subsidies and world trade - Surplus and starvation - Climate change and world food problems - The impact of China on world markets - Future constraints and possibilities for food production - Biotechnology and Frankenfoods.

Assignment: Brown, Chapt. 8, 9.

March 4: Mid-term Examination.

March 9: Human beings and natural systems - Environmental Services - The atmosphere and hydrosphere – The nature of common property resources – Tragedies of the global commons – Managing the oceanic commons – Protecting the atmospheric commons - Saving the ozone layer - The Montreal Protocol.

Assignment: Pirages and DeGeest, Chapt. 3; Brown, Chapt. 5.

March 11: The challenges of global warming - Rising sea level - Winners and losers - Prospects for curbs on production of carbon dioxide - The Kyoto Protocol - The United States and global warming – The “Chindia” challenge.

Assignment: Brown, Chapt. 4, 10.

March 16: Globalization and bioinsecurity - The value of biodiversity – CITES and the protection of endangered species – Globalization and bioinvasion.

March 18: Dealing with microinsecurity – The persisting threat of infectious diseases - New and re-emerging diseases – The coevolution of Homo sapiens and pathogens - Disease and globalization – The lingering threat of a global pandemic.

Assignment: Pirages and DeGeest, Chapt. 6.

March 23: International efforts to manage infectious disease – early warning for potential outbreaks and pandemics - The need for greater transparency.

Assignment: Brown, Chapt. 7.

March 25: Technology and ecological security – Defining science, technology and engineering – Seven impacts of technology on global relations - Technology and new forms of conflict - Weapons of mass destruction - Technology and terrorism – The impact of technological innovation on the four dimensions of ecological security.

Assignment: Pirages and DeGeest, Chapt. 7.

March 30: Technology and the Industrial Revolution – The emergence of a world system – Dominance and dependence - Colonial legacies - The plight of the Third and Fourth Worlds - Africa=s dilemmas - Problems of capital accumulation - Terms of trade - The persisting economic divide - A post-industrial revolution?

Assignment: Pirages and DeGeest, Chapt. 8.

April 1: Growing interdependence and inequality – The growth of terrorism - Core-periphery issues - The West vs. the rest? - A clash of civilizations?

Assignment: Lechner and Boli, Part I.

April 13: Towards ecologically secure development - The Brundtland Commission report - Future sustainable development - The Chindia dilemma - New perspectives on growth and development - Sustainable development as a process - Leapfrogging development.

Assignment: Lechner and Boli, Part IX.

April 15: Technology and the global economy – Governance challenges in a global economy - From military conflict to economic competition - Emerging global markets - The seamy side of globalization.

Assignment: Lechner and Boli, Part IV.

April 20: Global technopolitics - Issues of increased trade and competition among industrial countries - The emerging global market place - Global corporations - The U.S. in future global competition.

April 22: Economic growth or environmental integrity? - The impact of free trade on the global environment - Harmonizing environmental and cultural standards - The impact of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

April 27: Telecommunications and cultural globalization - A clash of cultures - The changing nature of intellectual property - Beyond books and compact disks - North-South differences on patents and copyrights - Should nature be patented? - Money, power, and intellectual property.

Assignment: Lechner and Boli, Parts VII., VIII..

April 29: Globalization and sovereignty - The end of the nation state? - New forms of global governance - Managing the impacts of deeper globalization - A new planetary bargain.

Assignment: Pirages and DeGeest, Chapt. 9; Brown, Chapt. 12, 13.