**SIS-660-002 ENVIRONMENT AND POLITICS**

**(Fall 2021)**

Meeting Dates F2021 –

Wednesdays 2:30 to 5:20

Sept.: 1,8,15(Yom Kippur), 22, 29;

Oct.: 6, 13, 20, 27;

Nov.: 3,10,17, [off on 24th for Thanksgiving];

Dec.: 1,8

Class Location: International Service Building 233

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Prof. Jesse Ribot

[jesse.ribot@gmail.com](mailto:jesse.ribot@gmail.com)

Office hours: virtual, by appointment.

Faculty Bio: Ribot is a professor of environmental politics with a focus on climate and vulnerability. He taught in the Department of Geography at University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign from 2008 to 2018. Before 2008, he was a senior associate of the World Resources Institute, and taught in the Urban Studies and Planning department at MIT. He is an Africanist studying local democracy, resource access and social vulnerability.

# Course Description

This course is the gateway for the MA in Global Environmental Policy and the dual degree in Natural Resources/Sustainable Development. It is open to other students who have a shared interest in finding effective responses to the world’s acute environmental challenges. Global environmental changes, risks and hazards are among the most profound challenges facing humanity. They currently undermine the quality of life for many and threaten, in the extreme, to compromise the fundamental, organic infrastructure that supports all life on earth. This course introduces students to the sociopolitical dynamics of global environmental affairs and their links to human development and wellbeing. It explores the causes of environmental harm and avenues of effective response. We pay particular attention to the role that power plays in both the emergence of environmental problems and in their potential solutions.

It is assumed that you already have a basic grasp of the causes and consequences of such environmental problems as climate change, ozone depletion, biodiversity loss, invasive species, air and water pollution, hazardous waste, deforestation, desertification and so on. This class aims to provide you with familiarity with theories and schools of thought in the field and help you develop skills in research, writing, and public presentation that you will be able to draw upon throughout your Masters career and into the future. By completing this course you should be able to:

* Analyze some roles of the state system, global political economy, and civil society in exacerbating and/or mitigating environmental problems;
* Articulate the difference in perspectives of developed and less-developed countries and understand tensions between conservation and development;
* Understand the various interpretations of the causes of crisis, vulnerability and environmental degradation and take your own position on these;
* Locate the information you need, formulate and structure a research project, and present your arguments in a persuasive and supported manner.

# Table of Contents

[Course Description ii](#_Toc81068800)

[Table of Contents iii](#_Toc81068801)

[Course Assignments 1](#_Toc81068802)

[Course Assignment Summary 1](#_Toc81068803)

[Obtaining Weekly Assigned Readings 2](#_Toc81068804)

[Grading 2](#_Toc81068805)

[Reading Schedule & Assignments 3](#_Toc81068806)

[Week 1 (9/1): What’s the Problem? 3](#_Toc81068807)

[Week 2 (9/8): Overpopulated Earth? 4](#_Toc81068808)

[Assignment – Pose a research question in 100 words – Due Sundown next Monday (9/6) 4](#_Toc81068809)

[Land Politics Section 5](#_Toc81068810)

[Week 3 (9/15): Food Systems 5](#_Toc81068811)

[Week 4 (9/22): Land, the Politics of Access of Rights 6](#_Toc81068812)

[Assignment: Term Paper Abstract due today (9/22) 7](#_Toc81068813)

[Climate Change Section 7](#_Toc81068814)

[Week 5 (9/29): Hazards and Vulnerabilities 7](#_Toc81068815)

[Week 6 (10/6): US Climate Experience – the Dust Bowl & Katrina 8](#_Toc81068816)

[Assignment: Schedule for Term Paper Presentations/Discussants 8](#_Toc81068817)

[Presentation Schedule Table 8](#_Toc81068818)

[Week 7 (10/13): Climate International – Migration 9](#_Toc81068819)

[Week 8 (10/20): Covid19, Like Climate Change, An Environmental Problem with Social Cause 10](#_Toc81068820)

[Assignment 3: Final Presentations of Term paper 11](#_Toc81068821)

[Global Politics Section 11](#_Toc81068822)

[Week 9 (10/27): International environmental law 11](#_Toc81068823)

[Assignment: Letter to Editor is due to a publisher by 31 October 12](#_Toc81068824)

[Assignment: Final Presentations of Term paper 12](#_Toc81068825)

[Week 10 (11/3): Environmental Authoritarianism 12](#_Toc81068826)

[Assignment: Final Presentations of Term paper 12](#_Toc81068827)

[Environmental Justice Section 12](#_Toc81068828)

[Week 11 (11/10): On Responsibility and Response: Cause and Blame in the Anthropocene? 12](#_Toc81068829)

[Assignment: Final Presentations of Term paper 13](#_Toc81068830)

[Week 12 (11/17): Environmental Racism 13](#_Toc81068831)

[Solutions Section 14](#_Toc81068832)

[Week 13 (12/1): Resilience & Adaptation & Mitigation 14](#_Toc81068833)

[Assignment: Final Presentations of Term paper 15](#_Toc81068834)

[Week 14 (12/8): Roles of Civil Society 15](#_Toc81068835)

[Assignment (12/1): Final Presentations of Term paper 15](#_Toc81068836)

[Assignment (12/8): Final Research Proposal Due this coming Monday by Noon 15](#_Toc81068837)

[Academic Integrity Code 16](#_Toc81068838)

[Diversity and Inclusion 17](#_Toc81068839)

[Student Conduct Code 17](#_Toc81068840)

[Computing and Copyright Policy 17](#_Toc81068841)

[Other Policies Additional Student Policies 18](#_Toc81068842)

[Help Desk 18](#_Toc81068843)

[Disability Accommodations 18](#_Toc81068844)

[Academic Support and Learning Resources 18](#_Toc81068845)

[Library Resources 19](#_Toc81068846)

[Annex A: Course Assignments 20](#_Toc81068847)

[Class Assignment Format and Submission Procedures 20](#_Toc81068848)

[Written Questions on Weekly Readings 20](#_Toc81068849)

[Term Paper Writing Project 21](#_Toc81068850)

[Term Paper Abstract 21](#_Toc81068851)

[In-Class Presentation of your Term-Paper Project 21](#_Toc81068852)

[A Policy Research Proposal Term Paper 22](#_Toc81068853)

[Some literature on proposal writing 25](#_Toc81068854)

[Some additional methods books/articles that may be of help 26](#_Toc81068855)

# Course Assignments

All assignments must be submitted in Word document format with 12pt font and the title of the file you submit MUST begin with your name – such as *Ribot Weekly reading questions.doc* or .docx or any Word format. It must be Word as I can write comments back to you and edit (most relevant for longer writing assignments). Your name is essential as I can then sort by filename and find all of what you have done.

Annex A has more details on format and content of assignments. Please read Annex A thoroughly.

## Course Assignment Summary

* **Read Annex A** thoroughly and come to the 1st class with questions about the assignments.
* **Weekly readings** – you must read the assigned readings.
* **Individual ‘office’-hour meetings** – Please meet me on zoom individually at least one time during the semester. The purpose of our meeting is for me to get to know you and your thinking. We can also discuss your research proposal ideas. You can set up an appointment by e-mailing me some proposed times. Best if they are early afternoon. Also best to meet at least 4 weeks before the end of the semester – earlier is better!
* **Weekly written questions on readings** – Each week, NO LATER than 24 hours before class (and ideally several days before class), you should email to me a set of 3 to 5 discussion questions provoked by the week’s readings. Limit them to 150 words *maximum –* I will stop reading at the 150th word. The questions will be used to stimulate the week’s discussions. You can also include any quotes from the reading that surprised you. You are allowed to miss four comments without penalty – although, this does not mean you are exempt from reading on those four weeks! Please submit to me by e-mail: [Ribot@American.edu](mailto:Ribot@American.edu) or [jesse.ribot@gmail.com](mailto:jesse.ribot@gmail.com).
* **Term Paper** – a research proposal (1500-word maximum: this includes the abstract but does not include your bibliography, budget, or work plan). Abstract due Week 4. The final project is due by noon on the Monday following our final class of the semester. You can also write a proposal for project funding, as for a Boren or Fulbright. Then you can follow the length requirements for that submission.
* **Final Presentation of Term paper –** You will present your findings during last 6 weeks of the semester. This can be just oral or using an image-focused PowerPoint (i.e., not a whole lot of text). The presentation will be relatively short (10 minutes) and should offer highlights of your work, not a summary of it. For each presenter there will also be a discussion leader/discussant assigned. The discussant’s role is to ask the first question, make the first comment, and then to lead discussion. Discussion will be 10 minutes.
* **Letter to the Editor –** You are also required to send a **“Letter to the Editor”** to a major newspaper. Please email your letter to me before you submit it so I can make suggestions and improve your chances of being published. You must, once you have my feedback, then submit it to the paper! This must be submitted to a newspaper by October 31. It should be *very short*, *no more than four or five sentences*, the purpose is to encourage you to follow the news and participate in public discussion. You must follow the submission requirements of your chosen newspaper – concerning length restrictions.

## Obtaining Weekly Assigned Readings

All required readings are available on Canvas, or their URL is in this Syllabus. If they are not available or you cannot access them on the Canvas system, you are responsible to let me know (e-mail me), so I can fix the problem or send you a copy. Most readings should also be accessible through the library system, even if you cannot get them on Canvas. Note that I may change the readings as the semester progresses – as we discover new and interesting readings to include, and as our focus develops, we may drop some readings. Changes in the readings will be announced in class.

## Grading

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Assignment** | **% of Grade** | **N.B.** |
| Weekly questions on readings | 20% (2% each) | You can miss 4 without penalty – extra credit for handing in all of them |
| Term Paper | 40% | Term Paper Abstract is included in this grade |
| Letter to the editor | 15% | Half for first draft and half for final draft |
| Term-paper Presentation | 5% |  |
| Participation in class | 20% | Includes discussant roles |

Fifty percent of the grade in each assignment is based on the instructor’s judgment of students’ progress from where each of you start at the beginning of the semester and the effort you put into learning. The grades will then be based on resulting assignment scores. The course is not graded on a curve; thus, it is not possible to give a grading chart.

# Reading Schedule & Assignments

## Week 1 (9/1): What’s the Problem?

* Who are you? Why are you here?
* Who am I?
* What is a problem?
* What is an environmental problem?
* When does a problem become social?
* When does a problem become a political-economic problem?
* The Syllabus
  + Classes
  + Assignments
  + Readings may Change

Readings:

Please think about how Hardin and Seuss would say to each other about the problem of environmental decline. What would each identify as the cause? They were contemporaries. Hardin was a neo-Malthusian. Many who follow are – Donna Meadows, Dennis Meadows, Paul Ehrlich…. What might we call Dr. Seuss? Of course, there are many people theorizing our human relation with nature in big ways. Julian Simon, a businessman/economist, thought we would innovate our way out of all problems – so there is no problem. Polanyi thought capitalism could not moderate the destruction of nature – as nature is a fictive commodity. Ester Boserup who theorized that population pressure is the mother of invention and innovation.

Required Reading: 5+5+29+43 = 82

* Seuss, Dr. 1971. *The Lorax*. New York: Random House*.* Pp. ~5
* Hardin, Garrett. 1968. “Tragedy of the Commons,” *Science* 162(3859): 1243-1248, Pp. 5  
  DOI: 10.1126/science.162.3859.1243 (at [www.sciencemag.org/content/162/3859/1243.full](http://www.sciencemag.org/content/162/3859/1243.full))
* Pope Francis. 2015. “What is Happening to Our Common Home,” Ch. 1, pp. 15-44 in *Laudito Si’:* *On Care for Our Common Home.* Pp. 29 <https://www.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si_en.pdf>
* Patel, Raj and Jason W. Moore. 2017. “Introduction,” pp. 1-43, *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things: A Guide to Capitalism, Nature and the Future of the Planet. Berkeley: University of California Press*. Pp. 43

Recommended Film: Cain Toads – an Unnatural History

## Week 2 (9/8): Overpopulated Earth?

Today we explore why population growth is not the problem – merely by looking at other factors that are at play. What is the problem then?

Required Readings on Getting Past Malthus: 3+5+8+13+19 = 48 🡪 48+18 = 66

* Ahmed, Nafeez. 2021. “Collapse This Century. New Research Shows We’re on Schedule.” *Motherboard Tech Services*. <https://www.vice.com/en/article/z3xw3x/new-research-vindicates-1972-mit-prediction-that-society-will-collapse-soon?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=news_tab&utm_content=algorithm>. Pp.~5
* Read about Ester Boserup on Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ester_Boserup#References>. Pp ~3.
* Buck, Susan. 2010. “No Tragedy of the Commons,” pp. 46-54 in Ken Conca and Geoffrey Dabelko (eds.) *Green Planet Blues* (4th ed.) Westview Press, Pp. 8.
* Tiffen, Mary and Michael Mortimore. 1994. “Malthus controverted: The role of capital and technology in growth and environmental recovery in Kenya”. *World Development* 22 (7):997-1010. Pp. 13
* Rudel, Thomas K. 1998. “Is There a Forest Transition? Deforestation, Reforestation, and Development,” *Rural Sociology* 63(4): 533-552. Pp. 19.

Required Readings on Research: 10+8 = 18

* Lund, Christian. 2014. “Of what is this a case? Analytical movements in qualitative social science research.” *Human Organization*, 73(3): 224-34. Pp. 10
* [Przeworski, Adam and Frank Salomon. 1995. The Art of Writing Proposals](https://www.fordham.edu/download/downloads/id/3367/Social_Science_Research_Council__SSRC____On_the_Art_of_Writing_Proposals.pdf). <https://www.fordham.edu/download/downloads/id/3367/Social_Science_Research_Council__SSRC____On_the_Art_of_Writing_Proposals.pdf>. Pp. 8

Recommended Readings:

* Murton, J. 1999. “Population growth and poverty in Machakos District, Kenya,” *Geographical Journal* 165 (1):37-46. Pp. 9

### Assignment – Pose a research question in 100 words – Due Sundown next Monday (9/6)

What is a problem and what is a research question – define an environmental problem (why is it a problem and for whom), define a research question (what do we need to know about this problem and why), pose a hypothesis (what do you suspect we can learn by studying the problem). All in 100 words.

* + Good research question has a practical and theoretical interest. It is about something we want to understand in order to do something. It is also about understanding, in a theoretical (generalizable) sense, what the relation is between the independent and dependent variables.
  + A good research question is about ‘why’ not about ‘how’ – how to solve something is NOT a research question. How comes only after research tells us why.
  + Hypothesis can also have practical and theoretical elements. It can pose what you will find about the practical problem, but can pose a mechanism at work that is more general – the mechanisms that links independent and dependent variables.

# Land Politics Section

## Week 3 (9/15 – Meeting Online): Food Systems

Required Readings: 8+6+10+8+25+26 = 90

* Sen, Amartya. 1980. “Famines,” *World Development* 8(9): 613–621. Pp. 8
* Edkins, Jenny, “Mass Starvations and the Limits of Famine Theorizing,” (2002) *IDS Bulletin* 33(4) pp. 12-18. Pp. 6
* Patel, Raj. 2011. “Can the World Feed 10 Billion People?” *Foreign Policy* Pp. ~10[check]
* Lappé, Frances Moore, Jennifer Clapp, Molly Anderson, Robin Broad, Ellen Messer, Thomas Pogge, and Timothy Wise. 2013. “How We Count Hunger Matters.” *Ethics & International Affairs* 27(3):251-259. Pp. 8.
* Clapp, Jennifer & William G. Moseley. 2020. “This food crisis is different: COVID-19 and the fragility of the neoliberal food security order,” *Journal of Peasant Studies* 47(7):1393-1418). Pp. 25 https://kujenga-amani.ssrc.org/2020/05/14/sub-saharan-africa-will-most-likely-ride-out-the-covid-19-storm/
* Edelman, Marc. 2020. “From ‘populist movement’ to authoritarian era: Challenges, dangers, possibilities,” *Journal of Peasant Studies* 47(7):1418-1444). Pp. 26

Recommended Readings:

* Drèze, Jean and Amartya Sen. 1989. “Hunger and Public Action.” *Oxford: Clarendon*.
  + Ch. 1: Introduction. Pp. 3-19. PP. 16
  + Ch. 2: Entitlements and Deprivation. Pp. 20-34. PP. 16
  + Ch. 4: Society, Class and Gender. Pp. 46-61. PP. 15
* Manning, Richard. 2004. “The Oil We Eat: Following the Food Chain Back to Iraq,” *Harper’s Magazine*. Available online at: <https://www.resilience.org/stories/2004-05-23/oil-we-eat-following-food-chain-back-iraq/>. Pp. ~8
* Paarlberg, Robert. “Attention Whole Foods Shoppers,” [May/June 2010] *Foreign Policy*, available at: [www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/04/26/attention\_whole\_foods\_shoppers](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/04/26/attention_whole_foods_shoppers). Pp. ~8

## Week 4 (9/22): Land, the Politics of Access Rights

Land is an important natural resource. It is a resource over which people struggle. In this class, we will explore who has access to land and how that access is governed. This access (challenges and opportunities) is shaped by governments, laws, authority systems, and social movements. (The reading materials will be shared directly with the students)

Doctoral Student Ali Kaba will teach this class.

Required Readings: 28 + 14 + 10 + 10 + 3 + 5 + 4 = 74

* Ribot, Jesse and Nancy Lee Peluso. 2003. A theory of access: Putting property and tenure in place. Rural Sociology. Vol. 68, p. 153-181. Pp. 28
* Borras, S.M. 2016. “Land politics, agrarian movements and scholar-activism. Inaugural Lecture, 14 April 2016” International Institute of Social Studies (ISS). P. 1 – 15. Pp.14 https://www.tni.org/files/publication-downloads/borras\_inaugural\_lecture\_14\_april\_2016\_final\_formatted\_pdf\_for\_printing.pdf.
* Shipton, Parker and Mitzi Goheen. 1992. Introduction: understanding African landholding: power, wealth, and meaning*.  Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 62 (3), 307-325. <https://www-jstor-org.proxyau.wrlc.org/stable/pdf/1159746.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Afdf3e8aeabc9a967c6e44350acd07a6e>. P. 307 – 317 pp. 10.
* Lund, Christian and Mattias Borg Rasmussen. 2018. “Reconfiguring Frontier Spaces: The territorialization of resource control.” *World Development*, Volume 101, Pages 388-399. Pp. 10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.01.018. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X17300347>
* Daley, Beth. 2019. “What landmark Kwazulu-Natal court ruling means for land reform in South Africa.” *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/what-landmark-kwazulu-natal-court-ruling-means-for-land-reform-in-south-africa-162969>. Pp. 3
* Kaba, Ali 2021 “Grounds for Land Grabbing: An Analysis of Challenges and Opportunities in Jigawa, Nigeria” [forthcoming] Journal of Peasant Studies. Pp. 21
* Kaba, Ali. 2021. “Violated? Liberia's Land Rights Law and the Worsening Dynamics of Land Grabs” *Land Portal.* Pp. 4. <https://landportal.org/blog-post/2021/07/violated-liberias-land-rights-law-and-worsening-dynamics-land-grabs>

Recommended Reading:

* Kaba, Ali. 2015. “Complexities of Community Self-Identification in Liberia.” *NAMATI*. Pp. 13. <https://namati.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Lesson-from-Field-SDI-Community-Definition-LR-final.pdf>
* Cousins, Ben. 2019. Land reform: expropriation without compensation is not the central issue Interview with Ben Cousins | Amandla Issue 61/62 | https://aidc.org.za/land-reform-expropriation-without-compensation-is-not-the-central-issue/ p. 5

### Assignment: Term Paper Abstract due today (9/22)

# Climate Change Section

## Week 5 (9/29): Hazards and Vulnerabilities

What do these terms mean: mitigation, coping, adaptation, resilience, vulnerability, precarity?

Required Readings: 2+34+3+15+2 + 4 = 60

* O’Keefe, Phil, Ken Westgate and Ben Wisner. 1976. “Taking the naturalness out of natural disasters”. *Nature*,260, 566-567. Pp. 2
* Wisner, B., Piers M. Blaikie and Terry Cannon. 2004. “At risk: Natural hazards, people's vulnerability and disasters”. *2nd Edition. London: Routledge*. Pp. 34
* Ribot, Jesse. 1995. “The Causal Structure of Vulnerability: Its Application to Climate Impact Analysis.” *GeoJournal*, Vol. 35, No. 2, pp. 119-122. Pp. 3
* O’Brien, Karen, S. Eriksen, L.P. Nygaard and A. Schjolden. 2007. “Why different interpretations of vulnerability matter in climate change discourses”. *Climate Policy,* Vol. 7, 73-88. Pp. 15
* Bourdieu, Pierre. 1997. « La précarité est aujourd’hui partout : Intervention lors des Rencontres européennes contre la précarité. » *Grenoble.* 12‑13 décembre 1997. *Contre-feux,* Ed. Liber Raisons d’agir,Grenoble. See: [http ://natlex.ilo.ch/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\_dialogue/---actrav/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\_161352.pdf](http://natlex.ilo.ch/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---actrav/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_161352.pdf). Pp. 2 [If you do not read French, someone who does will explain the piece in class.]
  + Read this too with an eye to how the idea of precarity helps us understand the causes of vulnerability as structural.
* Ribot, Jesse. 2011. “Vulnerability before Adaptation: Toward Transformative Climate Action’ From Affirmative to Transformative Climate Action” *Global Environmental Change*, Vol. 21, No. 4. Pp. 4

Recommended Readings:

* Watts, Michael J. and Hans Bohle. 1993. “The space of vulnerability: The causal structure of hunger and famine”. *Progress in Human Geography*, 17(1), 43-68. Pp. 26
* Leichenko, Robin M. and Karen L. O'Brien, Karen. 2019. *Climate and Society: Transforming the Future*. Cambridge: Polity.
* Wilkinson, Iain. 2010. *Vulnerability in everyday life*. London: Routledge.
  + Sociology in a World of Risk, pp. 1-13. Pp. 13
  + The History of Risk, Pp. 14-35. Pp. 21
  + Risk in Social Theory, Pp. 36-58. Pp. 22

## Week 6 (10/6): US Climate Experience – the Dust Bowl & Katrina

What is the cause of crisis? How do we explain the losses and damages associated with these events? What made it possible for climate variations to trigger disasters?

Required Readings: 39+29+4+4 + 14+ = 90-

* Steinbeck, John. 1939. *The Grapes of Wrath*. New York: Penguin Books. Chapters 1-5. Pp. 39.
* Cronon, William. 1992. “A place for stories: Nature, history, and narrative.” *The Journal of American History,* 1347-1376. Pp. 29
* Cook, Benjamin I., Ron L. Miller, and Richard Seager. 2009. “Amplification of the North American ‘Dust Bowl’ drought through human-induced land degradation,” *PNAS* vol. 106 no. 13 4997–5001. Pp. 4
* Smith, Neil. 2006. “There is no such thing as a natural disaster,” on SSRC’s website on *Understanding Katrina*: http://understandingkatrina.ssrc.org/Smith/. [or [https://items.ssrc.org/understanding-katrina/theres-no-such-thing-as-a-natural-disaster/](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/items.ssrc.org/understanding-katrina/theres-no-such-thing-as-a-natural-disaster/__;!!IaT_gp1N!hc1vvxzwXXhNwmX-beX6h5qjsnWTeKcjxepHgWae5sT6gGt8R1NbNjmqAcX2yrTX$)]Pp. 4
* Bullard, Robert D. and Beverly Wright. 2009. “*Race, Place and Environmental Justice After Hurricane Katrina: Struggles to Reclaim, Rebuild, and Revitalize New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.”* Boulder: Westview Press. Introduction, Pp. 1-14. Pp. 14

Recommended Readings:

* Abatzogloua, John T., and A. Park Williams. 2016. “Impact of anthropogenic climate change on wildfire across western US forests,” *PNAS* 113(42):11770–11775. Pp. 5
* Video: Trouble the Water (2008) – 90-minute academy award‐nominated documentary film on Katrina (<http://www.troublethewaterfilm.com/>). <https://tubitv.com/movies/462757/trouble-the-water?utm_source=google-feed&tracking=google-feed>.
* Naomi Klein Film: [This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate](https://www.amazon.com/This-Changes-Everything-Capitalism-Climate/dp/1451697392). [YouTube video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krYHHInkf2M) of a one-hour lecture by Klein on her book with that title – if you are interested. The link to the film is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xb4wp4QK2PU>.
* Newkirk II, Vann R. 2020. “The story of an unnatural disaster,” *The Atlantic*  <https://www.theatlantic.com/podcasts/floodlines/>.

### Assignment: Schedule for Term Paper Presentations/Discussants

### [Presentation Schedule Table](#_Presentation_Schedule_Table)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Wk** | **Presenter/Discussant** | | **Presenter/Discussant** | | **Presenter/Discussant** | | **Presenter/Discussant** | |
| 8 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 13 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 13 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

We need 4 or 5 presentations per day.

## Week 7 (10/13): Climate International – Migration

Migration is a big climate issue – as people fear foreigners coming across their borders. It makes for a great lever to raise the profile of climate change in the North.

Required Readings: 30+5+25+4 = 64

* Ribot, Jesse, Papa Faye and Matthew Turner. 2020. “Climate of Anxiety in the Sahel: Emigration in a Xenophobic Anthropocene”, *Public Culture* Vol. 32, No. 1. Pp. 45-75. Pp. 30
* de Sherbinin, Alex. 2020. “Impacts of Climate Change as Drivers of Migration” *Migration Information Source* October 23 Issue*.* Pp. ~5<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/print/16882#.X-FpzNhKiUk>
* Fabien et al. Draft. Columbia University Paper on Causality. Pp. 25 [I will distribute]
* Horton, Radley M., Alex de Sherbinin, David Wrathall3, Michael Oppenheimer. 2021. “Assessing human habitability and migration: Integrate global top-down and local bottom-up analyses,” *Science* 372 (6548):1279-1283. Pp. 4

Recommended Readings:

* Blocher, Julia M. and Emmanuel O. Kileli. 2020. “In Relatively Peaceful  
  Tanzania, Climate Change and Migration Can Spur Conflict” *Migration Information Source* October 23 Issue*.* <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/print/16905#.X-FpL9hKiUk>  
  <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/migration-information-source/special-issue-climate-change-and-migration>
* Panda, Architesh. 2020. Climate Change, Displacement, and Managed  
  Retreat in Coastal India” *Migration Information Source* October 23 Issue*.* <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/print/16759#.X-Fp8dhKiUk>

## Week 8 (10/20): Covid19, Like Climate Change, An Environmental Problem with Social Cause

Required Readings: 9+7+3+11+12 = 42

* Dzingirai, Vupenyu, Lindiwe Mangwanya, Melissa Leach, Annie Wilkinson, Sally Bukachi, 2017 “Structural drivers of vulnerability to zoonotic diseases in Africa,” *Philosophical Transactions B* 372: 20160169*.* Pp. 9 See: https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/pdf/10.1098/rstb.2016.0169.
* *B*enjamin William Cashore and Steven Bernstein. 2020. ”reshape [modern] desires’. “Why Experts Disagree on How to Manage COVID-19: Four Problem Conceptions, Not One,” *Global Policy Journal*. Pp. 7
* Williams, [Vanessa.](https://www.washingtonpost.com/people/vanessa-williams/) 2020. A poll finds African Americans and Latinos are more worried about the coronavirus; a public health expert explains why <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/03/27/poll-finds-african-americans-latinos-more-worried-about-covid-19-doctor-explains-why/?utm_campaign=wp_post_most&utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&wpisrc=nl_most>. Pp. ~3
* Auerbach, Adam M. and Tariq Thachil. 2021. “How does Covid-19 affect urban slums? Evidence from settlement leaders in India,” *World Development*. Vol. 140, No. XXX, Pp. x-x. Pp. 11 See: <https://libraryh3lp.com/file/d0jpa9cp9tn14f@web.libraryh3lp.com/1610557623.pdf?t=2jOZglXlRBeAddIcBQwSIZ>.
* Gupta, Divya, Harry Fischer, Suchita Shrestha, Syed Shoaib Ali, Ashwini Chhatre, Kamal Devkota, Dil Khatri, Pushpendra Rana.2021*. “*Dark and bright spots in the shadow of the pandemic: Rural livelihoods, social vulnerability, and local governance in India and Nepal,” *World Development*141: 105370. Pp. 12

Recommended Readings:

* Das, Veena. 2020. “Facing Covid-19: My Land of Neither Hope nor Despair.” In “Covid-19 and Student Focused Concerns: Threats and Possibilities,” Veena Das and Naveeda Khan, eds., *American Ethnologist website*, May 1 2020, [<https://americanethnologist.org/features/collections/covid-19-and-student-focused-concerns-threats-and-possibilities/facing-covid-19-my-land-of-neither-hope-nor-despair>]
* Butler, Judith. 2020. “Mourning Is a Political Act Amid the Pandemic and Its Disparities,” Truthout Interview by [George Yancy](https://truthout.org/authors/george-yancy/), April 30, 2020. Pp. 9 <https://truthout.org/articles/judith-butler-mourning-is-a-political-act-amid-the-pandemic-and-its-disparities/>

### Assignment 3: Final Presentations of Term paper

# Global Politics Section

## Week 9 (10/27): International environmental law

SIS Professor Ken Conca will teach this class. He will be speaking about treaty regimes, soft-law pathways, and the law of human rights. You will find that Bodansky gives an optimistic view of international environmental law as developmental, progressive, innovative, etc., which Professor Conca will ask you to take a critical look at. IISD 2019 gives a sense of the state of play in several ongoing treaty regimes. IISD 2021 will let us take a deep dive into the “chemicals” treaties on waste, POPs, and so on. While reading, here are a few questions to keep in mind: 1) If Bodansky offers an accurate summation of the past 3 decades of international law, how should we characterize the place where we have arrived? Is the glass half full, half empty, overflowing, shattered and lying on the floor, …? 2) IISD 2019 provides a snapshot of key moments, developments, and controversies in a single year of international environmental diplomacy. Stepping back from the issue-specific discussion, what seem to be the four or five cross-cutting challenges, barriers, etc. that dominate the politics seen here? 3) Based on all three readings: What are the mechanisms by which international environmental law seems to shape behavior? Whose behavior, shaped how, and to what extent?

Required Readings: 22+31+11 = 64

* Bodansky, Daniel. 2020. “Top Ten Developments in International Environmental Law: 1990-2020.” *Yearbook of International Environmental Law*. Oxford University Press. Pp. 22
* International Institute for Sustainable Development. 2019. “The State of Global Environmental Governance 2019*,”* *IISD*. Pp. 31
* International Institute for Sustainable Development. 2021. “Summary of the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions: 26-30 July 2021.” *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* vol. 15 no. 275, August 2, 2021. Pp. 11

Recommended Readings:

* Issues of particular interest to students of global environmental politics can be found on <http://earthweb.info/index.html> under the top menu item on “IEL+GEP.” More generally, a few particular pages that might be of interest include:

• the [Treaties, conventions & MEAs](https://urldefense.com/v3/__http:/earthweb.info/ielgep/treaties.html__;!!IaT_gp1N!mES-Og8U12ar4ICI718R3o61V-bF04Y3xElEVQln3J3NJebD8czmadDfJ7mYB94l$) page,

• the [News & blogs](https://urldefense.com/v3/__http:/earthweb.info/reference/news.html__;!!IaT_gp1N!mES-Og8U12ar4ICI718R3o61V-bF04Y3xElEVQln3J3NJebD8czmadDfJ983kOTx$) page, which now contains links to more than 100 environmental news sources,

• the [Periodicals](https://urldefense.com/v3/__http:/earthweb.info/reference/periodicals.html__;!!IaT_gp1N!mES-Og8U12ar4ICI718R3o61V-bF04Y3xElEVQln3J3NJebD8czmadDfJ1HUB6LI$) page,

• the [Global environmental assessments](https://urldefense.com/v3/__http:/earthweb.info/reference/assessments.html__;!!IaT_gp1N!mES-Og8U12ar4ICI718R3o61V-bF04Y3xElEVQln3J3NJebD8czmadDfJzDRntGn$) page,

• the [NGOs & CSOs](https://urldefense.com/v3/__http:/earthweb.info/actors/ngos.html__;!!IaT_gp1N!mES-Og8U12ar4ICI718R3o61V-bF04Y3xElEVQln3J3NJebD8czmadDfJ7QtXtg0$) page,

• the [College & university departments, degree programs, campus groups & institutions](https://urldefense.com/v3/__http:/earthweb.info/actors/programs-degrees.html__;!!IaT_gp1N!mES-Og8U12ar4ICI718R3o61V-bF04Y3xElEVQln3J3NJebD8czmadDfJzBBvUNL$) page,

• the [Spillover, zoonotic diseases (zoonoses), One Health & Covid-19](https://urldefense.com/v3/__http:/earthweb.info/keyissues/gph-spillover.html__;!!IaT_gp1N!mES-Og8U12ar4ICI718R3o61V-bF04Y3xElEVQln3J3NJebD8czmadDfJ-Axosyn$) page,

• the [Environmental justice (EJ), environmental racism & JEDI](https://urldefense.com/v3/__http:/earthweb.info/environmental/ej-jedi.html__;!!IaT_gp1N!mES-Og8U12ar4ICI718R3o61V-bF04Y3xElEVQln3J3NJebD8czmadDfJ87_vzLj$" \t "_blank) page

• the [Climate change hub](https://urldefense.com/v3/__http:/earthweb.info/climate/hub.html__;!!IaT_gp1N!mES-Og8U12ar4ICI718R3o61V-bF04Y3xElEVQln3J3NJebD8czmadDfJ2xootye$) page,

### Assignment: Letter to Editor is due to a publisher by 31 October

### Assignment: Final Presentations of Term paper

## Week 10 (11/3): Environmental Authoritarianism

SIS Professor Judith Shapiro will teach this class. Please obtain and read her book for this class.

Required Readings: 240

* Li, Yifei and Judith Shapiro. 2020. *China Goes Green: Coercive Environmentalism for a Troubled Planet.* Cambridge: Polity Press. Pp. 240.

### Assignment: Final Presentations of Term paper

# Environmental Justice Section

## [Week 11 (11/10): On Responsibility and Response: Cause and Blame in the Anthropocene?](#_Week_12:_On)

Nobody has the right to obey.

* + - * + Hannah Arendt

We want to understand causes in order to identify solutions. Indicating causality, however, is contentious because it can lead to responsibility, blame, and liability. While those indicated as responsible may not like it, *responsibility is key, to response* – it identifies who should act and provides incentive (as in potential punishment). This section is designed to help us think through the relation between cause and response. This relationship is at the core of responsibility – and thus, it is contentious and often then pushed out of conversations. Nobody likes the fingers pointed at them. So, nobody wants causal analyses that make them responsible or liable. This means that causes are often hidden in ways that make solutions difficult. Here we will discuss this contentious arena in which the social, via the denial of causality, becomes another part of the cause of climate-related crises.

Required Reading on Responsibility [[1]](#endnote-1)

Page Count: 1+17+15+19+10 = 62

Taddei, R. 2008*. “*Blame: The hidden (and difficult) side of the climate change debate.” *Anthropology News*, pp. 45-6. Pp. 1

Rudiak-Gould, P. 2015. “The social life of blame in the Anthropocene,” *Environment and Society: Advances in Research*,6, 48-65. Pp. 17

Wapner, Paul. 2010. "Sacrifice in an Age of Comfort," in Michael Maniates and John Meyer, eds., The Politics of Sacrifice, Cambridge: MIT Press 2010. ~15

* Jamieson, Dale. 2015. “Responsibility and Climate Change,” *Global Justice: Theory Practice Rhetoric* 8(2): 23-42. Pp. 19
* Kashwan, Prakash and Jesse Ribot. 2021. “Violent Silence: Erasing History and Justice in Global Climate Negotiations & Action,” *Current History*. Forthcoming. Pp. ~10 [I will distribute]

### Assignment: Final Presentations of Term paper

## Week 12 (11/17): Environmental Racism

Is environmentalism racist? What makes for racism of and in environmentalism?

Required Readings: 5+18+10+13+8+2+5 = 61

* Kashwan, Prakash. 2020. “American environmentalism’s racist roots have shaped global thinking about conservation,” *The Conversation September 2, 2020*. Pp. ~5 <https://theconversation.com/american-environmentalisms-racist-roots-have-shaped-global-thinking-about-conservation-143783>.
* Bullard, Robert D. and Beverly Wright. 2009. “Race, Place and Environmental Justice After Hurricane Katrina: Struggles to Reclaim, Rebuild, and Revitalize New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.” *Boulder: Westview Press*. Introduction, Pp. 1-18. Pp. 18
* Huq, Efadul and Henry Mochida. 2018. “The Rise of Environmental Fascism and the Securitization of Climate Change,” *Projections* 30 March. Pp.~10 <https://projections.pubpub.org/pub/x0z77j87/release/10?version=9692a332-18a0-41a4-8ead-9701e320fc71>
* Kashwan, Prakash. 2021. “Climate Justice in the Global North: An Introduction,” Case Studies in the Environment, pp. 1–13. Pp. 13. electronic ISSN 2473-9510.
* Plumer, Brad and Nadja Popovich. “How Decades of Racist Housing Policy Left Neighborhoods Sweltering”, *New York Times*, Aug. 24, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/08/24/climate/racism-redlining-cities-global-warming.html>.~8
* Thomas, Adelle and Rueanna Haynes. 2020. “Black Lives Matter: the link between climate change and racial justice.” *Climate Analytics*. 22 June 2020. <https://climateanalytics.org/blog/2020/black-lives-matter-the-link-between-climate-change-and-racial-justice/>. Pp.~2
* Ranganathan, Malini. 2017. “The Environment as Freedom: A Decolonial Reimagining” *Items* Social Science Research Council. Pp. ~5 <https://items.ssrc.org/just-environments/the-environment-as-freedom-a-decolonial-reimagining/>

# Solutions Section

## Week 13 (12/1): Resilience & Adaptation & Mitigation

Required Readings: 26+17+3+~10+6 = 62

* Agrawal, Arun. 2010. “The role of local institutions in adaptation to climate change.” In: R. Mearns and A. Norton (eds). *Social dimensions of climate change: Equity and vulnerability in a warming world.* Washington, DC: The World Bank, pp. 173-198. Pp. 26. Available at: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2009/01/11486596/social-dimensions-climate-change-equity-vulnerability-warming-world>.
* Beymer-Farris, Betsey A., Thomas J. Bassett and Ian Bryceson. 2012. “Promises and pitfalls of adaptive management in resilience thinking: The lens of political ecology.” Ch.16, pp. 283-299 in T. Plieninger and C. Bieling (eds). *Resilience and the cultural landscape*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 17
* Oliver-Smith, A. 2013. “A matter of choice (editorial).” *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 3, 1-3. Pp. 3
* Hickel, Jason, Paul Brockway, Giorgos Kallis, Lorenz Keyßer, Manfred Lenzen, Aljoša Slameršak, Julia Steinberger and Diana Ürge-Vorsatz. 2021*.* “Urgent need for post-growth climate mitigation scenarios.” *Nature Energy*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41560-021-00884-9> Pp. 3
* Asiyanbi, A., & Jens Friis Lund. 2021. “Rethinking REDD+ and the promise of forest-based climate change mitigation.” Department of Food and Resource Economics, University of Copenhagen. Policy Briefs (Copenhagen Centre for Development Research) No. 1/2021. Pp. 6

Recommended Reading:

* Lindegaard, Lily. and L. T. H. Sen. Forthcoming. Everyday adaptation and interrupted agency: How formal climate change adaptation initiatives risk disrupting autonomous adaptations. Draft manuscript. [To be distributed by professor.]

### Assignment: Final Presentations of Term paper

## Week 14 (12/8): Roles of Civil Society

Required Readings: 12+13+

* Keck, Margaret and Kathryn Sikkink, “Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics,” (1999) International Social Science Journal 51(159) pp. 89-101. Pp. 12
* Norman Eisen et al. 2020. [*The TAP-Plus Approach to Anti-Corruption in the Natural Resource Value Chain*](https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-tap-plus-approach-to-anti-corruption-in-the-natural-resource-value-chain/)*,* Brookings Institution, Washington DC 6-19 Executive Summary and Introduction. Pp. 13
* Alexandra Gillies. 2020. *Crude intentions: How oil corruption contaminates the world*. London: Oxford University Press; pp. 320
* Brockmeyer, M., Jonathan Fox. 2015. *Assessing the Evidence: the effectiveness and impact of public governance oriented multi-stakeholder initiatives,* London: Transparency and Accountability Initiative; Pp. 88
* Burca, G., R. Keohane, and C. Sabel. 2014. *Global Experimental Governance*. Columbia Law School. Public Law and Legal Theory Working Paper #14-393. New York. Pp. 21

### Assignment (12/1): Final Presentations of Term paper

### Assignment (12/8): Final Research Proposal Due this coming Monday by Noon

# Academic Integrity Code

All students must adhere to American University’s Academic Integrity Code, which you can find at: http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.cfm. The code states:

“By enrolling at American University and then each semester when registering for classes, students acknowledge their commitment to the Code. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their rights and their responsibilities. In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, examinations of whatever kind, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Students are responsible for learning the conventions of documentation and acknowledgment of sources. American University expects students to complete all examinations, tests, papers, creative projects, and assignments of any kind according to the highest ethical standards, as set forth either explicitly or implicitly in this Code or by the direction of instructors.”

Please take particular note of Section II.A, which lists violations adjudicated under the academic integrity code. They include:

• **plagiarism** (i.e., “the representation of someone else’s words, ideas, or work as one’s own without attribution...”)

• **inappropriate collaboration** (i.e., “when work that the professor presumes is original to the student is in fact the product of collaboration so close that the originality is no longer individual to the student...”)

• **dishonesty in examinations** (i.e., “the use of inappropriate or unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in a test. Unless the instructor directs otherwise, an examination is assumed to be solely a student’s own work. No communication is allowed among students either through voice, written, electronic, or any other form of transmission, nor are students permitted to consult books, papers, study aids or notes without explicit permission...”)

• **dishonesty in papers** (i.e., “submitting material obtained from another person or company or purchased from either. All papers and materials submitted for a course must be the student’s original work unless the sources are cited.”)

• **work done for one course and submitted to another** (“This category of violation covers the presentation of the same work in more than one course at any time during a student’s academic career without prior consent from both instructors. When incorporating their own past research into current projects, students must cite previous work...”)

• **fabrication of data** (i.e., “the falsification, distortion, or invention of any information or citation in academic work...”)

• **interference with other students’ or scholars’ work** (this includes “but is not limited to acts that deny others access to scholarly resources, or deliberately impede the progress of another student or scholar...”)

• “**bribes, favors, and threats** ... with the purpose of affecting a grade or the evaluation of academic performance

• and **other academic misconduct** (which includes “any form of academic deceit has violated the intellectual enterprise of the university”)

## Diversity and Inclusion

The School of International Service considers the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff to be a strength and strives to make an inclusive environment for everyone. Dimensions of diversity include sex, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, political ideology, intellectual and physical ability, and primary language. Students are encouraged to speak up and share their perspectives and experiences. This class represents a diversity of backgrounds and experiences, so everyone must show respect for others. If you feel your differences may in some way isolate you from the SIS community, please speak with the instructor to help you become an active and engaged member of our class and community

## Student Conduct Code

To achieve its ends, an academic community requires the knowledge, integrity, and decency of its members. In turn, the community helps individuals develop habits and values that will enable them to pursue personal satisfaction and to contribute to a better world. This Student Conduct Code is designed to benefit the American University community and to assist in forming the highest standards of ethics and morals among its members. It fosters the university’s commitment to excellence and equity and affirms the shared values that make community life possible. Students with alleged violations of the Student Conduct Code should contact Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution Services to receive further information on disciplinary procedures.

## Computing and Copyright Policy

This policy prohibits individuals from accessing or attempting to access any account, file, and/or software for which they do not have specific authorization.

All AU faculty, staff, and registered students are given computing and network access privileges. Each person is assigned a computer account code (user ID or username) that provides access to university computing resources and systems for instructional, research, and administrative purposes. Access to these resources is a privilege, not a right. Resources include networks, laboratory systems, residence hall systems, library systems, faculty and staff office systems, and software licensed by the university or its agents for use on university systems.

Because the entire AU community relies upon computing resources and systems to use and store important and confidential data, including software and computer programs, it is morally wrong and strictly prohibited for individuals to access or attempt to access or view any account, file, and/or software for which they do not have specific authorization. Also, it is prohibited to disrupt, delay, endanger, or expose someone's work or university operations. Nor should any synchronous session or pre-prepared material developed for our course be recorded or distributed without the express consent of all participants.

To review the complete policy, click here.

## Other Policies Additional Student Policies

For a comprehensive list to policies involving students, click here.

### Help Desk

For remote support, students can email helpdesk@american.edu or call 202-885-2550. For on campus assistance, visit the technology support desk in Bender Library.

### Disability Accommodations

To access academic accommodations due to a disability, students must follow a three-step documentation process.

**Step 1**: Submit documentation of your disability. (Documentation may be uploaded as part of **Step 2**.)

General Documentation Guidelines

Documentation Guidelines for a Learning Disability

**Step 2**: Complete and return the Student Accommodations Questionnaire.

**Step 3**: Call 202-885-3360 to schedule an appointment with an ASAC counselor.

### Academic Support and Learning Resources

The ASAC also hosts a variety of supports for students. All students can meet with a counselor to discuss time management, learning strategies, note taking, and effective reading skills. To schedule a telephone appointment with a counselor, please call 202-885-3360.The ASAC also hosts the Writing Lab, which is available to students.

### Library Resources

All Bender Library resources can be accessed at http://www.american.edu/library/. The library offers online tutorials and access to research librarians. Information of particular relevance to online learners can be accessed at http://www.american.edu/library/services/online.cfm.

Library Tutorial: http://subjectguides.library.american.edu/infolit

# [Annex A: Course Assignments](#_Annex_A:_Course)

## [Class Assignment Format and Submission Procedures](#_Class_Assignment_Format)

***IMPORTANT NOTE:*** *All assignments must be in* ***12-point font and single-spaced****. All assignments must be handed in to me via my e-mail: Ribot@American.edu. The electronic copies of all* ***assignments must be submitted in Word*** *(NO GOOGLE DOCS or .pdfs), and the* ***file title must start with your last name, followed by the assignment title****. So, if you are Anna Eggplant, then the file should be titled: Eggplant Anna Week 3 Reading Comment.doc (or .docx), or Eggplant Anna Term Paper Abstract.doc. Inside the file, you must also have your name and submission date written at the top of the page.*

## [Written Questions on Weekly Readings](#_Written_Comments_on)

**Weekly written questions on readings** – Each week, NO LATER than 24 hours before class (and ideally several days before class), you should email to me a set of 3 to 5 discussion questions provoked by the week’s readings. Limit them to 150 words *maximum –* I will stop reading at the 150th word. The questions will be used to stimulate the week’s discussions. You can also include any quotes from the reading that surprised you. You are allowed to miss four comments without penalty – although, this does not mean you are exempt from reading on those four weeks! Please submit these to me by e-mail: [Ribot@American.edu](mailto:Ribot@American.edu) or [jesse.ribot@gmail.com](mailto:jesse.ribot@gmail.com).

* Some ideas for what to include in your questions:
  1. Include at least one discussion question and at least one quote from the readings that surprised or struck you – i.e., what do you find new and surprising. Ask something about it.
* Think about the following when you read:
  1. What do the articles contribute to theory – what is new in them?
  2. What are the key questions the articles evoke?
  3. Vis-à-vis your own interests, what do you find surprising, new and interesting in the articles, and why?
  4. What are some strengths and shortcomings of the articles?
  5. Compare and contrast the arguments or theoretical positions of the different articles where possible.
  6. What was incomprehensible to you in the articles? What did you not understand?
  7. From the readings, is there a memorable quote strikes you?

## [Term Paper Writing Project](#_Term_Paper_Writing)

The writing assignment for this course is a **1500-word (Maximum) Term Paper in the form of a Research Proposal**

### [Term Paper Abstract](#_Term_Paper_Abstract)

Everyone must submit a 150-word abstract that describes your intended project on the week specified in the syllabus. Start with a title! Provide a good pithy project title that reflects something to catch the interest of the reader – a title that indicates that the reader will discover something new and interesting.

For Your Research Proposal Abstract: The abstract must specify the problem you are studying, your research question, the case to be studied, and why it is important or interesting. Be specific. Your problem needs to be something that can be studied in the real world or assessed and evaluated and responded to in the real world. Please also include a bibliography with at least five key documents you will use for the background – add a line under each that says what you expect to use that article/document for. I will provide feedback in the week after you submit your abstracts.

Be prepared to informally discuss your abstract/project idea in class – tell us the problem you’ll work on, why it is a problem and for whom, the main question or issue, and why you think it is important. Please be prepared to tell us who your audience is.

### [In-Class Presentation of your Term-Paper Project](#_In-Class_Presentation_of)

You will present your Term Paper in class. Presentation structure is also described below – after the assignment description.

Presenter: Each of you will be expected to present your project to the class. In class you will present your work in less than 10 minutes. Then the discussant will take 3 minutes to comment, and class will discuss your work for the remaining 7 minutes. This is short because of how many people we have in the class and due to the readings required for a survey course. We will see if we can spend more time than this on each presentation.

Please use this outline (or the sample research proposal outline above) for your presentation – just to make sure that these elements are present when you speak:

* 1. The problem you are addressing and why it matters and to whom
  2. The questions you are asking and any hypotheses you may be entertaining
  3. The case study you will examine
  4. The theoretical framing you will employ/interrogate/critique
  5. The data required to ask your question or interrogate your hypothesis [remember this is a research proposal, so you do not need the data or literature, you need to tell us what *kinds* of data.]
  6. The methods you will use to collect the data you have described.

Discussant Role: The discussant will give comments. The discussant’s role is to give some constructive feedback on your project and to help lead a discussion. Discussants should ask about whether each of the elements of a proposal are present and what more needs to be done to develop the question, hypotheses, or arguments. It is often helpful for the discussant to try to simply repeat back to the author what they understand the core problem to be. The aim is to make this a constructive exercise for the author.

**Structure of the sessions:**

* Your Presentation: 10 minutes
* Discussant: 3 minutes
* Discussion: Remaining 7 minutes

### [A Policy Research Proposal Term Paper](#_A_Policy_Research)

The Research Proposal term paper is 1500 words maximum*.* Please identify a research question you would want to pursue were you doing a Ph.D. Write a full research proposal. The best approach is to identify a funding agency and use their template (you may actually want to apply for a grant – such as a Fulbright or other funding to do field research). You can also follow my outline of a research proposal presented below. The research proposals will be judged and ranked as if they were submitted to an actual funding agency. You should feel free to find a real funding source and write a serious proposal. ***If*** you write for an existing funder, you can choose their format even if it is longer or shorter than 1500 words (no more than 2500 words) – I will allow you to write for the donor you choose. You may want to look, for example, at Fulbright, Boran, NSF, SSRC.

This project requires:

1. identifying your problem;
2. identifying the audience you are writing to;
3. developing a policy research question or hypothesis;
4. locating it within the literature;
5. explaining its broader policy significance (that is, making it clear why anyone should care about what is being investigated and what might be found);
6. explaining what data are necessary for answering the question;
7. explaining the methods to be employed for obtaining and analyzing the data (i.e. tracing out how empirical observations will be related to the question or hypothesis);
8. estimating a timeline; and
9. estimating funding needs.

A policy research question addresses an unresolved problem (related to climate adaptation or vulnerability reduction) that has policy relevance. The question must also have theoretical relevance—let us know how answering it will contribute to the broader understanding of this problem for instances other than your particular case. At a minimum, your proposal should identify a problem where better understanding or information is likely to help us to formulate a better solution.

A typical policy-research proposal has the following components. This is just an example—you can use a different outline if you wish. I suggest that you use the Fulbright, SSRC, or NSF formats or the format of a grant you actually intend to apply for (if you do so, the above page limits, font size, and double spacing still apply.)

1. Title
2. Abstract—150 words max
3. Introduction
   1. Problem statement
      1. What is the problem to be explored?
      2. Why is it important and to whom is it important?
   2. Summary of debates around the problem
   3. Summary of hypothesis and research questions
4. Background—What does the literature have to say about your problem
5. Research Questions and Hypotheses
6. Case
   1. Where you are going to study your problem
   2. Why this is an advantageous place for studying your problem
7. Merit
   1. Intellectual merit
      1. Contribution to applicable knowledge
      2. Contribution to theory
   2. Broader merit
      1. Contribution to change in the world – in your case and generally
8. Methods
   1. How you get from your questions to answers
   2. Timeline
9. Budget – not included in word count
10. Bibliography – not included in word count

One useful way to organize a methods discussion is to break down the problem as follows:

**Climate Change Question Example**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Hypothesis or Primary Research Questions | Operational Questions | Data Required to answer operational questions | Methods for gathering data |
| Q: How many deaths did Cyclone Idea cause?  H1: The number of deaths attributable to the cyclone is dependent on the analytic frame chosen.   * A hazards frame will attribute all deaths to the cyclone * A social-causal frame will attribute deaths to underlying vulnerabilities in place   H2: Better communication would reduce fatalities that follow cyclones in this region | H1Q1: How many deaths are attributed to the cyclone under a Vulnerability model?  H1Q2: How many deaths are attributed to the cyclone under a Hazards model?  H1Q3: What assumptions in the models explain differences found? | * Post cyclone death statistics * A vulnerability analysis of causes of death * A hazards assessment of damages following the storm * Documents with the analyses that can be evaluated for the assumptions explicit and implicit in the frames used | * Statistical analysis * Analytic methods of vulnerability and of hazards analysis * Document review and analysis – discourse analysis * Interviews of those who conducted analyses of damages and deaths |
| H2Q1: In places deaths occurred following the storm, what early warnings were communicated.  H2Q2: In places with different early warning messages were linked differences in death tolls? | * Data on early warning practices place by place * Data on who in official positions knew what when * Data on who in affected places heard what when * Data on damages and deaths in each of these areas | * Government documents * Interviews with those in government communications roles * Interviews of those in affected zones * Surveys * Document review |

**Democracy Research Question Example**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Hypothesis or Primary Research Questions | Operational Questions | Data Required to answer operational questions | Methods for gathering data |
| Hypothesis 1: Decentralization reforms leads to better representation.  Hypothesis 2: More democratic representation leads to more efficient forest management  Question: What is the relation between representation and forestry management outcomes before and after decentralization reforms? | How has representation changed over time (before and after decentralization)? | Measure of representation (i.e. accountability plus responsiveness) change over time in each case:  -Change in accountability  -Change in responsiveness  -Change in citizen engagement  -Change in popular demands being reflected in decisions being taken | Measures before and after decentralization policy implementation of:  -Observation of sanctioning by population  -Surveys of popular demands  -Surveys of decision maker understanding of popular demand  -Observation of decision making processes  -Decisions (or policies) made |
| How have outcomes varied over time (before and after decentralization reforms)? | Measure of outcomes over time  -Change in forest management  -Change in hectares under management  -Quality of forest health  -Change in local income from forests | -Observation and historical interviews concerning change in forest management  -Documentation of forest service of forests under management  -Transect studies of ligneous density and species mix before and after decentralization reform |

This table is just an example from a local democracy research program—in the problem definition or background section you would also have to define your variables and explain what theory has to say about the relations—and why you expect a particular kind of relation.

### Some literature on proposal writing

* Professor Michael Watts' essay "The Holy Grail: In Pursuit of the Dissertation Proposal" is, well, just that – a "holy grail" – essay dedicated to demystifying the process and offering concrete advice on the dos and don'ts: <http://iis.berkeley.edu/sites/files/pdf/inpursuitofphd.pdf>
* NSF grant reviewer tells all   
  <http://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2003/04/nsf-grant-reviewer-tells-all>
* NSF Merit Review – look over.   
  Criteria that NSF grant reviewers hold the proposals to. Note that these are kind of flexible depending on what discipline and sub-discipline we may apply to. The section "Merit Review Facts" may be useful. http://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/merit\_review/
* Some useful resources for helping in proposal writing – look over: <http://iis.berkeley.edu/DissPropWorkshop>
* Lund, Christian. (2014). Of what is this a case? Analytical movements in qualitative social science research. *Human Organization*, 73 (3), 224-34.
* Przeworski, Adam and Frank Salomon. 2008. “The Art of Writing a Proposal.” <http://www.arch.mcgill.ca/prof/adams/arch627/fall2008/pdf/The%20Art%20of%20Writing%20Proposals.pdf>

### Some additional methods books/articles that may be of help

* Sayer, Andrew. 1992. *Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach,* Second Edition. New York: Rutledge.
* Flyvbejerg, Bent, Todd Landman, Sanford Schram. 2012. *Real Social Science: Applied Phronesis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
* Brady, H.E. and D. Collier. (2004). *Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards.* London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
* Becker, Howard S. 2017. *Evidence*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
* Ribot, J. and N. L. Peluso. 2003. A theory of access: Putting property and tenure in place. *Rural Sociology*. Vol. 68, pp. 153-181.
* Bennett, A. 2010. Process tracing and causal inference. Ch. 10 in Henry Brady and David Collier (eds.). *Rethinking Social Inquiry.* Rowman and Littlefield.
* Cronon, W. 1992. A place for stories: Nature, history, and narrative. *The Journal of American History,* (March), 1347-1376.
* Lund, Christian. 2014. “Of What is This a Case?: Analytical Movements in Qualitative Social Science Research.” *Human Organization* 73(3): 224-234.
* Bates, Robert, Avner Greif, Margaret Levi, Jean-Laurent Rosenthal, Barry R. Weingast. 1998. *Analytic Narratives*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Introduction, pp. 3-23. Pp. 21

1. Related readings on responsibility (and some on irresponsibility)

   Latour, B. (2014). Agency at the time of the Anthropocene. *New Literary History,* 45, 1-18. Pp. 18 [To critique for absence of any concept of responsibility.]

   Loftus, A. 2012. *Everyday environmentalism: Creating an urban political ecology*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Ch. 1: “The Urbanization of Nature: Neil Smith and Posthumanist Controversies,” Pp. 1-19. Pp. 19 [Read as humanism’s relation to responsibility].

   Castree, N. 2014. The Anthropocene and Geography I: The back story. *Geography Compass*,8(7), 436-449. Pp. 13

   Schwartz, Scott W. 2019. “Measuring Vulnerability and Deferring Responsibility: Quantifying the Anthropocene,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 36(4):73-93. Pp. 20

   Giddens, Anthony. 1999. Risk and Responsibility. *The Modern Law Review* 62(1):1-10. Pp. 10

   de Waal, Alex. 1997. *Famine crimes: Politics and the disaster relief industry in Africa.* Oxford: James Currey. Pp. 25

   Introduction. Pp. 1-6

   Ch 1: “Rights and Entitlements: The Conquest of Famine in South Asia,” 7-25. Pp. 19 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)