Course Title
Environmental Social Movements

Course Number
ENVST-UA.9481001 / SOC-UA.9209001

Instructor Contact Information
Dr. Andrzej Ancygier
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Course Details
Mondays, 5:15pm – 8:00pm
Location of class: NYUB, Room "Spandau"

Prerequisites
None

Units earned
4

Course Description
How do social movements form in response to environmental concerns? What makes them effective or ineffective? This course analyses the various social movements that were organized in response to environmental concerns. Both historical and sociological dimensions of environmental movements are covered, while particular attention is given to how issues of environmental protection and social justice intersect. At NYU Berlin, the course includes an analysis of American (I), European, and in particular German (II), as well as global movements (III).

Course Objective
The first goal of the course is to familiarize students with the historical emergence and contemporary activities of groups and movements engaged in protecting nature, natural resources and the environment. We will address their changing goals and perennial organizational problems. The second goal of the course is to introduce students to relevant sociological theories of social movements and to train students in the skills necessary for the theoretically based analysis of environmental movements. The third goal is to engage students in a critical discussion on the role of environmental movements in a rapidly globalizing world, on issues of social and environmental justice, and on contradictions emerging between them.

Assessment Components
a. In-class participation (15%). This covers having read all of the assigned reading requirements and participating in the discussions.
b. Two reading responses (10% total, 5% each) on the reading material for a chosen session (400-700 words each). Alternatively, the student may also write his/her reactions to the discussion which has taken place in class.

c. Two quizzes (10% total, 5% each). The 10-minute-long quizzes will consist largely of multiple-choice questions and will cover the content of the reading assignments and the in-class discussions of the previous sessions.

d. One in-class presentation (10%). Students will be asked to give a 15-minute-long presentation in which they compare a specific aspect of environmental policy in Europe to one in the USA. The presentation should be held during the session covering the respective topic. Students have until 30 September 2015 to inform the instructor about the topic of the presentation.

e. Midterm essay (30%). Students will have to write a take-home essay (2000-3000 words with references) in which they compare a specific aspect of environmental policy in Europe to one in the USA. The exact topic can be the same as the one chosen for the in-class presentation but should also include the suggestions made during the presentation. Additional readings are required for the essay and can be determined in consultation with the instructor. The midterm essays are due before October 31, 2015.

f. Closed-book, in-class final exam (25%). The final exam will be held during the session on 14 December 2015 and last around 60 minutes. Students will have to choose and answer two out of three open questions which will necessitate a longer response. In addition, the exam will include a number of open questions that should be answered with one or two sentences, as well as some multiple-choice questions.

Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

Assessment Expectations

Grade A: The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well-structured arguments in his/her work. The student writes comprehensive essays / answers to exam questions and his/her work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.

Grade B: The candidate shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy.

Grade C: The work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and is in need of improvement.

Grade D: The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, poor research.

Grade F: The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness and the research is clearly negligible

Grade Conversion
Your instructor may use one of the following scales of numerical equivalents to letter grades:
Attendance Policy

Participation in all classes is essential for your academic success, especially in NYU Berlin’s content courses that, unlike most courses at NYU NY, meet only once a week for three hours. Your attendance in both content and language courses is required and will be checked at each class meeting. As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor by e-mail. Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, religious observance or emergencies. If you want the reasons for your absence to be treated confidentially and not shared with your professor, please approach NYUB’s Director or Wellness Counselor. Your professor may ask you to present a doctor's note or an exceptional permission from the Director or Wellness Counselor.

Unexcused absences affect students’ grades: for content courses an unexcused absence leads to a deduction of 2% of the overall grade and may negatively affect your class participation grade; in German language classes this leads to a deduction of 10 points from the attendance grade. Faculty is also entitled to deduct points for frequent late arrival to class or late arrival back from in-class breaks. Being more than 15 minutes late for class counts as an unexcused absence. Please note that for classes involving a field trip or other external visit, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at the announced meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.

Exams, tests, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness require a doctor's note as documentation. It is the student's responsibility to produce this doctor's note; until this doctor's note is produced the missed assessment is graded with an F. In content classes, an F in one assignment may lead to failure of the entire class. Three unexcused absences in one course may lead to a Fail in that course.

Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays

Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent because of any religious observance should notify the Director or Assistant Director for Academics in advance of the anticipated absence. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Director or Assistant Director will re-schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments.

Late Submission of Work

(1) Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.
(2) Late work should be submitted in person to the instructor or to the Assistant Director for Academics, who will write on the essay or other work the date and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative staff may also personally accept the work, and will write the date and time of submission on the work, as above.

(3) Unless an extension has been approved, work submitted late receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100 point scale for each day it is late.

(4) Without an approved extension, written work submitted more than 5 weekdays following the session date fails and is given a zero.

(5) End of semester essays must be submitted on time.

(6) Students who are late for a written exam have no automatic right to take extra time or to write the exam on another day.

(7) Please remember that university computers do not keep your essays - you must save them elsewhere. Having lost parts of your essay on the university computer is no excuse for a late submission.

Plagiarism Policy
The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. Proper referencing of your sources avoids plagiarism (see as one possible help the NYU library guide to referencing styles: http://nyu.libguides.com/citations).

NYUB takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. All your written work must be submitted as a hard copy AND in electronic form to the instructor. Your instructor may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form.

It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you MUST inform your professor.

Required Text(s)
The Course Reader, which can be bought at Sprintout behind Humboldt University (Georgenstraße/Universitätstraße – S-Bahn-Bogen 190). Please allow five hours between booking and collecting readers.

Internet Research Guidelines
To be discussed in class.

Additional Required Equipment
None
Session 1 – 31 August 2015

Introduction: Environmental Social Movements

This first session of the course will be devoted to introducing the students to the main themes of the course, its objectives, special activities and excursions, and also its ground rules. Students will be informed about what they can expect to learn and how this is related to the different assessment components. Topics of the presentations and midterm papers will also be discussed.

Podcast:

Session 2 - 7 Sept 2015

What is a Social Movement? Theories and Concepts

The second session will introduce students to the concept of social movements. We will discuss definitions, central elements of social movement theories, and the issues they raise about collective action, organization, cooperation, their role in politics and democracy and their effectiveness. Based on a number of short introductory texts, we will try to put together a framework for analyzing environmental movements throughout the course.

Readings:


Newton, Kenneth “Pressure Groups and Social Movements,” in Cambridge Textbooks in Comparative Politics: Foundations of Comparative Politics” (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 198-221 [03].

Module 1: American Experiences

Session 3 - 14 Sept 2015

Early Conservation Ideas and Actors in the US

Session three looks at the roots of nature conservation. It juxtaposes two great men that are usually considered to be pioneers of nature conservation, but who differed considerably in their approaches to nature. The self-styled “founder” of US forestry Gifford Pinchot was committed to what he called the “wise use” or “conservation” of resources. By contrast, John Muir is the most prominent early “preservationist”. He is known for his appreciation of “wilderness” itself, a value he valiantly defended in the battle surrounding dam building in the Hetch Hetchy Valley in the early years of the 20th century. The goal of this session is to distinguish between their conceptions of nature. At the same time, it is important to
acknowledge that both traditions characterize the conservation movement and continue to have an impact on environmentalism today. We will read excerpts from original sources, to get a first-hand impression of their reasoning.

Readings:


Session 4 - 21 Sept 2015

From “Silent Spring” to “Limits to Growth”

The fourth session covers the rise of modern environmentalism, a shift towards a more comprehensive view of humanity’s impact on the planet. This transition is considered to have taken place in the decade between Rachel Carson’s admonitions against the dangers of DDT published in 1962 and the warnings of the Club of Rome in 1972 about the “Limits to Growth”. While the United States played a prominent role in these developments, the rise of environmentalism or “the environmental revolution”, as it has been dubbed, is a worldwide phenomenon.

Readings:


Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr, “There are No Limits to Growth” 1-12 [9a]


Session 5 - 28 Sept 2015

Earth Day: How a 1970 Teach-in Made the First Green Generation
The fifth session will study the importance of events in the history of the environmental movement. By looking at organizers, speakers, local events, and the new infrastructures that followed from Earth Day, we will critically analyze Adam Rome’s thesis that Earth Day mobilized for and shaped environmentalism in the 1970s. This session, as well as session 6, will be based on the discussion of students’ essays on selected chapters of this book.

Readings:


Session 6 - 5 Oct 2015

Greenpeace – From Counterculture to Global Organization

Greenpeace is probably the most well-known environmental organization. We will examine in detail how the brand new study by Frank Zelko explains the rise of Greenpeace, its intellectual origins and organizational transformations, as well as its activities and ideas about “mind-bombing” the public. As in the previous session, the discussion will be based on students’ essays on selected chapters of this book.

Reading:

Session 7- 12 Oct 2015

Urban Environmental Justice

This session introduces the notion of environmental justice and the movements associated with it. In the second half of the session, we will discuss and examine a number of examples in different urban contexts, namely the building of highways through African-American neighborhoods, the Chicago Heat Wave and the results of Hurricane Katrina. The goal is to establish common traits, problems and solutions, as well as important differences.

Readings:


Environmental Movements and their Critics

The eighth session is devoted to the analysis of environmental skepticism and, in particular, climate skepticism. It examines analyses of the structures and organizations behind this critique, their interests and objectives. Taking a closer look at the different viewpoints, we will analyze and critique core arguments.

Readings:


Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger, Break Through. Why We Can't Leave Saving the Planet to the Environmentalists (Boston: Mariner Books 2009), i-18, 216-240. [19]


Module 2: European Experiences

Nature Conservation in Europe

In session nine we will begin our overview and discussion of environmentalism in Europe by focusing on its oldest wing, namely nature conservation. The main focus will be on the comparison of western and eastern European environmentalism.

Readings:

Nick Manning, “Patterns of Environmental Movements in Eastern Europe” in Environmental Politics, 7:2 (1998), 100-133. [22]
Session 10 – 9 Nov 2015

Environmental Movements in Different European Countries

During this session, we will compare developments of environmental movements in different European countries. We will compare the motivations and strategies they adopted and try to reach conclusions about how successful these strategies have been in achieving the stated goals of these movements.

Readings:


Module 3: German Experiences

Session 11 - 16 Nov 2015

New Movement or Old? The Rise of the Environmental Movement in Germany in the 1970s

Session 11 will focus on an important feature of postwar West German society, namely, the role and emergence of environmentalism. During this session we will juxtapose two perspectives on the history of the rise of the environmental movement in Germany: its rootedness in traditional nature protection and the new, transnational anti-nuclear issue.

Readings:


Session 12 - 23 Nov 2015

Anti-Nuclear Protest and the Greens

The nuclear energy issue has been central to German and European environmentalism since the 1970s, and has led to the definite phase-out of nuclear power in Germany in the aftermath of Fukushima. Hence, session 12 focuses on the anti-nuclear movement in Europe in a comparative and transnational perspective. We will consider the movement’s goals and fears
and its link to the formation of Green Parties. In the second half of the session, we will discuss two theoretical and comparative studies which try to explain cross-country variations.

**Readings:**


**Module 4 - Global issues**

**Session 13 – 30 Nov 2015**

Environmental Justice Around the World: Climate Change

The last two sessions focus on global issues. In session 13, we will examine the unequal impact of our consumption and its collateral damage on individuals and communities worldwide by studying the politics of climate change. With the climate negotiations in Paris entering their hot phase, we will look at the role of the global environmental movements in pushing for a more ambitious climate policy. Special focus will be put on the issue of fair distribution of the burdens in the fight against climate change.

**Readings:**

Dale Jamieson “Consequentialism, Climate Change, and the Road Ahead”,

Andrew Jamison “Climate Change Knowledge and Social Movement Theory”,

Ross Andrew Fletcher “A Global Environmental Justice? The challenge of transferring a US movement to countries outside the US”, 17 pages. [32a]

Chloé Anne Vlassopoulos, "Competing definition of climate change and the post-Kyoto negotiations" 104 – 118. [32b]

**Session 14 - 7 Dec 2015**

A Global Environmental Movement?

Session 14 addresses the much-discussed issue of the emergence of a global environmental movement. We will look at the role transnational actors play in international and global environmental politics and zoom in on the organizational problems which working at the global level poses to social movement actors.
Readings:

Christopher Rootes, “Acting Globally, Thinking Locally? Prospects for a Global Environmental Movement,” in Environmental Politics 8: 1 (1999): 290-310. [34]

Session 15 - 14 Dec 2014

Wrap-up session. In-class exam: Around 60 minutes and discussion of results afterwards.

Your Instructor

Andrzzej Ancygier (Ph.D) specializes in European environmental policy with a focus on renewable energy and climate policy. Since 2010/2011, he has been working at the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovations (EACI), an agency of the European Commission. He is also currently working at Hertie School of Governance where he analyzes German-Polish cooperation in the field of renewable energy and climate policy. He also coordinates a project dealing with the impact of the European Emission Trading Scheme (EU ETS) on energy intensive industries. Since 2011, Ancygier has been teaching the course “European Environmental Policy” at New York University in Berlin and has recently taught a number of courses dealing with European integration, European economic policy and global challenges at the Free University in Berlin.