

**POL300F – Protest, Politics, and Power:  
Reshaping Global Environmental Governance from the Ground Up**

**Professor Kate Neville  
Wednesday 4-6pm**

*“When asked if I am pessimistic or optimistic about the future, my answer is always the same: If you look at the science about what is happening on earth and aren’t pessimistic, you don’t understand the data. But if you meet the people who are working to restore this earth and the lives of the poor, and you aren’t optimistic, you haven’t got a pulse. What I see everywhere in the world are ordinary people willing to confront despair, power, and incalculable odds in order to restore some semblance of grace, justice, and beauty to this world.”*

~Paul Hawken

**Contact information:**

**Office number: Sidney Smith Hall 3103**

**Office hours: Thursday 2-4pm or by appointment**

**Email: [kate.neville@utoronto.ca](mailto:kate.neville@utoronto.ca)**

**Course Description:**

This course begins outside the halls of government power and administration, aiming to understand how a multiplicity of groups and individuals alter and affect global environmental governance. With a focus on non-governmental organizations, grassroots action, and new relationships between citizens and corporations, the course uses analytic tools from political science (including related fields of political sociology and political geography) to help unpack patterns of environmental protest and resistance over time.

We begin by interrogating what is meant by governance, civil society, and protest. Next, we examine citizens, looking at the ways in which individuals and communities are inspired (or provoked) to take action, strategies they use to voice concern and effect change, and divisions within and across social groups. We then turn to the private sector, considering the ways in which corporations are shaping global environmental governance, paying particular attention to the promises and challenges of market campaigns and consumer activism. Finally, we examine our own role, as students and academics, in environmental governance and activism.

Drawing on case studies of protests and social movements from around the world, this course allows students to move beyond borders and states in understanding environmental governance. A central goal of the course is to engage and empower students, as citizens and consumers and scholars, to enact the change they want to see in the world.

**Learning objectives**

The goals of this course are three-fold: 1) to understand the distinctions and crossovers between and among non-state actors, and to assess and evaluate different mechanisms for gaining voice and participating in governance (*content*); 2) to develop critical analysis skills by reading academic papers and book chapters, and reflecting on these articles and arguments (*analysis*); and 3) to improve abilities in research and writing, through the development and completion of a research essay (*communication*).

## **Course format & materials**

The course is offered in twelve two-hour classes. Readings are available online on Blackboard.

## **Assignments**

Further details on assignments and exams will be provided in class. Assignments should be submitted electronically, by email or via Blackboard, no later than the start of class (4pm) on the date they are due.

1. Reading response essay	20%	Oct 14
2. Research essay outline	5%	Oct 28
3. Research essay	35%	Nov 18
4. Reading journal (10 entries)	10%	Dec 2 (but entries should be made weekly)
5. Final exam	30%	exam period, to be scheduled

### *Reading response essay – due October 14 (week 5)*

This is a 700-1000 word paper on one of the readings from the first five weeks of class. This paper offers you the chance to reflect on one of the journal articles or book chapters assigned in the first half of the course. The paper must include: a) description, where you identify the central argument(s), key evidence, and methodology/approach used; b) analysis, where you critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the reading; and c) comparison, where you consider the arguments in the paper in contrast to or in combination with another reading (either another course reading or another relevant source). This essay will be marked out of 20, with five marks each for: description; analysis; comparison; and writing (structure, language, and clarity).

### *Research essay outline – due October 28 (week 7)*

This is a one-page assignment, involving an outline and preliminary bibliography for your research essay. This provides you the opportunity to have feedback from me about your plan for your final paper. You must provide your general topic, specific research question, tentative thesis statement, and a list of five relevant peer-reviewed sources you might cite. This outline will be marked out of five, reflecting the relevance to the course of your topic, clarity and relevance of your research question, clarity of your thesis statement, and applicability of your references.

### *Research essay – due November 18 (week 10)*

This is a 2500-3000 word research paper (including references) on a topic of your choice related to the main themes of the course. You must cite peer-reviewed references for the paper, and provide a complete bibliography. Further details will be provided in class.

### *Reading journal (10 entries) – should be completed weekly; will be due December 2 (week 12)*

Course readings are mandatory; this assignment offers you the chance to reflect critically on the weekly readings. For ten of the twelve weeks of class, you are expected to write one or two paragraphs about one of the week's readings, which include: a) a summary of the main points of the reading(s) (identifying the central argument/thesis and main evidence) and b) a reflection on the reading(s) in the form one or two questions that arose for you while reading. Each entry will be marked as 1 (excellent), 0.5 (fair), or 0 (poor).

### *Final exam – December exam period (to be scheduled by the University)*

The final exam will consist of definitions, short answer, and short essay questions on a range of topics from the course. Questions will draw from material in the course readings and lectures, and will test both your knowledge of the course content and your critical thinking skills.

## **Policies and Expectations**

### ***In general***

In this course, you can expect that I will strive to be fair, respectful, prepared, responsive, and enthusiastic. In return, I anticipate you will be respectful of your classmates and of me, be prepared and on time for class, and meet deadlines for assignments.

While there is no grade given for participation, as we may have limited time for discussions, I expect that everyone will attend and participate actively in class. Active participation includes both contributing your ideas (questions, comments, analyses, insights) and listening to the contributions of others (without distraction). While laptops are welcomed in the class for note taking, cell phones and other devices are not. Further, I expect that you will not spend your time in class on e-mail, social media, or other activities unrelated to the class.

I hope that together we can foster a safe and engaging space for thinking about big questions, and I will be relying on all of you to help create that space.

### ***Deadlines and late penalties***

I anticipate that all assignments will be submitted on time, and that examinations will be written when scheduled. However, some students may find themselves with valid conflicts and challenges. In these cases, it is best to speak with me in advance about alternate arrangements and accommodations. I am less likely to be sympathetic on the eve of a deadline or once a deadline has passed. In general, late assignments and term papers will be penalized at a rate of 10% per day. Late essay outlines will not be accepted.

### ***Backups and rough drafts***

You are strongly advised to keep rough drafts and backup copies of all assignments and essays you submit for this class. Also, please take a minute at the start of the term to set yourself a backup strategy. Whether it's a backup external hard drive, a web-based cloud service like Dropbox or Google Drive, or some other option, it's important that you have multiple copies of your work in the case of a hard drive failure or computer problem. No extensions will be provided due to computer problems.

### ***Email and communication***

I will hold weekly office hours, and I will be very glad to meet with you during those times to discuss readings, lectures, assignments, essays, and more. I have also listed my email address in the contact information at the start of the syllabus; however, please consider several things when reaching out to me by email:

- I prefer to use email to address simple questions and logistics; if you have any substantive concerns, I will suggest we meet during my office hours;
- I will do my best to respond to your messages, but please don't expect a rapid response; I often check email only once a day, and may not check on evenings and weekends;
- If you write to me for an extension or accommodation the night before an assignment is due, I am unlikely to be able to accommodate your needs or offer assistance;
- Please check (and double-check) that the information is not in the syllabus before you contact me with questions; and
- Please treat emails as a professional form of communication; I will expect proper grammar, sentences, and greetings and sign-offs in your messages.

### ***Exceptions and Assistance***

The University has many resources to help students who are in need of assistance for any number of reasons, both in and outside of the classroom, including: Accessibility Services, Students for Barrier-free Access, the Hart House Accessibility Fund, intercampus transportation, financial assistance, library resources, academic resources, health and counseling services, and peer mentoring systems. The University also is committed to providing allowances for religious observances.

If you are struggling or anticipate needing help with your coursework for academic and/or personal reasons, or you encounter unanticipated challenges or crises during the term, please seek the support you need as early as possible. If you do not know the options, do not hesitate to ask. If you will need accommodation from me for any reason, in the classroom or on coursework and assignments, please let me know as soon as you can. A few helpful resources are here:

- <http://life.utoronto.ca/just-for-you/for-students-with-a-disability/>
- <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>
- <http://healthandwellness.utoronto.ca/>
- <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres>
- <http://uoft.me/religiousaccommodation>

### ***Academic integrity***

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously, seeing these as serious academic offenses.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources, including Writing at the University of Toronto.

- <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>
- <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources>
- <http://www.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/>

Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor
- Making up sources or facts
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.
- Looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades
- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University

## Course Schedule

### PART I: SETTING THE STAGE: A THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

#### **Week 1. Governance & civil society – September 16**

In this introductory week, we tackle a number of key definitions that will underpin discussions and analyses throughout the course. The focus here is on interrogating the central (and contested, multiple) concepts of the state, civil society, governance, and the environment.

- Key concepts: governance; civil society; states; environment

#### *Readings*

- Lemos, Maria Carmen, & Agrawal, Arun. 2006. Environmental Governance. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 31: 297-325.
- Wapner, Paul. 1995. Politics Beyond the State: Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics. *World Politics*, 47(3): 311-340.

#### **Week 2. Individuals, states, and corporations – September 23**

We will continue discussions this week on the central concepts of the course, investigating the idea of responsibility and possibility in global environmental governance.

- Key concepts: collective action, individualization; systems/structures; innovation

#### *Readings*

- Andonova, Liliana B., & Hoffmann, Matthew J. 2012. From Rio to Rio and Beyond: Innovation in Global Environmental Governance. *Journal of Environment and Development*. 21: 57-61.
- Bernauer, Thomas, & Gampfer, Robert. 2013. Effects of Civil Society Involvement on Popular Legitimacy of Global Environmental Governance. *Global Environmental Change*. 23(2): 439-449.
- Maniates, Michael F. 2001. Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World? *Global Environmental Politics*, 1(3): 31-52.

#### **Week 3. Contentious politics & social movements – September 30**

This week draws on political science and political sociology to gain a theoretical foundation for understanding the processes of collective action and claim-making. Here, we examine the characteristics of contestation to better grasp how groups mobilize, voice claims, respond to challenge and change, and sustain movements over time.

- Key concepts: mobilization; social movements; cycles and repertoires of contention
- Case study: pipelines & LNG plants

#### *Readings*

- Chapter 1 (pp. 1-22) from Snow, David A., & Soule, Sarah A. 2009. *A Primer on Social Movements*, WW Norton & Co.
- Boudet, Hilary Schaffer, & Ortolano, Leonard. 2010. A Tale of Two Sitings: Contentious Politics in Liquefied Natural Gas Facility Siting in California. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 30(1): 5-21.
- Carruthers, David, & Rodriguez, Patricia. 2009. Mapuche Protest, Environmental Conflict and Social Movement Linkage in Chile. *Third World Quarterly*. 30(4): 743-760.

#### **Week 4. Activism across/beyond borders – October 7**

This week focuses on linkages and intersections of the local and global politics of protest. We will look at the ways in which networks and alliances can diffuse information and norms, amplify local voices, mobilize resources, and transcend domestic interests.

- Key concepts: local/global interactions; scale; alliances; transnational advocacy networks
- Case study: water privatization

#### *Readings*

- Chapter 1 (pp. 1-38) from Keck, Margaret E., & Sikkink, Kathryn. 1998. *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*, Cornell University Press.
- Chapter 2 (pp. 37-62) from Robinson, Joanna L. 2013. *Contested Water: The Struggle Against Water Privatization in the United States and Canada*, MIT Press.

### **PART II: PEOPLE POWER: A LOOK AT CIVIL SOCIETY**

#### **Week 5. What provokes protest: environmental justice & voice – October 14**

~ *Reading response essay due this week* ~

Discussions this week will address the catalysts of social action on environmental issues, particularly mobilization by economically and socially marginalized communities. Questions of long-standing grievances will be considered, as well as the ways in which environmental harm is often enacted in slow, cumulative, and largely invisible ways, and the challenges this creates for mobilization and response.

- Key concepts: justice; inclusion/exclusion; marginalization; environmental harm; NIMBYism; slow violence

#### *Readings*

- Rootes, Christopher, & Leonard, Liam. 2009. Environmental movements and campaigns against waste infrastructure in the United States. *Environmental Politics*, 18(6): 835-850.
- Schlosberg, David. 2004. Reconceiving Environmental Justice: Global Movements And Political Theories. *Environmental Politics*, 13(3): 517-540.
- Introduction (pp. 1-44) from Nixon, Rob. 2011. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard University Press.

#### **Week 6. Objectivity & the complex role of science – October 21**

In this week, we examine the role of science and scientists as actors in environmental governance, and the ways in which environmental debates are framed. We look at information as a tool in contestation, and consider how it can be co-opted and contested, as well as the ways in which science is used/seen as a neutral arbiter or a politicized element of decision-making.

- Key concepts: science; framing; objectivity/subjectivity; politicization
- Case study: climate change

### Readings:

- Carolan, Michael S. 2008. The Bright- and Blind-Spots of Science: Why Objective Knowledge is Not Enough to Resolve Environmental Controversies. *Critical Sociology*, 34(5): 725-740.
- Demeritt, David. 2001. The Construction of Global Warming and the Politics of Science. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 91(2): 307-337.
- Jasanoff, Sheila. 2010. Testing Time for Climate Science. *Science (Policy Forum)*, 328(5979): 695-696.

## **Week 7. Defining the boundaries: advocacy, environmental activism, & eco-terrorism? – October 28**

~ *research essay outline due this week* ~

When are those voicing claims about the environment participating in active citizenship and democratic engagement, fulfilling the rights and duties of citizens, and when do these critical voices become activists or even eco-terrorists? In this week, we consider the blurry definitions of activism, advocacy, and eco-terrorism, with particular attention to which actors are defining these activities and what motivations they may have for assigning certain labels.

- Key concepts: activism; advocacy; (eco-)terrorism; framing; non-violent protest
- Case study: Earth First!

### Readings

- Smith, Rebecca K. 2008. “Ecoterrorism”? A Critical Analysis of the Vilification of Radical Environmental Activists as Terrorists. *Environmental Law*. 38: 537-576.
- Vanderheiden, Steve. 2008. Radical environmentalism in an age of antiterrorism. *Environmental Politics*, 17(2): 299-318.
- Bell, James John, Cookson, J., Hogue, Ilyse, & Reinsborough, Patrick. 2003. The Next Environmental Movement. *EarthFirst!* 23(2): 28.

## **Week 8. Law & the ethics of law-breaking – November 4**

Picking up from week six, we continue discussions on the role of protest and activism in democratic and public processes, this time focusing on the role of the law in these activities. We consider two key elements of the judiciary this week: the use of legal systems to contest social and environmental injustices, through, for example, campaigns by civil society groups to entrench the rights of nature in national constitutions; and, conversely, the use of civil disobedience tactics to protest industrial activities.

- Key concepts: democracy; accountability; ethics; law; civil disobedience

### Readings

- Part 1 (pp.1-29) from Scott, James. 2012. *Two Cheers for Anarchism: Six Easy Pieces on Autonomy, Dignity, and Meaningful Work and Play*. Princeton University Press.
- Thoreau, Henry D. 1849. *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*. <http://www.ibiblio.org/ebooks/Thoreau/Civil%20Disobedience.pdf>
- Williams, Terry Tempest. 2011. What Love Looks Like. *Orion Magazine*, <https://orionmagazine.org/article/what-love-looks-like/>

## **Week 9. Civil society divided: conservation & environmentalism – November 11**

Civil society is a highly heterogeneous term, encompassing a diversity of groups with conflicting interests, ideas, ethics, and traditions. This week, we examine the ways in which civil society groups clash with each other on issues related to the environment, resource use, and rights. We look at a number of different examples of these conflicts, using analytical tools from contentious politics to consider movements, counter-movements, and alliances involved in these debates.

- Key concepts: conservation; sustainable use; subsistence economies; indigenous rights; traditional knowledge; dispossession, exclusion and territoriality; green grabs
- Case study: the seal hunt

### *Readings*

- Dauvergne, Peter, & Neville, Kate J. 2011. Mindbombs of Right and Wrong: Cycles of Contention in the Activist Campaign to Stop Canada's Seal Hunt. *Environmental Politics*, 20(2): 192-209.
- Gregoire, Lisa. 2014. The Hunt Revisited. *The Walrus*, <http://thewalrus.ca/the-hunt-revisited/>
- Willow, Anna. 2012. Re(con)figuring Alliances: Place Membership, Environmental Justice, and the Remaking of Indigenous-Environmental Relationships in Canada's Boreal Forest. *Human Organization*, 71(4): 371-382.

## **PART III: THE CORPORATIZATION OF ACTIVISM?**

### **Week 10. Private governance: partnerships and consumer activism – November 18**

~ *research essay due this week* ~

This week we turn from grassroots action, non-governmental organizations, and citizens to the private sector as an actor in global environmental governance. Here, we consider the benefits and limits of private governance for creating environmental change, looking at corporate-NGO partnerships, mechanisms for private environmental governance, and concerns about “greenwashing” and the co-optation of sustainability.

- Key concepts: partnerships; eco-business; corporate social responsibility (CSR)
- Case study: coffee certification

### *Readings*

- Dauvergne, Peter, & Lister, Jane. 2012. Big Brand Sustainability: Governance Prospects and Environmental Limits. *Global Environmental Change*, 22(1): 36-45.
- Auld, Graeme. 2010. Assessing Certification as Governance: Effects and Broader Consequences for Coffee. *The Journal of Environment & Development*, 19(2): 215-241.

### **Week 11. Market campaigns & celebrity activism – November 25**

In this second week on private governance, we look deeper into the role of corporations in environmental governance, and the role of the citizen in participating in different spheres of governance. We probe the use of social media in environmental action, with particular attention to the ways in which these tools can be embedded in corporate systems, and how grassroots groups also use these approaches. Examining the ways in which high-profile individuals engage in environmental causes, we look critically at the benefits and drawbacks of this approach to social and environmental change.

- Key concepts: corporatization; institutionalization; social media; celebrity activism



### *Readings*

- Chapter 1 (pp. 1-28) and 2 (pp. 29-54) from Dauvergne, Peter, & LeBaron, Genevieve. 2014. *Protest, Inc.: The Corporatization of Activism*. Polity Press.
- Richey, Lisa Ann, & Ponte, Stefano. 2013. Brand Aid and the International Political Economy and Sociology of North–South Relations: Introduction. *International Political Sociology*, 7(1): 92-93.

## **PART IV: ACADEMICS AS ACTIVISTS?**

### **Week 12. Scholars, institutions, and action – December 2**

~ *reading journal due this week* ~

In this final week of the course, we turn a critical gaze towards ourselves, as students and academics within educational institutions. We look at the academy in three ways: the university as a corporation, considering the environmental impacts of the procurement and investment strategies of these large institutions; the university as a site of protest, addressing the ways in which campuses provide spaces and communities for organizing and conducting protest; and scholarship as a form of activism, where research and writing have the potential to change social and political trajectories.

### *Readings*

- Manokha, Ivan, & Chalabi, Mona. 2012. #Occupy IR: Exposing the Orthodoxy. *Journal of Critical Globalisation Studies*. 5: 153-156.
- Chapter 1 (pp.1-8) and 2 (pp.9-26) from Hawken, Paul. 2007. *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Social Movement in History is Restoring Grace, Justice, and Beauty to the World*. Viking Press.