

EST 696, SUPERPOWERS IN GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS: CHINA AND THE US

Study abroad at
Wageningen University
The Netherlands
June 20-30, 2011

Overview

This course examines the environmental politics of China and the US in the 21st century, against a background of globalizing environmental politics. The US is diminishing as global hegemonic power and China increasingly is ascendant. Both play a crucial role in current and future global environmental politics, not only with respect to global environmental change, but also through influencing environmental agendas of other countries, via the trade and environment agenda, the harmonization of standards, and foreign investments of US and Chinese based transnational firms, etc.

Overview (cont'd)

In order to understand how the US and China influence and co-construct global environmental politics today, it is necessary to have a better understanding of both countries' domestic environmental politics and governance. While both nations aspire to (continued) global prominence, their domestic processes and dynamics of environmental politics are very different due to the nature of their political systems, levels of economic development, demographic and natural conditions, and historical-cultural roots.

Objectives

Students will gain an understanding of key features of both domestic environmental politics in China and the US (including the role of state actors, the private sector and civil society) and ways in which these two mega-states are involved in and influence global environmental politics.

Instructors

- **David Sonnenfeld**, Ph.D., Professor of Sociology and Environmental Policy at SUNY-ESF
- **Lei Zhang**, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Environmental and Natural Resource Policy, Renmin (People's) University, China
- **Bettina Bluemling**, Ph.D., Researcher and Project Coordinator, Environmental Policy Group, Wageningen University

Course structure

- Part A: plenary lecturing and discussion (required, 2 credit hours)
- Part B: research and writing of an analytical paper on US and/or Chinese involvements in one aspect of the global environmental agenda (optional, 1 credit hour)

Students must determine the number of credits and begin working on the research paper from the onset

Plenary lectures

- Plenary lectures will take place every afternoon while the course is in session, June 20-30
- During these weeks, students will explore course topics through:
 - Reading required and recommended texts
 - Writing two short commentaries on the required texts
 - Presenting and commenting on one or two texts
 - Listening to lectures, and
 - Engaging in class discussions

Analytical paper

The optional analytical paper will utilize theoretical perspectives presented in the class to explore a particular topic in environmental politics *involving both China and US*. Based primarily on secondary, available data, the paper can be a *comparative* study (e.g. on water, energy, pollution control, NGOs), or a study on environmental *linkages* between the two countries (e.g. trade, waste dumping, investments in cleaner production or GMOs).

Grading and evaluation

- Part A (required): Grading will be on the basis of performance on the two written commentaries (50%), oral presentation (25%), and course attendance & participation (25%).
- Part B (optional): Grading will be on the basis of the analytical paper (100%). It should be 12-15 pages in length (double-spaced, plus cover sheet and references), and is due no later than 5:00 pm, Friday, July 15, 2011. Grading and evaluation will be completed by 31 July 2011.

Wageningen University

‘To explore the potential of nature to improve the quality of life’. That is the mission of Wageningen University & Research centre (WUR). 10,000 students from over 100 countries work everywhere around the world in the domain of healthy food and living environment for governments and the business community-at-large.

The strength of Wageningen UR lies in the combined efforts of the natural and social sciences. This union of expertise leads to scientific breakthroughs that can quickly be put into practice and incorporated into education.

The domain of Wageningen UR consists of three related core areas:

- Food and food production
- Living environment
- Health, lifestyle and livelihood



WAGENINGEN UR
For quality of life

Location

1 hour by commuter train from
Amsterdam or
Schiphol Airport



Accommodations

Vacation bungalows, each with two bedrooms (one with a double bed, one with a bunk bed), living room, kitchen, terrace, TV. They are 15 minutes walking distance from the course site. Cost is €495/week. For further information, see:

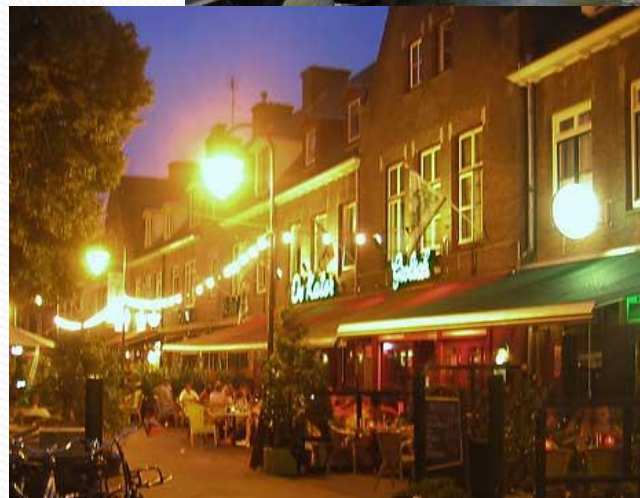
www.vakantiewageningen.nl/



Other Logistics

- Course registration
- Air travel
- Ground transfer
- Visa considerations

Summer in the Netherlands



Further information

- David Sonnenfeld, Dept. of Environmental Studies, SUNY-ESF, Marshall 211B, (315) 470-4931, dsonn@esf.edu
- Carolyn Salter, International Education Coordinator, SUNY-ESF, Bray 302, (315) 470-6691, cmsalter@esf.edu
- Bettina Bluemling, Environmental Policy Group, Wageningen University, bettina.bluemling@wur.nl