Course Outline

SUPERPOWERS IN GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS: CHINA AND THE US

SENSE PhD course S435; ENP 50306; ENP 50803
Environmental Policy Group, Dept. of Social Sciences, Wageningen University, NL
5th period, May 14 till May 25, 2007

Description

This course takes a look at the environmental politics of China and the US at the start of the third millennium, against the background of globalizing environmental politics. The US is the current hegemonic power and arguably China will become so in a few decades.[1] Both play a crucial role in current and future global environmental politics, not only with respect to global environmental change (such as contributing to and coping with the greenhouse effect, and dealing with international trade in waste), but also with respect to many domestic environmental agendas in other countries via, among others, the trade and environment agenda, the harmonization of standards, and foreign investments of US and Chinese multinationals. In order to understand how the US and China affect, influence and co-construct global environmental politics, it is necessary to have a better understanding of both countries' domestic environmental politics and governance, which will be a core part of this course. While both aspire to (continued) global prominence, their domestic processes and dynamics of environmental politics are very different due to the nature of their political systems, their overall levels of economic development, demographic and natural conditions, and historical-cultural roots.

OBJECTIVES. By the end of course lectures (Part A), students will (i) gain an understanding of key features of *domestic* environmental politics in the US and in China, including the role of state actors, the private sector, and civil society in constituting and challenging these politics; (ii) acquire insights on the ways in which these two mega-states are involved in and 'dominate' *global* environmental and related politics; and (iii) obtain a beginning appreciation of three leading theoretical approaches to the study of global environmental governance: World-Systems Theory, Global Environmental Politics/ International Relations, and the Sociology of Networks and Flows. Students who take the optional, extended course (Part B), also will (iv) become familiar with US and Chinese involvements in one particular topic of the global environmental agenda; and (v) develop analytical skills through the application of one or more theoretical approaches to case study material on a specific topic.

METHODS/FORM. The course is structured in two parts: plenary lecturing and discussion (Part A, 3 credits, ECTS); and individual research and writing of an analytical paper on US and Chinese involvements in one particular aspect of the global environmental agenda (Part B, 3 credits, ECTS). The first part is required, the second optional; the course can thus

[1] Arguably, we could add the European Union to the superpowers. As many courses at Wageningen University and other European Universities pay sufficient in-depth attention to the role and functioning of EU environmental politics, we leave the EU in this course aside.

be taken for 3 or 6 credits. *Given the short duration of the course, students must determine the number of credits and commence working on the research paper from the beginning*.

Plenary lectures will take place every afternoon, from May 14 till May 25, with the exception of May 17 (a holiday). In these sessions, students will explore course topics through a combination of *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.

The optional analytical paper (Part B) 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). It should be 12-15 pages in length (double-spaced, plus cover sheet and references), and is due no later than 17.00, Friday, 15 June, 2007.

GRADING AND EVALUATION. (Part A) Grading will be on the basis of performance on the two written commentaries (50%), oral presentation (25%), and course attendance & participation (25%). (Part B) Grading will be on the basis of the analytical paper (100%). Grading and evaluation will be completed by 29 June, 2007.

TARGET GROUP AND PREREQUISITES. This course is designed for PhD students in social environmental sciences and environmental studies programmes (most notably through the SENSE and MGS graduate schools), and last-year Master's students in these fields. Previous graduate coursework in environmental policy, governance, or politics is required; advanced knowledge of the US and China is not.

Registration, lecturers and coordination

REGISTRATION AND FEE. PhD students can register for this course via the SENSE/WIMEK website (http://www.sense.nl/courses/course/S435), and have priority until Mon., April 16, 2007. PhD students are required to pay a fee of € 250 for this course. From April 16, last-year Master's students can register with Judith van Leeuwen: <Judith.vanleeuwen@wur.nl>. Master students can participate in this course for free. A maximum of 25 total students are allowed in the course.

TEXTS. During the course, three types of readings will be offered:

- The *required* reading is a set of texts put together as a course reader, which will be sent to you before the course starts. The required reading should be read before each lecture.
- The *recommended* reading is supplemental literature on particular topics that may be used in one of the assignments or the paper. It will be made available for downloading on the ENP website one week before the course starts, at: (http://www.enp.wur.nl/UK/education/Courses/Superpowers).
- A list of *additional* readings will be made available as well. Items on this list are suggested for further research including the paper (Part B), and after the class. Some of these items are available through the WUR libraries.

LECTURERS. The two principal lecturers are:

DR. DAVID A. SONNENFELD: He is associate member of the Environmental Policy Group and professor at Washington State University, the US. His most recent publications include *Ecological Modernisation around the World* (Routledge, 2000); *Challenging the Chip: Labor Rights and Environmental Justice in the Global Electronics Industry* (Temple University Press, 2006); and a special issue on "Environmental Reform in Asia," *Journal of Environment and Development* (2006).

DR. LEI ZHANG: She is lecturer in the Environmental Policy Group at Wageningen University. She has published widely on Chinese environmental politics and governance, among others in the journals *Environmental Politics*, *Greener Management International*, and in edited volumes.

In addition, guest lectures will be given by:
- Prof.dr. J. Timmons Roberts (Oxford University, UK; and The College of William and Mary, USA)
- Prof.dr. Eduard Vermeer (Leiden University)
- Dr. Peter Oosterveer (Wageningen University)
- Judith van Leeuwen, MSc (Wageningen University)

The coordination and logistics of the course are in the hands of Judith van Leeuwen of the Environmental Policy group, Wageningen University (de Leeuwenborch, Hollandseweg 1, Wageningen, room 2022, tel: +31.[0]317.483356, judith.vanleeuwen@wur.nl).

Course Outline

INTRODUCTION – Superpowers in Global Environmental Politics

	Date	Time	Subject	Lecturer(s)	Room
1	Monday 14/5	13.15-14.00	Introduction: Comparative setting of US and Chinese environmental politics	David Sonnenfeld, Lei Zhang	C30
		14.15-16.00	Theory: comparative and global environmental politics	David Sonnenfeld, Lei Zhang	C30
2	Tuesday 15/5	13.15-16.00	Historical perspectives on US environmental policy and politics	David Sonnenfeld	C30
3	Wednesday 16/5	13.15-16.00	Chinese environmental politics and the political system	Lei Zhang	C30

THEORY – Chinese and US Environmental Politics via Three Theoretical Lenses

	Date	Time	Subject	Lecturer(s)	Room
4	Friday 18/5	13.15-15.00	Global Environmental Politics/ International Relations Theory	Judith van Leeuwen	C406
		15.15-17.00	Student presentations; Commentary #1 due	David Sonnenfeld, Lei Zhang	C406
5	Monday 21/5	13.15-15.00	Environmental Sociology of Networks and Flows	Peter Oosterveer	C30

		15.15-17.00	Student presentations	David Sonnenfeld, Lei Zhang	C30
6	Tuesday 22/5	13.15-15.00	World-Systems Theory/ Climate Change Politics	Timmons Roberts	C30
		15.15-17.00	Student presentations	David Sonnenfeld, Lei Zhang	C30

CASES – Chinese and US Environmental Politics via Two Case Studies

	Date	**Time**	**Subject**	**Lecturer(s)**	**Room**
7	Wednesday 23/5	13.15-15.00	Case study: Toxic trade linkages between US and China	David Sonnenfeld, Lei Zhang	C30
		15.15-17.00	Student presentations	David Sonnenfeld, Lei Zhang	C30
8	Thursday 24/5	13.15-15.00	Case study: China's natural resource consumption	Eduard Vermeer	C30
		15.15-17.00	Student presentations	David Sonnenfeld, Lei Zhang	C30

CONCLUSIONS

	Date	**Time**	**Subject**	**Lecturer(s)**	**Room**
9	Friday 25/5	13.15-16.00	Conclusions: Future Prospects for Chinese and US Environmental Politics; Commentary #2 due	David Sonnenfeld, Lei Zhang	C30

Location and timing

LOCATION. Most lectures are held in room C30 in the Gaia building of Wageningen University (building no 101). The building is located at Droevendaalsesteeg 3 in Wageningen.

One exception is the lecture on Friday 18th of May. This lecture will be held in room C406, which is in the Forum building of Wageningen University (building no 102). This building is located on Droevendaalsesteeg 2 in Wageningen.

TIMING. The course will be lectured during the 5th period, May 14 till May 25, 2007, with the exception of May 17 (a holiday). Plenary lectures are every afternoon starting at 13:15 hours.

Course Outline, with Readings

SUPERPOWERS IN GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS: CHINA AND THE US

SENSE PhD course S435; ENP 50306; ENP 50803
5th period, May 14 till May 25, 2007

INTRODUCTION – Superpowers in Global Environmental Politics

	Date&Time	Subject	Lecturer(s)	Location
1	Monday 14/5 13.15-14.00	**Introduction: Comparative setting of US and Chinese environmental politics** Required readings: 1. Economy, E. (2004), "The Devil at the Doorstep," ch. 6 in *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenge to China's Future*. (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press). 2. Falkner, R. (2005), "American Hegemony and the Global Environment," *International Studies Review* v 7, n 4, pp. 585-599. Recommended reading: 3. Chasek, P.S. (forthcoming, 2007), "U.S. Policy in the UN Environmental Arena: Powerful laggard or Constructive Leader?", *International Environmental Agreements*, v7, n2 (September).	David Sonnenfeld, Lei Zhang	C30
	14.15-16.00	**Theory: comparative and global environmental politics** Required readings: 1. Spaargaren, G., et al. (2006), "Introduction: Governing Environmental Flows in Global Modernity". Ch. 1 in *Governing Environmental Flows: Global Challenges to Social Theory*, eds. Spaargaren, G., et al. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press). 2. Stevis, D., and H. Bruyninckx (2006), "Looking through the State at Environmental Flows and Governance". Ch. 4 in *Governing Environmental Flows*, eds. Spaargaren, G., et al. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press). Recommended readings: 3. Chasek, P.S., et al. (2006), *Global Environmental Politics*, 4th ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview), ch's 1 and 2.	David Sonnenfeld, Lei Zhang	C30

		4. Jänicke, M. (2002), "The Political System's Capacity for Environmental Policy: the Framework for Comparison". Pp. 1-18 in *Capacity-Building in National Environmental Policy*, eds. Weidner, H. and M. Jänicke. (Berlin: Springer-Verlag).		
2	Tuesday 15/5 13.15-16.00	**Historical perspectives on US environmental policy and politics** Required readings: 1. DeSombre, E.R. (2005), "Understanding United States Unilateralism: Domestic Sources of U.S. International Environmental Policy". In *The Global Environment: Institutions, Law, and Policy*, 2nd ed., eds. R.S. Axelrod, et al. (Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly Press). 2. Andrews, R.N.L. (2006), "[U.S.] Environmental Policy in a Global Economy", ch. 15 in *Managing the Environment, Managing Ourselves*, 2nd ed. (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press). Recommended reading: 3. McCright, A., and R. Dunlap. (2003), "Defeating Kyoto: American Conservative Movement's Impact on U.S. Climate Change Policy," *Social Problems*, v50, n3, Pp. 348-373.	David Sonnenfeld	C30
3	Wednesday 16/5 13.15-16.00	**Chinese environmental politics and the political system** Required readings: 1. Jahiel, A.R. (1998), “The Organization of Environmental Protection in China”, *The China Quarterly*, n156, Pp. 757-787, published by School of Oriental and African Studies. 2. Orts, E.W. (2003), “Environmental Law with Chinese Characteristics”, *William and Mary Bill of Rights Journal*, v. 11, Pp. 545-567. Recommended reading: 3. Xue, L., U.E. Simonis, et al. (2006), "Environmental Governance in China", Report of the Task Force on Environmental Governance, China Council of International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED), Beijing (ch. 1 and 2). Available: http://skylla.wz-berlin.de/pdf/2007/p07-001.pdf	Lei Zhang	C30

THEORY – Chinese and US Environmental Politics via Three Theoretical Lenses

	Date&Time	Subject	Lecturer(s)	Location
4	Friday 18/5 08:30	Written Commentary #1 due		via e-mail
	13.15-15.00	**Global Environmental Politics/ Int'l Relations Theory** Required readings: 1. Paterson, M. (2005), "Theoretical perspectives on international environmental politics". Ch. 3 In *Palgrave Advances in International Environmental Politics*, eds. M.M. Betsill, et al. (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave). 2. Downie, D.L. (2005), "Global Environmental Policy: Governance through Regimes". Ch. 4 In *The Global Environment: Institutions, Law, and Policy*, 2nd ed., eds. R.S. Axelrod, et al. (Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly Press).	Judith van Leeuwen	C406
	15.15-17.00	Student presentations	David Sonnenfeld, Lei Zhang	C406
5	Monday 21/5 13.15-15.00	**Environmental Sociology of Networks and Flows** Required readings: 1. Oosterveer, P. (2007), *Global Governance of Food Production and Consumption; Issues and Challenges*, (Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing). Ch's 2 and 3. Recommended reading: 2. Mol, A.P.J., and G. Spaargaren. (2006), "Toward a Sociology of Environmental Flows". Ch. 2 in *Governing Environmental Flows*, eds. Spaargaren, G., et al. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press).	Peter Oosterveer	C30
	15.15-17.00	Student presentations	David Sonnenfeld, Lei Zhang	C30
6	Tuesday 22/5 13.15-15.00	**World-Systems Theory/ Climate Change Politics** Required readings: 1. Roberts, J.T., and B.C. Parks. (2007), *A Climate of Injustice: Global Inequality, North-South Politics, and Climate Policy* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press), ch's 1, 2 and 6	Timmons Roberts	C30

		Recommended readings: 2. U.S. Dept. of State. (2004), "U.S. Climate Change Policy" [fact sheet], November 19. Available: http://www.state.gov/g/oes/rls/fs/2004/38641.htm 3. Yangtze Yan. (2006), "China Calls for Completing Post-Kyoto Talks by 2009". *Gov.cn*, November 16. Available: http://english.gov.cn/2006-11/16/content_443768.htm 4. Elkington, J., and J. Thorpe. (2007), "China's Elephant in the Room," *ChinaDialogue.net*, March 20. Available: http://www.chinadialogue.net/article/show/single/en/864-Climate-s-		
	15.15-17.00	Student presentations	David Sonnenfeld, Lei Zhang	C30

CASES – Chinese and US Environmental Politics via Two Case Studies

	Date&Time	**Subject**	**Lecturer(s)**	**Location**
7	Wednesday 23/5 13.15-15.00	**Case study: Toxic trade linkages between US and China** Required readings: 1. Basel Action Network and Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition. (2002), "Exporting Harm: The High-Tech Trashing of Asia". Available: http://www.ban.org/E-waste/technotrashfinalcomp.pdf. 2. Puckett, J. (2006), "High-tech's Dirty Little Secret". Ch. 20 in *Challenging the Chip: Labor Rights and Environmental Justice in the Global Electronics Industry* (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press). Recommended reading: 3. Greenpeace China, various reports, press releases, etc. Available: http://www.greenpeace.org/china/en/campaigns/toxics. 4. Raphael, C., & T. Smith. (2006), "Importing EPR for Electronic Equipment into the U.S.". Ch. 22 in *Challenging the Chip: Labor Rights and Environmental Justice in the Global Electronics Industry* (Phila.: Temple Univ. Press).	David Sonnenfeld, Lei Zhang	C30
	15.15-17.00	Student presentations	Sonnenfeld/ Zhang	C30

8	Thursday 24/5 13.15-15.00	**Case study: China's natural resource consumption** Required readings: 1. Vermeer, E.B. (2007). *Determining factors in China's fossil energy use and its environmental impact*, Leiden University 2. Lieberthal, K., and M. Herberg (2006). "China's Search for Energy Security: Implications for U.S. Policy", *NBR Analysis*, v17, n1 (April), National Bureau of Asian Research, Seattle, USA. Available: http://www.nbr.org/publications/analysis/pdf/vol17no1.pdf Recommended reading: 3. Liu, J.G., and J. Diamond (2005), "China's environment in a globalizing world", *Nature*, v 435, June 30, pp. 1179-1186. Supplementary material available: <http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v435/n7046/suppinfo/ 4351179a.html>.	Eduard Vermeer	C30
	15.15-17.00	Student presentations	David Sonnenfeld, Lei Zhang	C30

CONCLUSIONS

	Date&Time	Subject	Lecturer(s)	Location
9	Friday 25/5 08:30	Written Commentary #2 due		via e-mail
	13.15-16.00	**Conclusions: Future Prospects for Chinese and US Environmental Politics** Required readings: 1. Carter, N. T., and A.P J. Mol. (2006), "China and the Environment: Domestic and Transnational Dynamics of a Future Hegemon." *Environmental Politics* v15 n2, Pp. 330-44. 2. Friedman, T.L. (2007), "The Power of Green," *New York Times Magazine*, April 15. [cover article] Recommended readings: 3. Mol, A.P.J. (2006), "Environment and Modernity in Transitional China: Frontiers of Ecological Modernization," *Development and Change*, v37 n1, Pp. 29-56. 4. Zhang, L., A.P.J. Mol and D.A. Sonnenfeld, (forthcoming, 2007) "The Interpretation of Ecological Modernisation in China" *Environmental Politics*.	David Sonnenfeld, Lei Zhang	C30

Supplemental Bibliography

SUPERPOWERS IN GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS: CHINA AND THE US

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I. Global environmental politics: the context

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II. Environment and politics in China

Aldhous, P. (2005), "Energy: China's Burning Ambition," *Nature*, v435, n30 (June), pp. 1152-1154. Available at: http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v435/n7046/pdf/4351152a.pdf.

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