

Global Environmental Governance

HU3900 C22

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Overview

Welcome everyone to Global Environmental Governance

I'm Prof. William San Martín. I'm a historian and scholar of science and technology studies passionate about global environmental issues at the interaction of knowledge, policy, and inequalities.

This is the second time I'll be leading this seminar, and I'm very excited.

How will this class work?

To reduce risk while on campus, **I decided to move this class to a fully remote format for the first two weeks of the term.** We can re-assess conditions on campus after this, and hopefully return to fully in-person. Please follow this link to join this class while in remote-only format <https://wpi.zoom.us/j/96195990507> (Links to an external site.)

What to do before our first day of class?

There are no readings assigned for our first day. However, make sure you read our overview module and important information about expectations and grades. Ask questions if you have them.

My availability

I'll hold office hours on **Mondays (2-3pm) or by appointment**. If you want to meet during office hours, **let me know in advance if you'd prefer to meet online or in-person**. If online, please use this [link \(Links to an external site.\)](#) to join. I am also available for socially distancing outdoor meetings on Campus by appointment. I'm a big fan of walking meetings so we can also do that if the weather allows.

Welcome again and reach out if you have any questions!

Prof. San Martín

Seminar Description, Outcomes, and Expectations

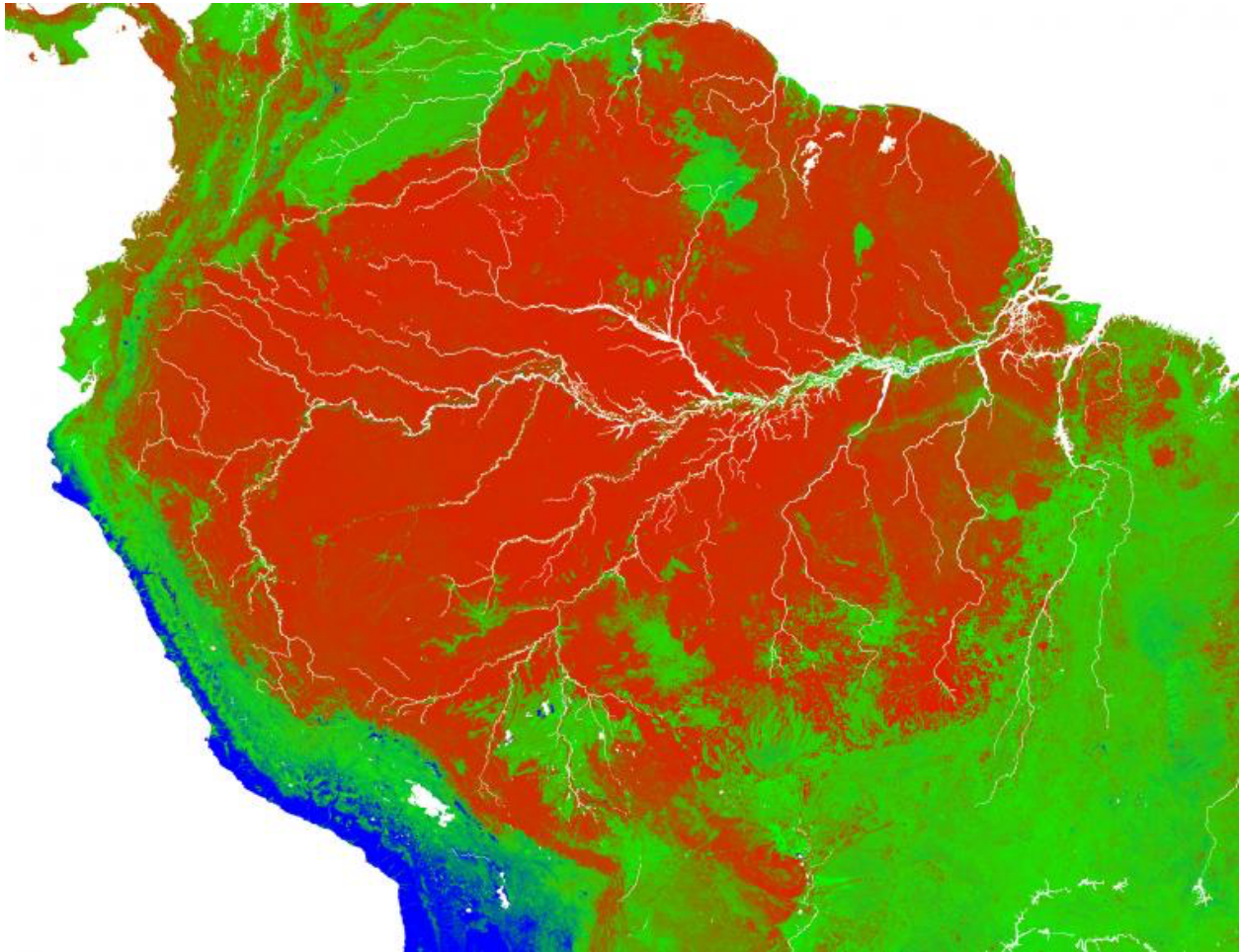


Photo: Deforestation Patterns in the Amazon, by Robert Simmon, based on data provided by the University of Maryland's [Global Land Cover Facility](#) (Links to an external site.).

NASA Earth

Observatory, <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/4385/deforestation-patterns-in-the-amazon> (Links to an external site.)

Seminar Description:

Since the rise to prominence of global, transboundary environmental issues in the 1980s—from Chernobyl to climate change, stratospheric ozone depletion, reduction of the tropical rainforest, and the rise of "sustainable development"—environmental policy has shifted from a domestic focus toward international coordination and global governance. This new "architecture," developed during the final years of the Cold War and manifested most completely in the 2015 Paris Agreement, calls for a more interconnected approach to the global history and politics of environmental policy.

This seminar uses comparative analysis to examine the social and ecological histories of global environmental policy. What similar challenges and lessons can we extract from the history of environmental management and governance in Uganda's Echuya forest reserve, and the Monteverde Cloud Forest in Costa Rica? What novel approaches can we craft from a greater understanding of the vast array of social responses to environmental problems in countries around the globe? What can developed nations learn from the expansion of environmental innovation and environmental justice movements in developing countries? how issues of justice and inequalities have entered (or not) the international environmental agenda? What is the role of colonialism, environmental movements, and scientific networks in this process?

Some topics might include but are not restricted to: *the role of scientific advisory panels and environmental assessments in transboundary policy; the need to integrate traditional indigenous knowledge into environmental planning and assessment; the place of Cold War and Post-Cold War politics in the expansion of global environmental policy; how non-state actors such as NGOs, environmental justice movements, and citizen-science advocacy groups have shape political and policy responses; the place of race and gender in environmental conflicts and justice; the lessons and challenges of environmental management and policy in developing countries; the inequalities of resources, knowledge, and pollution between the Global North and South; the politics and metrics of environmental risk and toxicity; and the challenges of integrating "rights of nature" with ongoing debates about humans rights and development in policy and social activism.*

Seminar Outcome:

This inquiry seminar serves as the culmination of the Humanities and Arts Requirement. All Inquiry Seminars have two primary goals: 1) to foster **independence of thought through self-directed research and writing**, and 2) to encourage a **cooperative approach** to learning through open exchanges with peers in a small seminar setting. Students will learn how to frame questions and to research and write about a self-chosen topic related to the theme of this seminar.

The main outcome of this seminar is to produce a piece of original research between 3000 and 5000 words (excluding references). **The title and abstract of this work will**

appear on your transcript. They should provide a professional summary of your work that you will be proud to see on your transcript.

Learning Outcomes:

Each student who completes this inquiry seminar will:

- Frame and investigate a significant research question in a thematic area
- Identify appropriate scholarship using the library and other resources
- Evaluate which sources are the most reliable and authoritative
- Develop their own argument about the research question using relevant evidence
- Discuss the work of other students in the seminar in a spirit of openness, cooperation, and dialogue

Expectations & Policies:

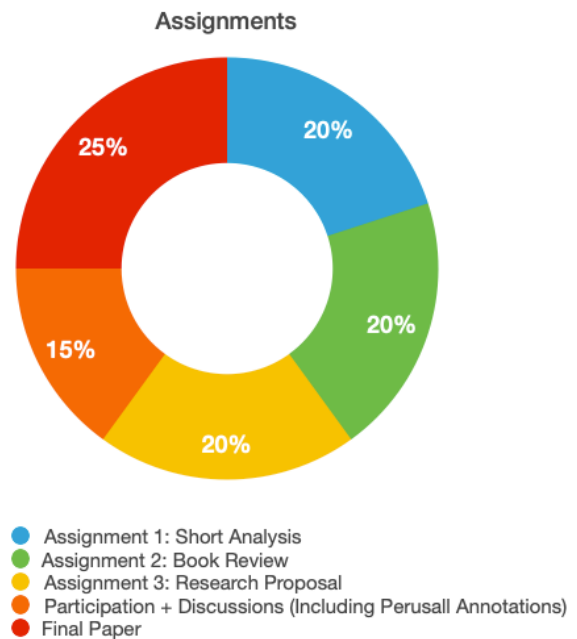
- **Critical thinking and more critical thinking:** Students are expected to think critically and independently about an area that requires research and investigation, communicate their thoughts effectively, and participate in a collaborative community of learning.
- **Researching, reading, writing, re-writing, editing, and more editing:** Independent research begins with the ability to define a topic, survey work relevant to your subject, and develop a bibliography. But diligent research is merely the first step towards writing a good paper in a scholarly manner. You should also demonstrate the ability to organize, analyze, and integrate the material into a novel argument. Even experienced scholars find this a challenge. Developing an innovative argument and good writing require several sessions researching, rewriting, peer-reviewing, and revising. Plan accordingly and ask for assistance.
- **Weekly reading:** All students are expected to do the required weekly reading which will form the basis for seminar discussion.
- **All assignments, attendance, and participation are mandatory.** If an emergency happens, reach out as soon as you can.
- **Deadlines are sometimes flexible:** I want you to take this class and its assignments seriously. I expect you to plan accordingly and save the time to engage with the assigned materials and prepare the assignments meaningfully. If you anticipate that you won't be able to provide the time/mental effort that an assignment requires, reach out to me as soon as you can to check if an extension is possible. Sometimes an extension will affect the following assignment so that an extension won't be possible. Sometimes an extension is completely fine.

- **Questions are a prerequisite to learning:** You will learn from experts and established scholars. This is a challenging class, and therefore, it is expected that you might feel disoriented. Reach out before it's too late, ask questions in class, or reach out to me after class. I want to make sure you understand where we are going and why.

Grades & Assignments

Grading Summary

ASSIGNMENTS	
Assignment 1: Short Analysis	20%
Assignment 2: Book Review	20%
Assignment 3: Research Proposal	20%
Participation + Discussions (Including Perusall Annotations)	15%
Final Paper	25%
TOTAL	100%



Short Analysis

Based on the readings assigned for today and the additional material(s) you picked, write a short analysis (500-800 words) including the main arguments, evidence, and connections among them. Make sure you cover the basics and point out the importance of their findings. Include quotes or in-text citations. You will use this analysis as a guide for you during our discussion.

In addition, revise some of the reference lists in these readings. Check for titles and topics you might be interested in as potential themes to develop as a research project. Please select one or two references, take a quick read to understand their argument/methods/conclusions, and write a short paragraph (100-200 words) on how you envision a potential research project emerging from that work (including proper reference).

All citations and references should follow APA, MLA, or Chicago Standards.

Book Review

While reading, you might find it difficult to identify the book's main arguments or differentiate what's essential and what is not. An academic book usually takes years and years of research in addition to at least a couple of years of writing. It usually goes for several rounds of peer review. So, it is natural that you might find it overwhelming.

Either in the reading process or after, you might find it helpful to search for other book reviews written about this book (other scholars examining and clarifying its arguments/strengths/weaknesses for readers that might find it important for their research projects. Either before, while, or after reading, please read at least three book reviews for the work you are reading (or just finished), go back to the sections the review highlights, and compare with your notes to make sure you fully grasp the basics of the book and its contribution to academic discussions.

After this, meet other members of the class that also read the same book. You will now work together in writing a new book review so others in this class can learn about this work. Please be proactive and professional in coordinating times to meet. Collect and bring to your meetings meaningful notes/ideas/quotes/analyses that you and your team might use while drafting your book review.

To draft your book review, please use this guide <https://hist.ucalgary.ca/atimm/writing-advice/howtos/bookrev>. If you are struggling regarding the format, language, or what to include or what to leave out, think about what book reviews were more useful to you (and why) and feel free to reach out to me. I'd be happy to take a quick look.

Your book review should be one or two pages (single space). One member of your team, please post it here (including names of all co-authors) by midnight Wednesday the 26th.

All seminar members should read all book reviews before our session on Thursday. These book reviews will be the basis for our discussion that day.

Research Proposal

Each seminar member will submit a Project Proposal Summary (maximum 1 page, single-spaced). The Project Summary consists of 1) an overview, 2) a statement on the intellectual merit of the proposed research, 3) a statement on its broader impacts, and 4) a list of at least 10 secondary sources and at least 5 primary (historical) sources.

The overview should include a description of the research questions, a statement of methods to be employed, and expected outcomes. Although an overview, precise and accurate statements are fundamental. Coherence between research questions, methods, and outcomes is a primary condition for effective interdisciplinary research.

The statement on intellectual merit should describe the potential of the proposed research project to advance knowledge across disciplinary fields. Make explicit how distinct research methods will provide a unique set of data and their contribution to specific academic fields (e.g., environmental history, ecological economic, public policy, environmental governance).

The statement on broader impacts should describe the potential of the proposed research to benefit society and contribute to the achievement of specific, desired socio-environmental outcomes. We all expect our research to change the world, but more often than what we would like, the impacts of our research are narrow and only useful in specific realms. That's ok, thinking about impacts as building blocks that need to be in place so more significant changes can happen. That means, be concrete, specific, and realistic about the expected outcomes of your research. An apple tree will never provide pears; your outcomes will be defined by your research questions and methods.

The Project Summary should be informative to other persons working in the same or related fields, and, understandable to a scientifically or technically literate lay reader.

Take a look at these examples (link to be added). Please consider that these examples (one from a former student and two awarded NFS projects) are just real-world examples of how others have responded to a similar task. Pay attention to how they are populating each section and providing critical information. Take anything that would help you address this assignment and the challenge of your project, but keep in mind this is a unique assignment and your proposal will be a unique response to your research problem.

When crafting your research questions and methods, pay close attention to what you have learned in this class, including:

- How would you balance social, economic, political, cultural, and ecological dimensions?
- How would you balance local, regional, transregional, global, or planetary scales?
- What kinds of disciplinary expertise will your research be building upon and contributing to?
- How will your sources allow you (or not) to answer these questions?

Please submit your project proposal as a Word Doc here by midnight on Wednesday Feb. 2nd. Read and comment on at least two projects from this class before our session on Thursday.

Resources & Support

[Need Accommodations? Course Adaptations or Accommodations](#)

I fully support the use of accommodations.

If you have not already done so, students who believe that they may need accommodations in this course are encouraged to contact the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. The OAS is located in Daniels Hall. Their phone number is 508.831.4908 and email is accessibilityservices@wpi.edu. Furthermore, please reach out to me to allow me to advocate with you and implement accommodations.

Need Help with your Research? Research and Instructional Support

This class requires students to find information sources for research papers and projects. Appropriate sources include scholarly and peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and well-respected news magazines and newspapers.

Please check the following instructional videos on research tools available via our library.

- WPI Library Search Box: <https://youtu.be/mqsqDeCOBN8> (Links to an external site.)
- Locating Relevant Databases at WPI: <https://youtu.be/WGe9Qa9H86c> (Links to an external site.)
- Searching a Database and Retrieving Full-Text Articles at WPI: <https://youtu.be/aBW5OdTy94Y> (Links to an external site.)
- Google Scholar: [Google Scholar](#) (Links to an external site.)
- Evaluating Sources for Credibility: <https://youtu.be/oeGMT30xnP4> (Links to an external site.)
- You can always reach out to our WPI's Research and Instruction Librarians throughout the term at any time

Need Help with your Writing?

The Writing Center offers one-on-one consultations to help you improve as a writer. Writing Center tutors will read your written work, give you feedback about your document's strengths and weaknesses, and help you chart a path forward as you revise. For this term, all consultations will take place via online connection and document sharing instead of a face to face, but you'll still get real-time feedback through conversation with a peer tutor. Consultations are free and open to all WPI students for all classes and projects, and tutors will happily work with you at any stage of the writing process (early brainstorming, revising a draft, polishing sentences in a final draft). To learn more about their online tutoring and how to schedule a one-hour appointment, go to the Writing Center homepage: wpi.edu/+writing

Schedule

Week 1 (1/13) Introduction

Week 2 (1/20) From Global Environmental Policy to Earth System Governance

Required Readings

- Researching Global Environmental Politics in the 21st Century (Dauvergne and Clapp)
- The future of 'environmental' policy in the Anthropocene: time for a paradigm shift (Biermann)
- The Rise of Global Environmental Governance: A History of the Contemporary Human-Earth Relationship (ERC Advanced Grant, Sörlin)
- Pluralising planetary justice beyond the North-South divide: Recentring procedural, epistemic, and recognition-based justice in earth-systems governance (San Martín & Wood)

Students Pick (at least) One:

- Science as Power in International Environmental Negotiations: Global Environmental Assessments Between North and South (Biermann)
- Global Warming in an Unequal World. A Case of Environmental Colonialism (Agarwal and Narain)
- Varieties of environmentalism: essays North and South (Guha and Martínez Alier) Chapter 1 & 2
- Addendum to 'Assessing ExxonMobil's climate change communications (1977–2014)' (Supran and Oreskes)
- Assignment

Assignment 1: Short Analysis

Week 3 (1/27) Four Histories of Global Governance: From Climate Models to the Politics of Sustainable Development

Students will read one of the following books.

Please check the "People" section on Canvas to know what book you'll be assigned. All books are available in a digital format via the WPI library. Some of them are also available in printed form, but there are few copies. If you would rather read a printed copy and there are no available, you can also borrow my copy. Just let me know.

Students in Group 1 will read:

- The Untold Story of the World's Leading Environmental Institution: UNEP at Fifty (Maria Ivanova) MIT Press, 2021

Students in Group 2 will read:

- Defining Sustainable Development for Our Common Future (Iris Borowy) Routledge, 2014

Students in Group 3 will read:

- Of Limits and Growth. The Rise of Global Sustainable Development in the Twentieth Century (Stephen Macekura) Cambridge University Press, 2015

Students in Group 4 will read:

- A Vast Machine Computer Models, Climate Data, and the Politics of Global Warming (Paul Edwards) MIT Press, 2010

Assignment 2: Book Review

Week 4 (2/3) Project Proposals

Week 5 (2/10) Research Updates Roundtable

Week 6 (2/17) Research Preliminary Results Presentation

Week 7 (3/3) Final Presentation and Seminar Assessment