

## **Mainstreaming Climate/Environment in Asia** **WWS 402e Policy Task Force**

(Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University)

Thursdays 7:30-10:00pm

Instructor:  
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Senior Commissioner:  
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### **Course objectives:**

Asia accounts for 60% of the world population, while producing more than 30% of the global GDP. The region is also known for its hot spots of greenhouse gas emissions, water and air pollution, forest degradation, and biodiversity loss, all of which may invite large-scale natural disasters.

Prioritizing the environmental agenda is a challenge, especially in countries still suffering from poverty and domestic inequality. It is estimated that China alone has 10 million poor people living under the budget of \$1.90 (international poverty line) a day. Under such conditions, it is natural that governments place greater emphasis on economic development and infrastructure buildings at the expense of the environment. Where economic development is urgently sought after, what role can UN agencies play in mainstreaming an environmental agenda?

The overall goal of this policy task force is to identify key dilemmas/trade-offs between environment and sustainable development in the context of Asia (e.g., mining and forest conservation, energy development and pollution control), and to suggest strategies to the UN agencies (as well as to the donor communities) how best to mainstream environmental agendas. We focus particularly on how the international community can help countries address the question of inequality (i.e., uneven impacts on different groups of people - urban vs rural, gender, or socio-economic and ethnic groups) in pursuing environmental and sustainability objectives: the question often masked by economic growth.

The first third of the semester will consist of short lectures on broader themes of environment and development in Asia, followed by a discussion on assigned readings. Students are expected to explore and narrow down their paper topics by Week 4. Please be reminded that none of the readings are meant to replace your own analysis based on your own research.

The second part of the course consists of guest lectures and the following discussions. Guest lecturers are mostly practitioners who have had hands-on experiences working with aspects of “mainstreaming environment”. They offer excellent opportunities to “test” your own ideas and explore topics to include in your final report.

The final section will concentrate on practice presentations – not just to develop presentation skills, but also the ideas and how they can come together as one unified recommendation. The grand finale will take the form of final presentations in front of the UN officers in NYC in early May.

### **Grades:**

50% Task Force Research Paper

10% Briefing Paper of Research Paper

15% Oral Presentation

25% Group Participation

### **Possible Topics:**

The following are the possible questions that could be asked to guide each paper. They are examples and you are expected to use these to develop your own question. Sample questions are grouped into 1) country case studies, and 2) thematic and methodological studies. Group 1 type of questions mostly emphasize the conflict between the long-term interests of a particular country (and of the globe) and short-term economic interests. Yet, certain conflicts may arise among the long-term goods (e.g., national security and the environment). Group 2 expands to address cross national and systematic topics.

Please develop two or three scenarios and discuss topic choices individually with the instructor during Week 2 to ensure minimal overlap of research themes. Try to come up with better ways to frame the question as the term progresses, especially in line with questions asked by your classmates working on other chapters.

### **Examples of Country Case Studies**

- 1) How can China reduce air pollution where majority of the rural poor must rely on coal energy?
- 2) How can Malaysia and Indonesia protect their forest when oil palm is making so much money for the farmers and the government?
- 3) How can Japan attain CO<sub>2</sub> emission target without giving up on nuclear power as a reliable energy source?
- 4) How can poor countries like Laos and Cambodia conserve its forest and contribute to combatting global climate change while accelerating economic development and reducing inequalities?
- 5) How are island countries like the Philippines coping with sea level rise disaster risk ?

### **Examples of Thematic/Methodological Studies**

- 6) Rural development and climate: What are the connections, what policies should take place in view of SDGs?
- 7) Indicators: What are the appropriate indicators for measuring progress in environmental conservation?
- 8) Finance: How can we finance SDGs in general and climate change mitigation in particular?
- 9) Actors: What is the role of regional organization such as ASEAN?
- 10) Science and technology: How does science relate to policy decision? What are the impacts of technology on climate change?

### **Course Format:**

This class is tailored towards improving individual junior papers with a common interest striving to make a practical impact to our client (i.e., the UN). Typically, our meeting consists of a combination of short lectures and discussions based on assigned readings. The lecture will provide a broader background on weekly topics, while the discussion will be geared more towards drafting the final recommendations. While the immediate goal of the task force is

to come up with powerful policy recommendations, the ultimate goal is for students to understand the key dilemmas of environmental mainstreaming in the Asian context and how best to address them in individual papers.

Each class will have two discussion facilitators who will jointly prepare what questions to discuss and why they are important based on the assigned readings. While we expect everyone to read the assigned readings, the facilitators should re-emphasize the main points of each reading before moving on to the discussion. If you are assigned to one of the guest lecture series, you are expected to lead the discussion based on the main topic of the day.

## Schedule:

### Week 1 (Feb 6) **Introduction to the Theme**

Topics: (1) Overview of environment and development agenda globally with specific attention to Asia  
 (2) The role of policy recommendations and the shifting of international agenda from MDGs to SDGs

Student Work: Explore paper topics

Read:

- 1) Asian Development Bank. 2017. *A Region at Risk: The Human Dimensions of Climate Change in Asia and the Pacific*. ADB.
- 2) Lidia Brito. 2012. "Analyzing Sustainable Development Goals," *Science* Vol. 336. Issue 6087, pp. 1396-1396.

### Week 2 (Feb 13) **What is the Problem? What is a (good) Policy Paper?**

Topics: 1) What exactly is the "climate problem" in Asia?  
 2) Discussion on 3 assigned readings (two facilitators)  
 3) How are policy papers different from research papers?

Student Work: Start researching on individual topics. Explore past JPs.

Student Work: Selection of topics

Lecture: Framing Environmental Problems

- Read: 1) World Social Report 2021 (draft concept note)  
 2) World Economic and Social Survey 2016: *Climate Change Resilience: an opportunity for reducing inequalities*. UN DESA.  
 3) Fukuda-Parr, S. 2019. "Keeping Out Extreme Inequality from the SDG Agenda—The Politics of Indicators," *Global Policy* Vol. 10, Supplement 1, 61-69.

Recommended Reading:

Susskind, L. 2001. *Better Environmental Policy Studies*. Island Press.

\*Please make individual appointments with the instructor regarding topic selection.  
Prepare a prospectus and a drafting plan (time table) prior to the meeting.

### Week 3 (Feb 20) **Anatomy of Climate/Environmental Policies**

Topics: Why not follow the logic of “grow first, clean up later”? Why do we need mainstreaming?

Student Work: Continue researching on individual topics

Lecture: Policy Process: Inside the State

Read:

- 1) Keohane, R. 2015. “Global Politics for Climate Change: Challenge for Political Science,” *PS, Political Science & Politics* 48.1 : 19-26.
- 2) Sato, J. 2011. “State Inaction in Resource Governance: Natural Resource Control and Bureaucratic Oversight in Thailand,” in Sato, J. ed. *Governance of Natural Resources: Social Purpose of Materials in Nature*. UNU Press.

### Week 4 (Feb 27) **The Role of UN in Environmental Mainstreaming**

Topics: What is the priority of the UN? How does UN work?

Start Drafting: Make appointments with the instructor as necessary.

Student Work: Adjust framing of the paper

Lecture: Environmental Aid and the Leverage of International Organization

Read:

- 1) Barbara Adams and Jens Martens. 2015. *Fit for whose purpose? Private funding and corporate influence in the United Nations*. Global Policy Forum.
- 2) Lewis, T. 2003 “Environmental Aid: Driven by recipient needs or donor interests?” *Social Science Quarterly* Vol. 84, Issue 1, pages 144–161.
- 3) Milner, H. 2006. “Why multilateralism? Foreign aid and domestic principal-agent problems,” in Hawkins, D. *et al.* eds. *Delegation and Agency in International Organizations*. Cambridge University Press.

Week 5 (Mar 5) **Guest Lecture 1** (Ray Asada, University of Tokyo)

Topic: Rural Development and Sustainability: Growth without Urbanization?

Student Work: Continue drafting. Prepare at least two questions for our guest.

Student Work: Adjust framing of the paper

\*Prior to the guest lecture, we will have a special information session with Elana Broch of the Donald E. Stokes Library on how to make the best use of the WWS library for your junior papers.

Week 6 (Mar 12) Midterm Week, No class

-----Spring Recess----

Week 7 (March 26) **Guest Lecture 2** (Manuel F. Montes Senior Advisor, Society for International Development)

Focus: How can developing countries finance climate/environmental projects in Asia? What can UN do to assist the financing?

Student Work: Continue drafting. Prepare at least 2 questions for our guest.

Week 8 (April 2) **Guest Lecture 3** (UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs)

Focus: How does UN work to mainstream environmental agenda? What are the main challenges? How can we make our junior papers more relevant?

Student Work: Juniors' draft paper (which should not exceed 24 pages) and briefing memos (one or two page) due.

Week 9 (Apr 9) Oral Presentation (1) (3 students)

Week 10 (Apr 16) Oral Presentation (2) (3 students)

Senior Commissioner begins drafting the final report.

Week 11 (Apr 23) Chapter Consolidation and Practice Final Presentation.

Week 12 (TBA) Final Presentation at the UN in New York City

**Important Dates:****INDIVIDUAL PAPERS AND BRIEFING MEMOS DUE 5:00 PM, TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2020**

SUBMITTED TO THE DIRECTOR All individual papers and briefing memos must be submitted no later than 5:00 PM, on May 5. Students who do not hand in their individual research papers on the due date may receive a grade of F for the paper unless they have requested an extension in advance and received approval for it from the dean of the student's residential college. Extensions may or may not be subject to late penalties.

**FINAL TASK FORCE REPORT TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2020 SUBMITTED TO THE DIRECTOR**

A copy of the final report must be submitted to the Seminar director by the senior commissioner(s) or graduate consultant no later than May 12th.

**Some suggested readings on environmental issues in Asia**

- (1) The Economist (2013) China and the environment: The East is grey, Aug 10th 2013.
- (2) Coxhead, I. (2003) Development and the Environment in Asia. *Asian-Pacific Economic Literature*, 17: 22–54.
- (3) James D. Seymour (2010) Saving Asia's Environment, *Critical Asian Studies* Vol. 35, Issue. 2: 325-335.
- (4) Shin, Sagbum. 2015. "Environmental policy in East Asia: Institutions in comparative perspective," in Harris, P and G. Lang. eds. *Routledge Handbook of Environment and Society in Asia*. Routledge.
- (5) Felix Dodds, Jorge Laguna-Celis, Liz Thompson 2014 *Building a Bridge to a Sustainable Future From Rio+20 to a New Development Agenda*. Routledge.