EAS 677.123: CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL GEOPOLITICS

Winter 2022 – 2 credits
Mondays 1pm to 3:00pm
Class Meeting Room: 3556 Dana Building

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Course outline
Although the topic of geopolitics is not new, its application to the fields of environment and sustainability are becoming more important for both theory and practice. A number of new books, articles and approaches have centred around international environmental geopolitics that focus on (as Dalby has stated): 1. Inquiring into how human agency, and particularly uneven power relationships, is portrayed or obscured in geopolitical claims about environmental issues, and; (2) 2. Recognize ways in which selective, spatial focus, such as universal generalizations about environmental processes or place-specific, environmental situations, serve to legitimize particular perspectives or political interests.

The purpose of this class is to look at these questions within the context of terrestrial, atmospheric, oceanic, and outer space contexts. The class would be taught in a seminar-style with two readings per week being discussed. Evaluation would include a short response paper at the end of term.

Important COVID-19 Policies
We understand that the COVID-19 pandemic creates unprecedented, stressful circumstances that affect your academic, professional, and personal capacities. We pledge to be intentional and adaptable in supporting your physical and psychological health needs, which will undoubtedly be affected by the pandemic during the semester; we ask the same of you for us. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with your concerns and needs. Regardless of class format, we are committed to continuing to provide you with a meaningful learning opportunity this semester.

See Maize and Blueprint for the latest updates about the University of Michigan and COVID-19.

To best and most safely serve all course participants currently, please read this document in its entirety.

Course and Safety Logistics
For the time being, our course will be offered in a synchronous or “live”, in-person/hybrid format. Due to the discussion-based nature of our course, all students, whether remote or in-person, are required to join our lecture and discussion at the designated class time. All students will have access to the Zoom link for each
session, if in-person learners need to stay home. If you are unable to attend a session, please let the Graduate Student Instructor know as soon as possible.

Course Communications
All course communications will be sent via Canvas Notifications and email (course listserv: EAS542-2020@umich.edu). Please be sure to check both frequently. The Graduate Student Instructor should be the first point of contact for questions or concerns about the course, logistics, and assignments.

In-Person Safety Logistics
For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been required for our protection. By returning to campus, you have acknowledged your responsibility for protecting the collective health of our community. Your participation in this course on an in-person basis is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the State of Michigan and the University, including maintaining physical distancing of six feet from others, and properly wearing a face covering in class. Other applicable safety measures may be described in the Wolverine Culture of Care, the University’s Face Covering Policy for COVID-19 and SEAS Questions & Concerns document. Your ability to participate in this course in-person as well as your grade may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the Office for Institutional Equity. If you are unable or unwilling to adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, you will be required to participate on a remote basis (if available) or to disenroll from the class. We also encourage you to review the Statement of Students Rights and Responsibilities and check-in with the Office of Academic Affairs Director to navigate support and resources for you.

In-person sessions will be offered as long as it is safe in Ann Arbor. The opportunity to take this course in person depends on everyone’s ability to abide by all safety regulations:

- Each room will have a defined layout to accommodate social distancing.
- Students will have assigned seats to assist with contact tracing in the event of an exposure.
- Each room will be equipped with disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer. Students are responsible for disinfecting their table/chair when they enter the room at the start of class and using hand sanitizer.
- Each student will be provided with a starter kit with two masks, two bandanas, and a small bottle of sanitizer.
- Students are required to wear face coverings, wash after each day of use, and bring their own hand sanitizer for personal use.
- If you are feeling unwell, please stay home and access the course remotely. All students will have access to the online lecture for each offering.
- If you are unable or unwilling to adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, you will be required to participate on a remote basis or to disenroll from the class.

Follow safety precautions and practice recommended procedures to minimize the spread of COVID-19. Stay home or leave class if you:

- Have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Are sick.
- Have been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19.

Remote Learning Logistics
This course will be offered through Zoom Meetings. Each remote-learner is required to download the Zoom application. This is the only software required for this course. Please see the below requirements for remote learning:

- This course is synchronous. This means that all students are required to attend the lecture at the designated course time:
- Students are strongly encouraged to have their webcams turned on for the entire duration of the class session. This allows for better engagement with course materials, classmates, and the instructors. However, we understand that there may be situations in which this is not possible.
- Please keep your mic muted unless you are speaking.
- Due to the hybrid format of this course, we would like those who are remote learners to still engage verbally as much as possible. We ask that you utilize the chat function in Zoom to request an opportunity to speak and the Graduate Student Instructor will moderate the chat to give everyone the opportunity to participate to their fullest potential.

**Preparedness to Switch to Fully Remote**

If the situation evolves in such a manner that in-person/hybrid learning is not possible, we will switch to a fully remote format. In this case, session formats will consist of approximately 45 minutes of lecture from Dr. Butt followed by smaller group breakout discussion sessions for the remainder of the available time. One of these breakouts will be facilitated by Dr. Butt and the other by the Graduate Student Instructor. However, given the unprecedented nature of this situation, we anticipate that we may need to amend plans to provide the best possible learning experience for our students. We ask for your patience, understanding, and adaptability throughout the course of the semester.

**Copyright / Privacy Information**

Course lectures will be audio/video recorded and made available to students only in the event that they are unable to attend the class due to a reasonable explanation. As part of your participation in this course, you may be recorded. If you do not wish to be recorded, please contact the Graduate Student Instructor the first week of class (or as soon as you enroll in the course, whichever is latest) to discuss alternative arrangements. Otherwise you will be asked to consent to be recorded for the purpose of sharing the recording with your classmates.

Students are prohibited from recording/distributing any Class Activity or Material without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student’s own private use.

Please see the Recording and Privacy Concerns FAQ for additional information.

**Course prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites, but I assume that students have a working knowledge of where places are located and can find out if they do not. This class is intended primarily for Masters and PhD students who are focused on research. It is theoretically heavy and draws on multiple epistemological approaches to the study of people and the environment.

**Course format**
Classes are discussion-oriented and draw heavily on readings from the literature (both the required and in some cases, the supplemental readings). Some discussions will be led by students and will involve the preparation of a carefully thought out set of discussion questions or discussion points. Material for the handouts can be drawn from the readings (e.g. key figures) or from other sources. All students are expected to do the readings and to be ready to discuss them in class.

**Discussion Signup**

Each week, a pair of students will prepare a list of questions for discussion and should be prepared to facilitate the discussion. This is intended to provide students with the ability to learn how to facilitate a group discussion and provide opportunities for inclusive leadership.

**Academic Misconduct**

Students are advised to thoroughly examine the student advocacy and judicial affairs website to understand what is meant by academic misconduct. The website can be accessed from here (http://www.rackham.umich.edu/policies/academic_and_professional_integrity/).

**Course readings**

Additional readings (required): Will be provided as needed as pdf files on CANVAS

**Readings Responses**

A critical component of graduate education is the gain the ability to thoughtfully read and critique academic works as well as to formalize these critiques in a written form. To help you achieve this goal, you will be required to write a two to four-page response to the readings each two-week interval. You will receive a prompt for the first of the three responses, while the other four will be independently structured. You will post these responses to the CANVAS —Discussion section at pre-set due dates. During the end of each class period the instructor will provide a preview of the following assignment. It is important to develop and refine your own ideas as part of these responses Discussion section at pre-set due dates

**Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminar Participation:</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Readings Responses (7 in total):</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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Final grades are based on a total percentage for the term. Grade cut-off points (in terms of percentages) are as follows: A+ (100%), A (95.00 to 99.99%), A-(90.00 to 94.99%), B+ (87.00 to 89.99%), B (83.00 to 86.99%), B- (80.00 to 82.99%), C+ (77.00 to 79.99%), C (73.00 to 76.99%), C-(70.00 to 72.99%), D+ (67.00 to 69.99%), D (63.00 to 66.99%), D- (60.00 to 62.99%), E(50.00 to 59.99%), F (40.00 to 49.99%).

*Tentative Schedule*

* Note that during the course it is possible that some of the topics and readings will have their dates changed, or contents altered. I will try to provide as much advance warning of changes as possible.
# PART I: ESSENTIAL BACKGROUND TO ENVIRONMENTAL GEOPOLITICS

## Week 1: Course overview and what is Environmental Geopolitics

### Friday January 7: Required Readings


### Supplementary


## Week 2: Intimacy, Place, Politics and Violence

### Friday January 14: Required Readings


### Supplementary


## Week 3: Underground Geopolitics

### Friday January 21: Required Readings


**Week 4: Outer Space Geopolitics**

**Friday January 28: Required Readings**


**Supplementary**


**Week 5: Oceanic Geopolitics**

**Friday February 4: Required Readings**


**Supplementary**


**PART II: THEMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL GEOPOLITICS**

**Week 6: Conservation Geopolitics**

Friday February 11: Required Readings


Supplementary Readings


**Week 7: Tourism Geopolitics**

Friday February 18: Required Readings


Supplementary Readings


**Week 8: Toxic Air Pollution**

**Friday February 25: Required Readings**


**Supplementary**


**Week 9: SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS**

**Friday March 4: Required Readings**

**Week 10: Climate Change, Security and Adaptation**

**Friday March 11: Required Readings**


**Supplementary:**


Week 11: COVID-19

Friday March 18: Required Readings


Supplementary


PART III: REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GEOPOLITICS

Week 12: The Caucasuses

Friday March 25: Required Readings


Supplementary


**Week 13: Polar Geopolitics**

**Friday April 1: Required Readings**


**Supplementary**


**Week 14: Middle Eastern Geopolitics**

**Friday April 8: Required Readings**


**Supplementary**


**Week 15: The South China Sea**
Friday April 15: Required Readings


Supplementary