

International Studies 606
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Spring 2008
Wednesday 2:30-5:00pm, Social Work 106

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Greening Business, Involving Consumers

In this course we will explore the complicated intersection between environmental legislation, business practice and consumer demand. The focus will be on the U.S. and the European Union, with particular emphasis upon Germany as a prime site of environmental and consumer activism. First, the course will explore how political ideology and historical context affect perceptions of the environment and consumption. Then the course will brief you on how Europeans and Americans have conceptualized the acts of purchasing and consumption as politicized behavior. The very act of purchasing is an act of civic and cultural identity. We will also learn about the historical context of the relationship between individuals, social groups and national groups as purchasers and environmental polluters and/or activists. Our objective is to explore how globalization may be changing this politicization and policy from the individual through supranational levels. By the end of the course, you will be conversant in the major themes of the current public policy debates in these realms in the expanding EU and the US. Scholarship will include selections from the disciplines of history, geography, public policy, sociology, political and consumer science, as well as recent US and EU governmental directives.

The second part of the course will be the development of a personal project, which we will discuss as a group. You will seek out someone in the business sector (i.e., a junior manager for a company with a developed environmental portfolio, or one with an established resistance to environmental concerns if you are brave) to do a case study on the topic. Or you may choose to do an in-depth interview with a consumers' right organization. I will give you tutelage on interviewing methods, and will offer you a selection of possible interviewees but the footwork of contacting and interviewing them will be yours. This exercise has two objectives: 1) to create open dialogue between policymakers, business people and environmental leaders, and the next potential generation of experts on the environment (you). This will show you if and how civil groups have a role in influencing policy change; 2) to give you basic training on how to work with junior professionals from international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the corporate sector, on questions which interest you.

In short, we will be learning about transatlantic environmentalism, focusing on the role of consumers and the business sector in what has been called the "third way" approach to environmental governance. Our objective is to observe if and how civil groups can influence policy change, and to learn how discussion between businesses, policymakers

and consumer groups takes place (if at all). Sites of business/consumer dialogue include Wisconsin's Green Tier law, the European Union's REACH directive, GE's "Eco-logic" campaign, the Transatlantic Consumer and Business Dialogues, etc.

Readings Key: There are no required texts for the course. All selections are available online, including the two University-protected locales below, or at the College Library Reserves. I anticipate that there will be some changes to the readings towards the seventh through ninth weeks of the semester.

(Mad Cat)=the materials are available through the U-W electronic library databases. Go to Mad Cat (the UW Libraries home page) and click on Journals. Use the search engine to request the article.

(My UW)=These materials are on the College Library E-Reserve Webpages. You can access this through your account with the University at My UW.

Course Requirements:

- 1) Mid-term Examination: (in-class, blue-book essay question form based on initial readings of first seven weeks) **20%**
- 2) Class Participation: **30%**. Please notice that a significant percentage of your course grade is composed of participation. For me that has two meanings. As this is a seminar and not a lecture course, your attendance in class is obligatory. For example, two absences would lower your grade to a B at the highest, medical absences with appropriate documentation being obvious exceptions. In a seminar each individual is expected to contribute vocally to the learning process and to display active participation in all course activities, whether that be commenting on the readings or making substantive comments about another student's project.
- 3) Research Project: **50%**, 16-20 pages total, due in two segments, one due at the end of Week 11 (circa April 11), and the second segment by the end of the official final examination date and time (May 16, 2:30 pm, NOT NEGOTIABLE as I leave on a two-week research trip to Europe and will not be able to get your grade in on time).
- 4) Optional attendance at relevant European Studies lectures: (**Extra Credit**). We expect several incoming experts and guests whose talks might give you unique access to some of the course issues, including Jan Zielonka, a scholar of the European Union as an "imperial" power (February 20), Dietmar Dettke, an expert on the European Union's constitutional debacles (February 26), and Ozkan Mutlu, a German Parliamentary Representative for the Green Party (date TBA). I will grant you "participation" extra credit if you attend two or more of these lectures and ask the guest a relevant question.

Course Schedule:

Week One: January 23, Introduction. Environmental Quiz.

Week Two: January 30, The Environment in Historical Perspective
William Cronon, "A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative" *Journal of American History* 78 (March 1992):1437-1476. (Mad Cat)

Peter Staudenmaier, "Fascist Ecology: the 'Green Wing' of the Nazi Party and its Historical Antecedents."

<http://www.spunk.org/texts/places/germany/sp001630/peter.html>

[A more scholarly set of articles on the topic above can be found in Bruggemeier, Cioc and Zeller (eds.), *How Green were the Nazis: Nature, Environment, and Nation in the Third Reich*, 2005].

Jared Diamond, *Collapase*, Chapter 14: "Why Do Some Societies Make Disastrous Decisions?" (My UW).

Week Three: February 6, Twentieth-Century Consumer Identity

Victoria de Grazia, Chapter 7 "Consumer-Citizen" from *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through 20th Century Europe*

Matthew Hilton, "Consumers and the State since the Second World War," in *Annals of the American Academic of Political and Social Science*.

<http://ann.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/611/1/66>

David Vogel, "Protectionism versus Consumer Protection in Europe, in *Trading Up*. (My UW).

Week Four: February 13, the EU, the US and Federalism

Lecture on EU history.

Jeremy Richardson, (ed.), *European Union Power and Policymaking*, Chapters 12 AND 14. (My UW).

Regina Axelrod, Norman Vig, et.al. "The European Union as an Environmental Governance System." (My UW)

Week Five: February 20, the EU in Action as an Environmental Actor (new order below=important)

Jeremy Richardson, (ed.), *European Union Power and Policymaking*, Chapter 13. (My UW).

"Federalism and Environmental Regulation in Germany and the EU," R. Andreas Kramer and ". . . in the US" Miranda A. Schreurs, (AICGS online document.)

<http://www.aicgs.org/documents/pubs/polrep31.pdf>

Zsuzsa Gille, "Cognitive Cartography in a European Wasteland: Multinational Capital and Greens Vie for Village Allegiance." (My UW)

Week Six: February 27, Qualitative interview training and Vying Interpretations.

One-hour training on qualitative interviewing in class. And three groups will be formed to discuss and compare three vying selections from the works below (pages TBA), all available at the College Library Reserves desk. This discussion will take place on-line:

- Bjorn Lomborg, *Cool It: the Skeptical Environmentalist's Guide to Global Warming*
- Ted Nordhaus & Michael Shellenberger, *Break Through: from the Death of Environmentalism to the Politics of Possibility*
- Newt Gingrich and Terry L. Maple, *A Contract with the Earth*.

Week Seven: March 5, Politicized Consumers and Midterm Review.

Dietlind Stolle and Marc Hooghe, "Inaccurate, Exceptional, One-Sided or Irrelevant? The Debate about the Alleged Decline of Social Capital and Civic Engagement in Western Societies," *British Journal of Political Science* 2004 35: 149-167 (Mad Cat).

Gunnar Trumbull, "the Organized Consumer, in *Consumer Capitalism: Politics, Product Markets, and Firm Strategy in France and Germany*. (My UW).

One hour of this class will be dedicated to imagining the types of examination questions I might develop (*read*, I really wouldn't miss this class if I were you.)

Week Eight: March 12

In-Class Midterm

March 19: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS

Week Nine: March 26, Smart Companies and Eco-Business, Greenwashing?

Esty and Winston, *Green to Gold: how Smart Companies Use Environmental Strategy to Innovate, Create Value, and Build Competitive Advantage*. Chapter 10. (My UW).

Dan R. Anderson, *Corporate Survival: the Critical Importance of Sustainability Risk Management*. (Chapter 6 "Old Sustainability Risks: Asbestos and Superfund"). (My UW)

In-class Project planning and interviews.

Week Ten: April 2, Field Work.

Circulate draft concepts through My UW.

Week Eleven: April 9

Guest lecture on the REACH directive and its effects on transatlantic commerce and dialogue. A few additional short readings (circulars, announcements, governmental directives) on the REACH directive and the Multi-State Working Group on Environmental Performance will be distributed.

Week Twelve: April 16, Field Work.

Week Thirteen: April 23

Class meeting to compare qualitative interviewing results.

Week Fourteen: April 30, Short course presentations on papers.

Week Fifteen: May 7, Short course presentations on papers.

Further Resources:

Sheila Jasanoff, *Designs on Nature: Science and Democracy in Europe and the United States*.

Robert J. Duffy, *The Green Agenda in American Politics: New Strategies for the 21-st Century*.

Christopher J. Bosso, *Environment, Inc.: from Grassroots to Beltway*.

Tourism, Recreation and Climate Change. (Eds. C. Michael Hall and James Higham).

Paul Charles Milazzo, *Unlikely Environmentalists: Congress and Clean Water, 1945-1972*.

(<http://www.europeanstudiesalliance.org/research.htm>) for U-W Madison library resources such as the online “European Union Guide,” “Current Europe: A Guide to Resources in the Social Sciences,” and a guide to historical research in Europe.