

Syllabus

Global Biodiversity Governance

EVPP 475/ EVPP 575

Spring 2023

4:30 - 7:10 PM on Thursdays

Nguyen Engineering Bldg. 1110



Introduction

Welcome to the course *Global Biodiversity Governance (EVPP 475/EVPP 575)*. Biodiversity governance implies that all actors in society - government, business, and civil society - have a role in conserving biological resources. This course discusses the mechanisms and frameworks steering contemporary international biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

Instructor

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Office hours: By appointment



Department of Environmental
Science and Policy

Course Prerequisites

Having taken a minimum of one environmentally focused social science course or by permission of the instructor.

Credits

3 credits

Course Description

This global biodiversity governance course explores both public (governmental policy) and private (e.g., certification schemes established to support sustainable forestry and seafood trade) initiatives. The course draws on a wide range of literature sources to demonstrate key theoretical concepts of biodiversity governance and provides empirical examples of intergovernmental policy frameworks, private instruments, and the relationship between these policies and platforms. The main activities include lectures, student-led discussions, and a simulation of an intergovernmental negotiating session. As course instructor, I will help you expand your knowledge base of global biodiversity governance and develop skills that complement your academic portfolio.

You will be asked to (further) develop their own views on contemporary governance issues through the preparation of a concept outline and proposal for a paper that combines theoretical and empirical aspects of governance. Students registered for EVPP 575 will practice applying policy-relevant social science concepts (e.g., policy effectiveness, stakeholder participation, power relations) **by expanding this proposed outline into a written paper.**

Course Relationship to Existing Programs

The course can be taken by any student meeting the prerequisite, but it is especially designed to be part of the following undergraduate and graduate programs. Please check with your advisor on the relevance to your specific program.

Environmental Science and Policy, M.S., all concentrations, but especially:

- Conservation Science and Policy (COSP)
- Environmental Science and Policy (EVSP)
- Environmental Management (EVMG)

Environmental Science and Public Policy, Ph.D.

Environmental and Sustainability Studies, B.A.

Environmental Science, B.S., all concentrations, but especially:

- Conservation (CNSV)
- Human and Ecosystem Response to Climate Change (HERC)

Global and Environmental Change, B.S.

Biology, B.S.

Environmental Policy minor

Sustainability Studies minor

Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

This course will examine international public and private biodiversity-related governance from a conservation science and policy perspective. After this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify the main governance theories
2. Explain empirical examples of global biodiversity governance
3. Analyze an empirical case using theoretical constructs
4. Debate different approaches to governance
5. Give their opinion on the impact of governance on mitigating biodiversity loss

Educational Activities Associated with this Course

The course includes the following activities:

- Preparation for and attending lectures
- Leading one discussion/review session
- Participation in general group discussion and simulation

The content is provided through literature, lectures, group discussions, and a simulation exercise. The second part of the course will focus on applying the learned material by preparing a proposal for a paper and, for EVPP 575 students, expanding the proposal into a paper.

Governance theory is presented through academic literature (see learning materials), and students are expected to read and prepare to discuss the material before the lectures. These discussions are designed to develop an understanding of the literature (learning outcome 1), provide an opportunity to discuss different visions of governance to (further) develop your own views of the issues (learning outcomes 4 and 5), and practice the application of a theoretical construct (learning outcome 3). Most empirical examples (learning outcome 2) will be introduced through lectures and the simulation exercise. Of course, the literature also discusses empirical examples, and several publications in the literature list provide case studies of a variety of empirical examples.

The paper assignment includes three steps: 1) a written statement (idea note) presenting your ideas for the paper; 2) a written outline for the paper; and 3) **for EVPP 575 registrants, an additional assignment: a comprehensive paper and its presentation based on the proposal you have developed.**

You will apply the theoretical approaches in the literature to analyze an empirical case (learning outcome 3). EVPP 575 students will discuss different approaches to government and argue for your own vision of governance (learning outcome 4 and 5) in the written paper and presentation; you will receive further instructions on the written assignment during the course.

Assessment Strategy

All course activities are mandatory and participation in all lectures is a prerequisite for passing the course. You may miss one meeting due to illness or unforeseen circumstances if you inform the instructor by email before the scheduled meeting. Students should come to the lecture ready to participate in all activities and produce assignments on the due dates. I encourage you to contact me early on if you anticipate or are experiencing major life-changing events that may impact your on-time completion. Each student will be assigned to lead a discussion on one of the short assignments and is expected to contribute feedback to the other classmates on their proposal assignment. Details will be provided during the first meeting of the course.

The following are the minimum requirements for passing the course:

1. Presence during lectures (no grade, but prerequisite to pass)
2. Submission of four (4) written short assignments based on the literature

3. Idea and proposal development
4. Written paper and presentation (EVPP 575)

Learning outcomes		Short assignments and proposed outline for the paper	Final paper and presentation
1	Identify the main governance theories and summarize current critical issues in the field	X	
2	Explain empirical examples of global biodiversity governance	X	
3	Theoretically analyze an empirical case	X	X
4	Debate different approaches to governance		X
5	Give your opinion on governance		X

Grading Criteria

Assignment	Percentage Contribution to the Total Grade	
	EVPP 475	EVPP 575
In-class participation and discussion	15%	10%
Four (4) short assignments on the literature	40%	25%
Idea note for the written assignment	15%	10%
Proposed outline for the paper	30%	20%
Final paper	-	25%
Presentation	-	10%
TOTAL	100%	100%

The grading differs for the 475 and 575 levels of the course. Scores will be summed based on a 0–100 scale. **You will not be graded on a curve.** The minimum grade to pass for all students is 60%. The conversion into letter grades (A–D, F) is shown below:

Letter Grade - EVPP 475	Letter Grade - EVPP 575
A (100-93%)	A (100-90%)
A- (92-90%)	
B+ (89-86%)	B (89-80%)
B (85-83%)	
B- (82-80%)	
C (79-70%)	C (79-70%)
D (69-60%)	D (69-60%)
F (<60%)	F (<60%)

Academic Integrity

Students are required to be familiar and comply with the Mason Honor Code requirements which have clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental principles to follow always are: (1) all work submitted must be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification.

No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using the appropriate format for this class. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

Communication

I will respond within two hours to emails and calls within normal business hours. Responses outside of that frame will be longer. Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. I will not respond to messages sent from or send messages to non-Mason email addresses.

Disability Accommodations

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is in the Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474

Student Resources

- Stearns Center student support resources: <https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu//student-support-resources-on-campus/>
- Mason COVID Health✓™ <https://www2.gmu.edu/mason-covid-health-check>
- COVID-19 Evaluation and Testing <https://shs.gmu.edu/services/covidservices/>