Syllabus

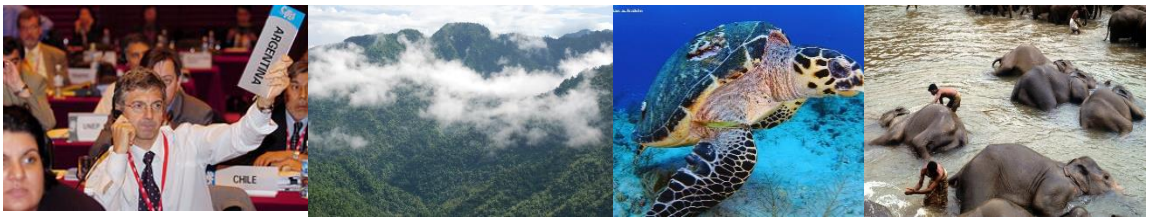
Global Biodiversity Governance

EVPP 475/ EVPP 575

Spring 2024

4:30 - 7:10 PM on Thursdays

Planetary Hall 224



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 initiatives and sustainable use of natural resources.

Instructor

Dr. Rhema Bjorkland [she/her/hers]
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Phone: (240) 685-6903
Office hours: By appointment

Course Prerequisites

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

Credits

3 credits

Course Profile

This course examines global biodiversity governance from a policy science perspective. It introduces regime and governance literature and draws on these and a variety of other sources to examine key theoretical concepts. Using empirical examples, the course explores biodiversity-related policies, platforms, and instruments in the intergovernmental arena (e.g., science-policy interfaces) and private arenas (e.g., sustainable forestry and seafood certification schemes). 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 (further) develop your own views on contemporary governance issues by writing a proposal for a paper that combines theoretical and empirical aspects of governance. If you are registered for EVPP 575, you will also expand this proposal into a written paper to demonstrate your understanding of policy-relevant social science concepts (e.g., policy effectiveness, stakeholder participation, power relations) This additional assignment assists graduate students refine critical writing skills that will support their thesis preparation, and graduate program more generally.

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. At the conclusion of 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 attendance at lectures
- Leading one discussion/review session and review a classmate's anonymous short assignment

- Participation in general group discussions and simulation activity

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.

We will learn about governance theory 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; provide an opportunity to discuss different visions of governance to develop your own views of the issues; and practice the application of theoretical constructs by analyzing empirical cases. Empirical examples 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 involves two steps: 1) an informal presentation to the class on your ideas for the paper; 2) a written proposal for the paper. There is an additional assignment for all EVPP 575 students: the submission of a comprehensive paper based on the proposal you have developed, and a presentation summarizing the main issues, objectives, and conclusions of your paper. Each EVPP 575 student will present and make the argument for their own vision on governance 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 a single meeting due to illness or unforeseen circumstances with email or phone notification before the start of the scheduled class or activity. Students should come to class ready to participate in all activities and produce assignments on the due dates. Please contact me early on if you anticipate or are experiencing major life-changing events that may impact your on-time completion. Your participation includes volunteering to lead a discussion on one of the assigned readings and contributing 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. Attendance during scheduled class times (no grade, but prerequisite to pass)
2. Submission of four (4) written short assignments based on the literature
3. Review a classmate's anonymous short assignment
4. Outline a thesis or research proposal
5. Submission of a final paper and presentation (EVPP 575)

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%
Peer review	15%	10%
Proposal for the written assignment	30%	20%
Final paper	-	25%

Assignment	Percentage Contribution to the Total Grade	
	EVPP 475	EVPP 575
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. A curve will not be applied. 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

Mason is an Honor Code university. Students are required to be familiar with and comply with the Mason Honor Code requirements; please see the Office for Academic Integrity for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. Three fundamental principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own, as defined by the assignment; (2) when you use the work, the words, or the ideas of others, including fellow students or online sites, you give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment or exam, ask for clarification.

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 will not be tolerated in the academic setting.

Generative-AI: All work submitted in this course must be your own original work; use of AI writing tools, such as ChatGPT, are prohibited in this course and will be considered a violation of academic integrity. All academic integrity violations will be reported to the office of Academic Integrity. Student work may be analyzed using an originality detection tool focused on Generative AI tools.

No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism or the course policy on Generative AI, please see me.

Communication

I will respond within two hours to emails and calls within normal business hours. Responses outside of that time 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 a non-Mason email address.

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 at the first class after approval of your disability accommodation. 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/