Course Syllabus

Environment and Conflict

COEX HS 226F, Module II, Spring 2016

Wednesdays, 2:00 pm - 4:50 pm, Heller School G054

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Course Description: This course examines the role of natural resources in conflict and conflict resolution. It analyzes multiple relationships between conflict and the environment drawing on conflict theory, environmental security and technical aspects of global environmental change. It analyzes intervention strategies in environmental conflicts. Topics include: resource wealth and resource scarcity as sources of conflict; role of environment in the conflict cycle and international security; impacts of natural disasters on conflict; climate change and conflict; business in fragile environments; environmental impacts of war; and, integrating environment concerns in conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding. Students participate in negotiation trainings and explore cases from different parts of the world.

Course Objectives: Having taken the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the linkages between conflict and the environment
2. Analyze a wide range of environmental conflicts, their drivers and characteristics
3. Understand multiple ways in which the environmental aspect of the conflict can be framed and how this affects conflict resolution
4. Explore environmental mediation both in terms of approaches and actors
5. Practice negotiation strategy development and problem-solving skills
6. Explore best practices in this field and critically examine future scenarios of environmental conflict

Teaching Methods: This is a highly interactive course, which combines lectures, case studies, role play simulations and small-group exercises. Lectures are used to introduce main concepts and data about environment and conflict. Case studies focus on specific, real-life conflicts from different parts of the world. In role play simulations students “play out” assigned roles as parties to an environmental conflict while learning negotiation skills and obtaining greater understanding of competing pressures on natural resources and their management. Small group exercises are used to debate contested concepts and practice team work.

Grading: There is a portfolio of assignments:

Reflection Paper (20% of the final grade, font Times New Roman 12, format and questions to be provided). During the class 2 you will be engaged in a negotiation simulation. This assignment asks you to reflect on this exercise and the ways of managing common pool resources. Paper is due at midnight before class 3.
Framing Memo (20% of the final grade, maximum 2 pages, single spaced, format provided, font Times New Roman 12). Recent newspaper coverage suggests that there are increasing tensions in the Arctic. Is the situation in the Arctic a conflict resolution challenge and if so why? You are asked to analyze and assess the situation – where are the tensions; how serious are they; what parties are engaged; how do parties themselves perceive the situation and what issues are at stake. Based on your analysis, do you think this situation needs to be managed, and if so how and by whom? In order to complete this assignment:
1) Do the readings for class 4 about the Arctic which will give you basic background;
2) Conduct your own inquiry drawing on any resources you find (newspapers, journals etc.) and answer the posed questions;
3) Prepare to discuss your situation assessment first with a small group of other students and then with the whole class during a discussion about the role of framing in conflict resolution. Memo is due at midnight before class 4.

Participation (10% of the final grade). Class participation is based on several components. First, you are required to attend all classes. Second, your contribution to class discussions and your in-class assessment of the reading assignments is factored. Finally, your attention to your classmates and lectures is also factored into this grade. The use of laptops is allowed for class-related purposes. If you text, check email, twitter, facebook or use other social media during class, your participation grade goes down (for example, from an A- to B+).

Class input (10%). During classes 4 or 6 (your choice) you will share with the class a newspaper article or a short video that discusses any of the topics discussed in the last three classes: natural disasters, water conflict, business and environmental conflict, environmental peacemaking, conflict prevention or peacebuilding. Plan for a 5 minute intervention and posting newspaper article/video the day before with a note consisting of 2 paragraphs: paragraph 1: why it is important; paragraph 2: how it relates to the theme of the class.

Final Exam (40% of the final grade). The final assessment will be based on the readings for the course and lectures. You will have three hours to answer three questions. None of the answers should be longer than 1 page of single-spaced text.

Late assignments. You are expected to submit your assignments on time. If your assignment is up to five days late your grade will be lowered (for example, from an A- to B+). If you are more than five days late and want to be graded, I need to see that you have a medical excuse or receive an email from your advisor.

Academic honesty. You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. The University policy on academic honesty is distributed annually as section 5 of the Rights and Responsibilities handbook. Instances of alleged dishonesty are subject to possible judicial action. Potential sanctions include failure in the course and suspension from the University. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person without proper acknowledgement of the source. This means you must use footnotes and quotation marks to indicate the source of phrases, sentences, paragraphs or ideas found in published volumes, on the internet, or created by another student.
Schedule of Classes and Readings

Class 1. Environment and Conflict: Introduction

Objectives:

- Introducing the class, readings and assignments
- Examining environment-conflict-security nexus
- Various types of environmental conflict

Readings:


UNEP 2009. From Conflict to Peacebuilding: The Role of Natural Resources and the Environment. http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/pcdmnb_policy_01.pdf (important to study p. 30 Figure 1 for the first class, please read the full report and cases whenever you have time)

Class 2. Understanding Conflict Dynamics: Competing Pressures on Natural Resources

Objectives:

- Experiencing environmental conflict through a role play simulation
- Learning about the negotiation process, dynamics and strategy development
- Understanding common pool resources and their management

Readings:

Instructions for Negotiation Training (Harvard Program on Negotiation simulation of negotiations among representatives of tribal, state, federal, recreation, and business interests over fishing rights in a large lake).


Class 3. Framing and Environmental Conflict

Objectives:

- Analyzing environmental conflicts by identifying parties, interests and options for mutual gain
- Understanding multiple ways in which environmental conflicts can be framed
- Exploring how framing influences potential interventions

Readings:


Class 4. Conflict Management: Natural Disasters and Conflict over Water

Objectives:

- Successes and failures in environmental conflict management
- Natural disasters and pre-existing conflicts
- Water conflicts: management and trends

Readings:


Reading TBD – Guest speaker is expected this class and will send us a reading of her choice


Class 5. Business in Conflict Situations: Relationships with Local Communities

Objectives:

- Private actors and conflict prevention: role play simulation
- Developers vs. indigenous communities
- Conducting a negotiation campaign

Readings:

Instructions for Negotiation Training (Harvard Program on Negotiation simulation Hydropower in Santales: Dealing with Social and Environmental Impacts of Energy Development)


Class 6. Environmental Peacemaking, Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

Objectives:

- Best practices in environmental peacemaking
- Environment in the service of peacebuilding and reconciliation in post-conflict settings
- Environmental footprint of war

Readings:


Environmental Peacebuilding Platform http://www.environmentalpeacebuilding.org/


Class 7. Date TBD. Final Exam.