INR 4350 - GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

Section: B060

College of Sciences

School of Politics, Security, and Intl Affairs

Course Information

Term: Summer 2026
Class Meeting Days: ASC
Class Meeting Location: Online
Modality: WW
Credit Hours: 3.00

Instructor Information

Suman Acharya
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Mondays, 10:00am to 11:30am EST, by appointment
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Office Hours

Office Hours: Mondays, 11:00AM-12:30 PM EST, by appointment.

Course Description

INR 4350 COS-POL SCI 3(3,0)Global Environmental Politics: PR: Complete all of the followingComplete at least 1 of the following: ENC1102 - Composition II (3) POS2041 - American National Government (3)or C.I. The unique environmental struggles and political issues that occur on the international and global levels. Occasionally

This course introduces students to key theories, concepts, and analytical frameworks for understanding contemporary global environmental politics. Through readings, discussions, and policy brief assignments, students will develop a foundational understanding of different subjects including global commons, social–ecological systems, resilience, climate change, adaptation, biodiversity, and societal transformation. The course examines major global environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, forestry, agriculture, and energy and analyzes political, institutional, and power dynamics shaping responses at local, national, and global scales. Emphasizing the interconnected social and ecological dimensions of environmental challenges, the course provides students with the tools to critically assess environmental governance, policy debates, and competing interests in global environmental decision-making. Overall, this course serves as an introduction to the core ideas, debates, and real-world cases that define the field of global environmental politics.

Student Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- **Explain, critically assess, and apply** key theories, concepts, and "big ideas" in global environmental politics.
- **Critically engage with scholarly and policy-oriented texts**, situating arguments within broader debates in and beyond the field of global environmental politics.
- **Analyze the complex causes and uneven social and ecological impacts** of global environmental problems, as well as the political responses to them at

multiple scales.

- **Collaborate effectively** to negotiate and design climate governance solutions, demonstrating an understanding of competing interests and power dynamics.
- **Communicate complex ideas clearly and persuasively** through discussions and written projects.
- **Reflect critically on individual and collective roles** in addressing global environmental challenges and advancing more just and sustainable outcomes.

Required Course Materials and Resources

Hardin, G. (1968). The Tragedy of the Commons. Science, 162(3859), 1243–1248. http://doi.org/10.1126/science.162.3859.1243

Course Assessment and Grading Procedure

Syllabus Quiz (5%)

After reviewing the syllabus, you must complete the **Syllabus Quiz** to confirm your understanding of key course policies.

- **Purpose:**
  This quiz counts as your **first academic activity** and confirms your attendance for university and financial aid purposes.
- **Value:**
  5% of your final grade
- **Deadline:**
  Due by **Tuesday, June 30 at 11:59 PM (ET)**

Module Examinations (40%)

Each week, you will complete a **Module Examination** designed to assess your understanding of that week's material. Exams are due on **Tuesdays at 11:59 PM (ET)**.

- **Format:** Each exam consists of **20 questions**, including multiple-choice, true/false, and matching.
- **Schedule:** There will be **four (4) module exams**, administered at the end of the first four weeks of the course. *There is no exam during the final week*, as you will be submitting your **Final Policy Brief**.
- **Grading:** Each exam is worth **10% of your final grade**, for a total of **40%** across all module exams.
- **Timing & Attempts:** You will have **one (1) attempt** per exam and **60 minutes** to complete it once you begin.

- **Resources:** Exams are **open-book and open-notes**. However, the use of **internet searches or AI-powered tools is not permitted**.
- **Important:** Missing an exam will significantly affect your final grade, so please plan accordingly and complete each exam by the deadline.

Policy Synopsis (5%, due July 7)

The **Policy Synopsis** is a short-written assignment in which you identify and briefly analyze a policy issue related to global environmental politics that interests you. You are encouraged to discuss your topic with the instructor at any time during the semester. You may choose your own topic (with instructor approval), select a topic covered in the course, or request an assigned topic if needed. This assignment is the **first step in developing your final policy brief project**.

- **Length:**
  400–500 words
- **What to Include:**
  Your synopsis should clearly address:
  - The **policy problem or issue** you are examining
  - Why the issue **matters** and possible directions for addressing it
  - The **key stakeholders** involved and their roles or interests
  - Discussion of **possible policy solutions or actions**
- **Purpose & Connection to Final Project:**
  This assignment helps you **define your topic early** and will serve as the **foundation for your final policy brief**. You will build on this same topic throughout the course.
- **Writing Style:**
  Write for a **general, non-expert audience**, using clear and concise language.
- **Feedback & Revision:**
  You are expected to **use feedback from this assignment** to improve your topic, analysis, and framing in final policy brief.

Yellowdig Discussions (25%)

Online discussions are a **core part of this course (25% of your final grade)**. We will use **Yellowdig** instead of Canvas discussion boards to create a more interactive and student-driven learning environment.

- **How It Works:**
  Yellowdig allows you to **create posts, ask questions, and engage with classmates' ideas**. You earn points for participating—by posting, commenting, and interacting with others—similar to a social media-style discussion space.
- **Grading & Participation:**
  - Your goal is to earn **2,500 total points** by the end of the course to receive full credit.

    - The course is divided into **5 earning periods** (1 week each).
    - Aim to earn about **500 points per period** (you may earn up to 700 for flexibility).
    - Your total points will count as **25% of your final grade**.

- **Ways to Earn Points:**
  You earn points by:
    - Creating thoughtful posts (questions, reflections, critiques)
    - Commenting on classmates' posts
    - Receiving comments and reactions from others
    - Engaging in meaningful discussions

- **Expectations:**
    - Participate **consistently each week** (do not wait until the end).
    - Check Yellowdig **at least 2–3 times per week**.
    - Focus on **quality and engagement**, not just quantity.
    - Be respectful and contribute to a **supportive learning environment**.
- **Access:**
  You can access Yellowdig through the **Canvas course menu**, assignments page, or mobile app.

- **Important Notes:**
    - Participation in Yellowdig is **required**.
    - Your grade may fluctuate during the course as points reset each earning period—this is normal.
    - You are encouraged to contribute early so others have time to engage with your posts.

- **Tips for Success**
    - Ask engaging questions that encourage discussion
    - Build on others' ideas and continue conversations
    - Use examples, media, or current events to enrich discussion
    - Stay consistent rather than trying to catch up at the end

Final Policy Brief (25%)

The **Final Policy Brief** is due in the last week of the course and represents the culmination of your work throughout the term. In this assignment, you will analyze a global environmental issue and present **clear, policy-relevant recommendations** for a non-expert audience (e.g., policymakers).

- **Due Date:**
  July 31 by 11:59 PM (ET)

- **Purpose:**

This assignment demonstrates your ability to **connect course concepts, evidence, and policy analysis** to address a real-world environmental problem. It builds directly on your **Policy Synopsis and Presentation**.

Required Structure
Your policy brief must include the following six sections:

- Title
- Executive Summary
- Context / Problem Description
- Key Stakeholders Involved
- Critique of Existing Policies
- Policy Recommendations

Content Expectations
Your policy brief should:

- Clearly explain the **issue and its current context**
- Identify and analyze **key stakeholders**
- Evaluate **existing policies or approaches**
- Propose **feasible policy recommendations**
- Consider **who benefits and who may be disadvantaged**
- Discuss potential **risks, trade-offs, and implementation challenges**

Assignment Requirements

- **Individual assignment**
- **Length:** 1,200–1,500 words (excluding references)
- **Sources:** Paraphrase all sources; **no direct quotations**
- **Citation Style:** APA (in-text citations and references)

Note: This assignment is designed to strengthen your **critical thinking, policy analysis, and professional writing skills** by applying course concepts to real-world global environmental challenges.

Grading Scale

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	90-100%
B+	87-89%
B	80-86%
C+	77-79%
C	70-76%
D+	67-69%
D	60-66%
F	0-60%

Communication Expectations

Clear and timely communication is essential for success in this course. Please review the following guidelines:

- **Preferred Method of Communication:**
  Students should contact me primarily through **Canvas Messages** for all course-related questions and communication. This ensures that your message is tracked and responded to efficiently.
- **Email Use:**
  My email (**suman.acharya@ucf.edu**) should be used **only in cases of emergency**. For all other inquiries, please use Canvas Messages.
- **Response Time:**
  I aim to respond to all messages within **24 hours on weekdays**. Messages sent on weekends or holidays may receive a response within **48 hours**.
- **Office Hours:**
  Office hours are held **Mondays from 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM (ET)** via Zoom, **by appointment**. Please reach out via Canvas to schedule a meeting.
- **Professional Communication:**
  Please use clear and respectful language in all communications and include relevant details (e.g., course name, assignment, or topic) to help me respond more effectively.

Policies for Course Grade

Makeup Work Policy

Students who represent the university in an authorized event or activity (for example, student- athletes) and who are unable to meet a course deadline due to a conflict with that event must provide the instructor with documentation in advance to arrange make-up. No penalty will be applied. For more information, see the UCF policy at:

https://policies.ucf.edu/documents/4-401.pdf&gt

Missed/Late Assignments

I understand that summer courses can be fast-paced and that unexpected situations may arise. My goal is to support your learning while maintaining fairness.

- **Late Work:**

Assignments submitted late may still be accepted with a **reasonable grade adjustment**, depending on timing and circumstances.

- **Communication Matters:**
  If you anticipate missing a deadline, please reach out to me **as soon as possible via Canvas Messages**. Early communication makes it easier to find a solution.
- **Extensions:**
  Flexibility is available for illness, emergencies, or other valid circumstances. I am happy to work with you when needed.
- **Missed Work Without Communication:**
  Assignments that are not submitted and without prior communication may receive a **zero**.
- **Shared Responsibility:**
  Please do your best to stay on track, and I will do my best to support you along the way.

Attendance

This is an online asynchronous course, so there are no required live class meetings. However, regular participation is required.

- **Attendance = Participation:**
  Your attendance is based on your **active engagement**, including completing modules, submitting assignments, quizzes, and participating in Yellowdig discussions.
- **Stay Engaged:**
  You are expected to log in to Canvas multiple times each week and keep up with all deadlines.
- **First Week Requirement:**
  Per University of Central Florida policy, you must complete an **academic activity during the first week** to be counted as attending the course.
- **Responsibility:**
  You are responsible for staying current with course materials, announcements, and due dates.

Make-up Assignments for Authorized University Event or Co-curricular Activities

Students who represent the university an an authorized event or activity

(for example, student athletes) and who are unable to meet a course deadline due to a conflict with that event must provide the instructor with documentation in advance to arrange a make-up. No penalty will be applied if the student gives advance notice and communicates with the instructor following UCF policy. In the case of an authorized university activity, it is your responsibility to show the instructor a signed copy of the Program Verification Form for which you will be absent, prior to the class in which the absence occurs or due date you need extended. For more information, see UCF Policy 4-401.

Make-up Assignments for Religious Observances

A student who desires to observe a religious holy day of his or her religious faith must notify their instructor as soon as practicable prior to the observance. Students who are absent because of religious observances will be permitted a reasonable amount of time to complete any missed work. For more information, see UCF Regulation 5-020.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is prohibited. Use of GenAI tools via website, app, or any other access, is not permitted in this class. All components of assignments in this course must be independently and originally completed by the student. Representing work created by GenAI as your own work will be treated as plagiarism.

Disability Access & Accommodations

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing equal access to all students with disabilities (ADHD, learning disabilities, Autism, chronic medical conditions, physical disabilities, etc.). To receive consideration for reasonable disability-related course accommodations, disabled students must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and complete the steps required for SAS to review accommodation requests. More information can

be found on the UCF Student Accessibility Services website under the Start Here tab or by contacting SAS directly (Ferrell Commons 185; sas@ucf.edu; Phone - 407-823-2371).

Approved accommodations are shared with course instructors via the SAS Course Accessibility Letter. Implementing certain accommodations may require discussion and specific considerations of the course design, course learning objectives, and the individual academic and course challenges experienced by the student. While students with disabilities or chronic health needs are also encouraged to discuss any course concerns with professors in addition to contacting SAS, professors are not required to facilitate disability-related adjustments to the course unless the professor has received a Course Accessibility Letter from SAS that outlines approved accommodations.

Changes to This Syllabus

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus as needed during the semester. Any updates will be communicated in advance via email and Webcourses.

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Code of Conduct at Student Conduct and Integrity Office. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

a. **Academic misconduct is defined as any submitted work or behavior that obstructs the instructor of record's ability to accurately assess the student's understanding or completion of the course materials or degree requirements (e.g., assignment, quiz, and/or exam). Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance to complete an academic exercise; unauthorized communication with others during an examination, course assignment, or project; falsifying or misrepresenting academic work; providing misleading information**

to create a personal advantage to complete course/degree requirements; or multiple submission(s) of academic work without permission of the instructor of record.

b. **Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.**

c. **Commercial Use of Academic Material. Selling of course material to another person and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the University and the instructor of record. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, the instructor of record's slide deck, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, and handouts.**

d. **Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements. The solicitation of assistance with an assignment, lab, quiz, test, paper, etc., without authorization of the instructor of record or designee is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to asking for answers to a quiz, trading answers, or offering to pay another to complete an assignment. It is considered Academic Misconduct to solicit assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements, even if the solicitation did not yield actual assistance (for example, if there was no response to the solicitation).**

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, *The Golden Rule*. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an "F" letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary

probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a "Z" designation on one's transcript.

Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Title IX

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at Let's Be Clear and UCF Cares.

For more information on access and community engagement, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- **Title IX – ONAC – Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance & askanadvocate@ucf.edu**
- **Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – Student Accessibility Services & sas@ucf.edu**
- **Access and Community Engagement (including the Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement, Military and Veteran Student Success, and HSI Initiatives)**
- **UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office & complianceandethics@ucf.edu**
- **The Ombuds Office is a safe place to discuss concerns.**

Reporting an Incident or Issue

If you believe you have experienced abusive or discriminatory behavior by any faculty or staff member, contact the Office of Institutional Equity online or at 407-823-1336. You can also choose to report using the UCF Integrity

Line and can report anonymously or as yourself at 1-855-877-6049 or using the online form. UCF cares about you and takes every report seriously. For more information see the Reporting an Incident or Issue Webpage.

Deployed Active-Duty Military Students

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

Campus Safety

At UCF Public Safety and Police, safety is the top priority. Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise, it's important to be familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- **In an emergency, always dial 911.**
- **Every UCF classroom has an Emergency Procedure Guide posted on a wall near the door, which will show you how to respond to a variety of situations. This guide can also be found online here.**
- **In the event of an active threat, remember AVOID, DENY, DEFEND. Choose the best course of action and act immediately. Watch the video here to learn more.**
    - **AVOID. Pay attention to your surroundings and have an exit plan. Get as much distance and as many barriers between you and the threat as quickly as possible.**
    - **DENY. When avoiding is difficult or impossible, deny the threat access to you and your space. Lockdown by creating barriers, turning the lights off and remaining quiet and out of sight. Make sure your cell phone is silenced, but do not turn it off.**
    - **DEFEND. When you are unable to put distance between yourself and the threat, be prepared to protect yourself. Commit to your actions, be aggressive and do not fight fairly. Do whatever it takes to survive.**
- **For emergencies on campus, UCF will utilize the UCF Alert system. All UCF students, faculty and staff are automatically enrolled to receive these email and text alerts, however, it's a good idea to frequently ensure your contact information is up to date.**

Financial Aid Accountability

All instructors/faculty are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete this activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

Class Schedule

Week	Topics	Assignments	Due
Week 1	**Theme: Perspectives on the Problem:** *introducing commons and their management* **Readings:** Hardin, G. (1968). The tragedy of the commons: the population problem has no technical solution; it requires a fundamental extension in morality. *science*, *162*(3859), 1243-1248. Dietz, T., Ostrom, E., & Stern, P. C. (2003). The struggle to govern the commons. *science*, *302*(5652), 1907-1912. Ostrom, E., Burger, J., Field, C. B., Norgaard, R. B., & Policansky, D. (1999). Revisiting the commons: local lessons, global challenges. *science*, *284*(5412), 278-282. Cox, M., Arnold, G., & Tomás, S. V. (2010). A review of design principles for community-based natural resource management. *Ecology and Society*, *15*(4). Baggio, J. A., Barnett, A. J., Perez-Ibarra, I., Brady, U., Ratajczyk, E., Rollins, N., ... & Janssen, M. A. (2016). Explaining success and	**Syllabus Quiz** **Model 1 Exam** **Yellowdig (Period 1)**	**6/30 at 11:59 pm EST**

	failure in the commons: the configural nature of Ostrom's institutional design principles. *International Journal of the Commons*, *10*(2). **Optional:** Lambert, J., Epstein, G., Joel, J., & Baggio, J. (2021). Identifying topics and trends in the study of common-pool resources using natural language processing. *International Journal of the Commons*, *15*(1).		
Week 2	**Theme: Social-Ecological Systems and Biodiversity Loss** **Readings:** Folke, C., Polasky, S., Rockström, J., Galaz, V., Westley, F., Lamont, M., ... & Walker, B. H. (2021). Our future in the Anthropocene biosphere. *Ambio*, *50*(4), 834-869. Nelson, D. R., Adger, W. N., & Brown, K. (2007). Adaptation to environmental change: contributions of a resilience framework. *Annu. Rev. Environ. Resour.*, *32*(1), 395-419. Ostrom, E. (2009). A general framework for analyzing sustainability of social-ecological systems. *Science*, *325*(5939), 419-422. Petersson, M., & Stoett, P. (2022). Lessons learnt in global biodiversity governance. *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics*, *22*(2), 333-352.	**Module 2 Exam** **Yellowdig (Period 2)** **Policy Brief Synopsis**	**7/7 at 11:59 pm EST**

	Rydén, O., Zizka, A., Jagers, S. C., Lindberg, S. I., & Antonelli, A. (2020). Linking democracy and biodiversity conservation: Empirical evidence and research gaps. *Ambio*, *49*(2), 419–433 **Optional:** Folke, C. (2006). Resilience: The emergence of a perspective for social–ecological systems analyses. *Global environmental change*, *16*(3), 253-267.		
Week 3	**Theme: Global Environmental Crises and the Politics of Multilateral Environmental Governance** **Readings:** Biermann, F. (2022). The future of 'environmental'policy in the Anthropocene: Time for a paradigm shift. In *Trajectories in environmental politics* (pp. 58-77). Routledge. Galaz, V. (2022). Global environmental governance in times of turbulence. *One Earth*, *5*(6), 582-585. Green, Jessica F. 2021. "Climate Change Governance: Past, Present, and (Hopefully) Future." In Global Governance in a World of Change, edited by Jon C. W. Pevehouse, Kal Raustiala, and Michael N. Barnett. Cambridge University Press. Dimitrov, R. (2016). The Paris Agreement on Climate Change: Behind Closed Doors. *Global Environmental Politics 16* (3): 1–11. **Optional:** Ostrom, Elinor. "Polycentric systems for coping with collective action and global environmental change." In *Global justice*, pp.	**Module 3 Exam** **Yellowdig (Period 3)**	**7/14 at 11:59 pm EST**

	423-430. Routledge, 2017.		
Week 4	**Theme: Climate Colonialism, Justice, and Indigenous Knowledge** **Readings:** Bhambra, G. K., & Newell, P. (2023). More than a metaphor: climate colonialism in perspective. *Global Social Challenges Journal*, *2*(2), 179-187. Mercer, H., & Simpson, T. (2023). Imperialism, colonialism, and climate change science. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, *14*(6), e851. Walker, G. (2009). Globalizing Environmental Justice: The Geography and Politics of Frame Contextualization and Evolution. *Global Social Policy*, *9*(3), 355–382. Whyte, K. (2020). Too late for indigenous climate justice: Ecological and relational tipping points. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, *11*(1), e603. **Optional:** Sultana, F. (2022). Critical climate justice. *The Geographical Journal*, *188*(1), 118-124.	**Module 4 Exam** **Yellowdig (Period 4)**	**7/21 at 11:59 pm EST**
Week 5	**Theme: Social Capital, Collective Action, and Climate Adaptation in the Global South** **Readings:** Adger, W. N. (2003). Social Capital, Collective Action, and Adaptation to Climate Change. *Economic Geography*, *79*(4), 387–404. Acharya, S. (2025). Unintended	**Yellowdig (Period 5)** **Final Policy Brief**	**7/28 at 11:59 pm EST** **7/31 at 11:59 pm EST**

	consequences: The erosion of traditional collective action and social capital by externally imposed climate adaptation programs. *Environmental Science & Policy*, *171*, 104167. Eriksen, S. H., Nightingale, A. J., & Eakin, H. (2015). Reframing adaptation: The political nature of climate change adaptation. *Global environmental change*, *35*, 523-533. Khatri, D. B., Nightingale, A. J., Ojha, H., Maskey, G., & Lama 'Tsumpa', P. N. (2022). Multi-scale politics in climate change: the mismatch of authority and capability in federalizing Nepal. *Climate policy*, *22*(8), 1084-1096.		