

*Elective: The Politics of the Environment and Climate Change
(In Danish re. Programme Regulations Klimaforandringer og miljøpolitik)*

Autumn Semester 2024

[Draft version 13 June 2024]

Course Description

This course examines environmental politics. We focus on greater global developments but aim to emphasise how this emerges from, and is relevant for, an Arctic perspective. Via a multidisciplinary approach, we employ the concept of the Anthropocene Era in human development as the theoretical focal point. This idea is derived from the Greek words for 'human' and 'new', signalling that we now live in a new era where people have become the most important factor for the natural world as well as the human. In fact, it questions the fundamental distinction between nature and culture which runs through modern life.

Classes will begin with discussions about how to define the nexus between environmental affairs and political concerns, and how the threats presented by climate change have affected these studies and perceptions. After debates on the causes of climate change and its socio-political effects, the course will shift to specific areas which are now challenging Greenland, the greater Arctic, and regional regimes such as the Arctic Council and international law. The economics of the environment will also be studied, with the far north as the primary focus, including debates over sustainable or 'green' growth and their relevance to Greenland, and the questions of critical theory and the (positive and negative) roles of capitalism. Finally, there will be the study of environmental politics via a strategic lens, asking the questions of how climate change is influencing widening concerns about security in the Arctic.

Course Coordinators

Jeppe Strandsbjerg (JS) and Marc Lanteigne (ML)

Course duration

The course will begin week 40 and run through week 46 with a break week 42.

Learning outcomes

Upon completing this course, students should:

Have **knowledge** of:

- The interactions between law, economics and politics in relation to climate change and environmental policy;
- How environmental concerns can be studied within the frameworks of politics, law, economics and security;
- The transition processes from 'black carbon' environmental policy to 'green growth' and the 'blue economy'.

Possess **skills** that enable the student to:

- Explain and assess climate change and environmental policy in an Arctic context and through different disciplinary approaches;
- Debate and assess the major questions and disputes surrounding climate change policies;
- Explain the main content and purposes of national and international treaties, conventions and agreements in the area that are particularly relevant in an Arctic context.

Develop the **competencies** to:

- Analyze and evaluate arguments within the areas of climate change and environmental policy;
- Analyze current problems within climate change policies in relation to law, economics and politics.

Course Requirements

A basic understanding of political science, international relations, and the role of governments. The course will include active course participation in discussion, exercises and group tasks.

Readings

List of readings: 1000-1200 pages.

We will use one textbook from Oxford University Press (2020): *Global Environmental Politics - Understanding the Governance of the Earth*, edited by Jean-Frederic Morin, Amandine Orsini, and Sikina Jinnah.

In addition, you will find a list of articles and reports on the curriculum.

Components and Assessment

ECTS: 10

Teaching hours: 36-40 hours including supervision

Exam: Written home assignment of maximum 15 pages (excl. references and appendix).
TBA.

Deadline for assignment submission:
December (TBA). Re-exam deadline ?? August (TBA).

Censorship: External

Lecturers

Marc Lanteigne (ML): marc.lanteigne@uit.no

Jeppe Strandsbjerg (JS): jest@uni.gl

Mie Hylstofte Sichlau Winding (MW): miwi@natur.gl

Guest presenters:

➤ Naalakkeruisut on Paris Agreement and Greenland's process.

Preliminary booking w. Afdelingschef Ane Wraae Nielsen: AWNI@nanoq.gl

➤ Joint Arctic Command, TBC

Warming up...

Prior to course start students should watch:

1. *Anthropocene - The Human Epoch* - via universitetsbiblioteket (ligger på Filmstriben).
2. [*Damon Gameau: The story that shapes your relationship with nature | TED Talk*](#)

Subject List

1) *Introduction to the Course (JS + ML Online)*

Expectations. What is it all about? Why are climate politics different from other policy areas? What is special in the Arctic regarding environmental policies?

2) *Introduction to Climate Politics*

What has been the evolution of environmental and climate policies both in Greenland as well as the greater Arctic and internationally? What are the specifics of the oft-discussed 'Anthropocene Era', and can we define it?

3) *Climate Change I – What is Happening? (MW)**

What are the physical effects behind climate change, and how have they been caused by human agency? How is the Arctic perceived as an early warning indicator of climate change threats?

4) *Climate and Environmental Politics in the Arctic*

What are the modern policies regarding climate change amongst Arctic governments? What have been the similarities and differences within the Arctic over how climate change responses (adaptation versus mitigation) have been developed? Where does the Arctic fit within international efforts to combat climate change, and how does Greenland fit into these questions?

5) *Our relationship to nature – living with nature in the Arctic*

Indigenous peoples have traditionally a more intimate relationship to, and knowledge of, nature compared to capitalist Western societies. What does this mean for the way we should think about environmental politics in the Arctic? What can be learned from indigenous traditions and knowledge, experiences and narratives?

6) *Legal Frameworks / National and International Treaties and Greenland Policies*

How have international laws, rules and norms developed to protect the environment, what have been their effects on climate change discourse, and how have these regimes directly and indirectly affected Greenland?

7) *Environmental Policies of the Arctic Council (ML)*

The Arctic Council remains the paramount organisation in addressing climate change challenges, including global warming, pollution, and other threats to maritime and land biology in the far north. How has the Council shaped climate change discourse, which areas of environmental risks are now the most pressing, and how will the current state of the group affect climate change cooperation moving forward?

8) *Sustainability in the Arctic*

What is sustainable development? How is it relevant to the Arctic? With the far north opening to greater economic activity, including extractive industries, shipping, fishing and tourism, how can the region continue to be protected while also ensuring economic growth for the Arctic's inhabitants? How do sustainability questions in the Arctic differ from elsewhere in the world?

9) *The Paris Agreement and Greenland's Climate Politics (visit (by) Ane Wraae v. Naal.)*

How have recent global environmental agreements, including the Paris Accords and recent discussions at the COP28 summit, affected Greenland politically, economically, and socially?

10) *Critical Theory, Green Politics / Growth, and the Blue Economy (ML)*

Why is it necessary to examine environmental policies in the Arctic using critical theory methods? What actors are therefore important when measuring the development of the Arctic, and how do sub-state actors contribute to the dialogues over balancing growth with climate responsibility? What is 'green growth' and how does it factor into greater questions regarding economic growth and modernisation?

11) *How to Define Environmental Security? (ML)*

Not long ago, security and environmental policy were often studied only as separate units. This has changed as it became further understood that there was much overlap between the two areas. How have environmental threats fuelling other forms of insecurity, in the Arctic and elsewhere? What are the possibilities

of future conflicts over environmental concerns, and what are the best way of understanding the complicated linkages between security and the environment?

12) *SAR, Maritime Security, and Ice (Possible visit by Joint Arctic Command?)*

Case study lecture.