



CIEE Prague, Czech Republic

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| Course title: | European Environmental Studies |
| Course code: | ENVI 3001 PRAG |
| Programs offering course: | Business, Arts and Sciences, Central European Studies, Communication, New Media, and Journalism, Global Architecture and Design |
| Language of instruction: | English |
| U.S. semester credits: | 3.00 |
| Contact hours: | 45.00 |
| Term: | Fall 2023 |

Course Description

The course discusses environmental studies as an interdisciplinary field, exploring their intersection with other disciplines. The core of the course is focused on the current environmental issues in a global context, primarily within the conceptual framework of Anthropocene and Post-Anthropocene. The Czech context is presented through an analysis of the most burning environmental issues, including brown coal mining, air pollution, carbon emissions, waste management, landscape transportation, soil erosion, and energy production, while offering students a unique opportunity to learn about some of these issues through first-hand experience gained during field trips to different sites around Prague. The interconnection of social, economic, and ethical context of the environmental issues is stressed throughout the course.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- compare different approaches to environment in the historical perspective;
- analyze the complexity of the human-environment relationship;
- assess the specifics of European and Czech environmental problems and discourse;
- critically discuss the problems of contemporary global environmental issues;
- research one topic related to environmental issues in Anthropocene and Post-Anthropocene, deliver a short presentation and defend their arguments.

Course Prerequisites

None

Methods of Instruction

Lectures with PowerPoint presentations and class debates are the basic methods of instruction. Students' presentations, group work, and quiz games also appear in the course, as well as short videos. Additionally, there will be one excursion (outclass), one field trip, and possibly also one guest lecture during the semester.

N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.

Assessment and Final Grade

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| 1. | Writings, all together | 27% |
| 2. | Presentation | 8% |
| 3. | Midterm Test | 15% |
| 4. | Final Test | 20% |
| 5. | Active Class Participation | 30% |
| | TOTAL | 100% |

Course Requirements

Writings, all together

Writing 1: Most field trip reflection

Reflection paper on Most trip. Length 700–900 words, further instructions will be explained in the beginning of the semester. Paper should include both personal experience and information from other sources than the excursion/trip. Grade will reflect: a) whether the instructions were followed; b) overall quality of argument and factual errors; c) quality of the paper compared to other students.

Writing 2: COP 21 Paris essay

Essay on Rio+20 or COP21 environmental conferences its outcomes. Length 700–900 words, detailed instructions will be given. Grade will reflect: a) whether the instructions were followed; b) overall quality of argumentation and factual errors; c) quality of the paper compared to the works of other students.

Writing 3: Reflection paper on Kenneth Boulding's text

Essay reacting to Boulding's text "The Economics of the Coming Spaceship Earth" (1966). Length 600–800 words, further instructions will be given. Grade will reflect: a) whether the instructions were followed; b) overall quality of argument and factual errors; c) quality of the paper compared to the works of other students.

Instead of reflection on Boulding's paper, reflection essay on the guest lecture (if appropriate) may be the topic of Writing 3 assignment. The guest lecture is not included in the Weekly Schedule, due to unknown date and unknown guest speakers.

Presentation

Each student will have one approx. 10–15 minutes presentation (in pairs or individually) on the topic offered by the professor. Student will know the topic of presentation a week beforehand. Further instructions will be explained. Grade will reflect: a) whether the instructions were followed; b) overall quality of argument and factual errors.

Midterm Test

Test consisting of 10–20 open tasks. Study guide will be provided in advance.

Final Test

Test consisting of 15–25 open tasks. Study guide will be provided in advance.

Active Class Participation

See the CIEE Prague Class Participation Policy below.

Answers to the questions on readings

Some questions are usually given in advance along with the class readings and students should answer these through Canvas online system. These brief answers are graded and the grades make part of the Active participation (together with submitting and preparing of non-graded assignments).

Other important information

Computers are not allowed in the class (if not needed for any online class work), not even for taking notes. The only exception could be special needs of students; these will be discussed individually with Academic Director.

Late submissions of work (writings, answers to reading, other homework) are not accepted. All work should be submitted through Canvas system. If you face any technical problems, submit the work by email and immediately inform me about problems with Canvas system. The system checks activity of all users and CIEE staff is able to see whether there were some technical problems or whether the users were logged in or not.

Canvas email (Inbox) is preferred way of communication. If there are technical problems, use my email.

Attendance

To encourage engaged learning, regular class attendance is required throughout the program. This includes any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as internship, service-learning, or other required field placement.

An excused absence in a CIEE course will only be considered if approved by a CIEE Center Director/Academic Director (not the Instructor), and:

- it is a self-certified absence for illness (only once per course, requires formal request before or within 24 hours, cannot miss assessment worth more than 5% of final course grade)
- a doctor's note from a local medical professional is provided
- evidence of a family emergency is provided
- it is a pre-approved observance of religious holiday

Unexcused absences include personal travel and/or travel delays, as well as missing more than 25% of a single class period (including tardiness and early departure). Assessments missed due to unexcused absences will be marked as zero. Students with over 10% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff. Students with over 20% unexcused absences will be contacted by CIEE staff, receive a formal warning letter (shared with their home institution) and lose 10% of the final course point total (e.g., a final A grade of 93% will be lowered to a B grade of 83%).

For more detail, please consult your CIEE Academic Manual.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to a positive and inclusive teaching and learning environment. All students are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness, respect, and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in grade penalties or disciplinary action. See the CIEE Student Academic Manual for further information on academic integrity.

N.B. Course schedule and co-curriculars are subject to change. The final duration and distribution of content and assignments will be determined and presented to students at the onset of the course.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Class: Introduction to class and theory of human-environment study

Presentation of the basic information on selected branches of social sciences (human ecology, cultural ecology, social ecology, environmental sociology) and on the logic of social science understanding to human-environment relationship.

Discussion of selected Czech and global environmental problems.

Week 2

Class: Czech landscape as a place for human-nature interaction

History of Czech landscape, main changes of landscape, agriculture and society from Neolithic era to 19th century. Era between WWI and WWII, expulsions of Germans, communist era, market economy, nature conservation, landscape perception.

Reading: Naughton 2001

Reading: Bičík, Jeleček and Štěpánek 2001, 65-73. (Send answers to the questions given.)

Week 3

Class: Czech environmental problems – selected case studies

Presentation and discussions of most important Czech environmental issues (brown coal mining, air pollution, carbon emissions, waste management, landscape transportation, soil erosion, energy production,...)

Week 4

Class: Czech environmental movement and environmental policy

Brief history of Czech environmental movement and important milestones of NGO-government relationship, including selected points of environmental policy. Comparison to other EU countries.

Reading: Fagin 2000, 139-156. (Send answers to the questions given.)

Course Excursion to Most

Mandatory trip to Northwest Bohemian brown coal mining area (Most, Horní Jiřetín and chateau Jezeří). Glasheim (2006) is recommended reading for the trip.

Week 5

Class: Global environmental policy

Important dates of environmental movement and sustainable development (Rachel Carson, Limits to Growth, Our Common Future, Rio de Janeiro Summit, Kyoto 1997, Copenhagen 2009, Johannesburg 2002, Green growth concept, Rio+20)

Reading: United Nations 1987 (Send answers to the questions given.)

Writing 1 (Most excursion reflection) due

Week 6

Class: First part- Midterm test

Second part - Selected trends in developed and developing countries

Examples of environmental and social problems, ethical consequences, etc.

Possible reading: European Environmental Agency 2011 (Send answers to the questions given.)

Week 7

Class: Climate change - nature and society

Causes and consequences of climate change, natural aspects, political agreements, EU specifics, Kyoto protocol), role of individual in climate change, household carbon footprint, possibilities and limits of behavioral change.

Possible discussion of the personal students' carbon footprints.

Reading: Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change 2014. (Send answers to the questions given.)

Week 8

Class: Climate change and media and climate change skepticism

Presentation of climate change in media, specifics of journalism, problem of balance, impact of media on individuals.

Neo-liberal criticism of climate change discourse, climate change denial, Julian Simon, Björn Lomborg, Václav Klaus, free-market environmentalism

Reading (two out these three texts): Klaus2005, 46-48.

Klaus2010.

Simon 1995, 11. (Send answers to the questions given.)

Writing 2 due

Week 9

Class: Measuring the progress

Gross Domestic Product and alternative economic indicators of development (Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare, Genuine Progress Index). Human Development Index and OECD index.

Group work – preparation of your own development index

Reading: Max-Neef 1995, 115-118. (Send answers to the questions given.)

Week 10

Class: Environmental impact of human activities and value of nature

Ecological footprint and its measurement. Concept of ecosystem services, financial value of nature, environmental and ecological economics. Each student will calculate his/her ecological footprint for

the class discussion.

Reading: Ewing, Moore, Goldfinger, Oursler, Reed and Wackernagel 2010, 5-14. (Send answers to the questions given.)

Week 11

Class: Environmental philosophy

Selected names and issues of environmental philosophy and ethics

Reading: TBA. (Send answers to the questions given.)

Backlogs

Any backlogs, review for final test, etc.

Writing 3 due

Week 12

Class: Greenpeace excursion (outclass)

Excursion to the Czech Greenpeace office, presentation of their work (including ongoing Czech and global campaigns), discussion with students

Exact date can be changed due to Greenpeace preferences!!!

Week 13

Class: Final Exam Week

Final test.

Course Materials

Readings

Bičík, I., Jeleček, L. and Štěpánek, V. (2001), Land-use changes and their social driving forces in Czechia in the 19th and 20th centuries. *Land Use Policy* 18 (1): 65-73.

Boulding, K. (1966). *The Economics of the Coming Spaceship Earth*. In H. Jarrett (ed.). *Environmental Quality in a Growing Economy*, pp. 3-14. Baltimore, MD: Resources for the Future/Johns Hopkins University Press.

<http://www.ub.edu/prometheus21/articulos/obsprometheus/BOULDING.pdf>

European Environmental Agency (2011), *EEA Signals 2011: Globalisation, environment and you*. Copenhagen: EEA, min. 2 chapters.

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/signals-2011-1>

Ewing B., Moore, D., Goldfinger, S., Oursler, A., Reed, A. and Wackernagel, M. (2010), *The Ecological Footprint Atlas 2010*. Oakland: Global Footprint Network, p. 5-14.

[http://www.footprintnetwork.org/images/uploads/Ecological Footprint Atlas 2010.pdf](http://www.footprintnetwork.org/images/uploads/Ecological_Footprint_Atlas_2010.pdf)

Fagin, A. (2000), *Environmental Protest in the Czech Republic: Three Stages of Post-Communist Development*. *Czech Sociological Review* 8 (2): 139-156.

http://sreview.soc.cas.cz/uploads/239fd6717f8e86a92c33864b0064088308f59ed1_353_139FAGIN.pdf

Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (2014), *Fifth Assessment Report – Climate Change 2014 – Synthesis Report – Summary for Policymakers*.

http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/AR5_SYR_FINAL_SPM.pdf

Klaus, V. (2005), *Freedom and its enemies: Problems of re-establishing freedom and democracy in the European context*. *Economic Affairs* 25 (2): 46-48.

<http://www.klaus.cz/clanky/1557>

Klaus, V. (2010), *The Climate Change Doctrine is Part of Environmentalism, Not Science*. Lecture at The Global

Warming Policy Foundation.

<http://www.klaus.cz/clanky/2694>

Max-Neef, M. (1995), Economic growth and quality of life: a threshold hypothesis. *Ecological Economics* 15: 115-118.

Naughton, J. (2001), A brief history of the Czech lands. James Naughton's personal pages at Oxford University.

<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~tayl0010/history.htm>

Simon, J. L. (1995), Why do environmentalists persist in imagining global degradation? *Human Events* 51 (17): 11.

United Nations (1987), *Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*. p. 54-60.

<http://worldinbalance.net/intagreements/1987-brundtland.php>

Glassheim, E. (2006), Ethnic Cleansing, Communism, and Environmental Devastation in Czechoslovakia's Borderlands, 1945-1989. *The Journal of Modern History* 78 (1): 65-92.

Pavan Sukhdev: Put a value on nature!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-QpKiU-NHo>

Bjorn Lomborg on Global priorities

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Ge71ZTTRaI>

EconStories: Keynes and Hayek Round 2

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTQnarzmTOc>