



ENVIRONMENTAL PEACEBUILDING (ENST 4409-130)

Dates: June 2-July 25 2025

Location: Students will participate in the course using Georgetown University's online learning management system called Canvas. To learn more about Canvas, please go through the Canvas Guide for Students.

Professor: Randall Amster

Professor Contact Information: randall.amster@georgetown.edu

Virtual Office Hours: by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In a globalized and networked world, the linkages between social and environmental issues are becoming increasingly evident. From climate change and sustainability to resources and economics, scholars and practitioners alike have been bridging the divide between society and ecology. This connection has yielded an emerging perspective suggesting that environmental issues need not primarily be a source of conflict, but rather can offer a basis for promoting cooperation and peace. Environmental Peacebuilding is at the forefront of this transition, constituting both the ecological realm of peace and the peacemaking potential of ecology, focusing on topics such as water basins, food systems, energy sources, and climate change impacts. Through various theoretical lenses, real-time case studies, and interactive experiences, we will explore this integrative paradigm in terms of its history, its present relevance in concrete settings, and its prospects for transforming the future.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Throughout this course, you should be able to:

1. **Develop an awareness of the emerging environmental peacebuilding paradigm**
2. **Demonstrate fluency with the literature and points of reference that characterize the field**
3. **Demonstrate interactive engagement with the subject via participation in case studies and activities**
4. **Explore regional manifestations (including community-based initiatives)**
5. **Develop individual topics and collaborative projects**
6. **Expand upon the burgeoning vision of environmental peacebuilding**
7. **Analyze the critical issues of our time through lens of environmental peacebuilding**
8. **Develop a vision that integrates theories and practices in the field**

COURSE READINGS

Amster, Randall. 2015. *Peace Ecology*. New York: Routledge. ISBN: 978-1612052977 ([digital access](#))

Quinn, Michael S., et al., eds. 2012. *Parks, Peace, and Partnership: Global Initiatives in Transboundary Conservation*. Calgary, Alberta, Canada: University of Calgary Press. ([Free PDF](#))

Swain, Ashok, and Joakim Ojendal (eds). 2018. *Routledge Handbook of Environmental Conflict and Peacebuilding*. New York: Routledge. ISBN: 978-138202528 ([GU library eBook](#))

Various authors. www.environmentalpeacebuilding.org (cases and publications [online](#))

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA

Graded Assignments

Statement of Intention 5%; Reaction Paper 15%; Case Study (local) 15%; Midpoint Exercise 15%; Case Study (global) 15%; Final Project 20%; Participation 15%

Grading Scheme

94 - 100 % = A

90 - 93 % = A-

87 - 89 % = B+

83 - 86 % = B

80 - 82 % = B-

77 - 79 % = C+

73 - 76 % = C

70 - 72 % = C

67 - 69 % = D+

60 - 66 % = D

Below 60 % = F

COURSE SCHEDULE

This course begins with an Orientation and is divided into **eight weekly modules**. Below is an outline describing the course structure. Each Module will be released on a weekly basis every Sunday at 11:59 pm (ET). Students are required to move through the modules sequentially.

ORIENTATION [Opens May 30]

The orientation provides an overview of the course and introduces you to your instructor and peers. You will also learn about the technology requirements and where to get support.

MODULE 1: INTRODUCTIONS & OVERVIEW [June 2-8]

Developing foundational knowledge of the field; connecting peace concepts with environmental studies; setting aims and intentions for the semester. How can environmental efforts promote peace and justice, and how can peacebuilding initiatives help promote greater environmental sustainability?

MODULE 2: WAR, PEACE, & THE ENVIRONMENT [June 9-15]

Establishing baseline knowledge of core themes within the field; intervening critically with current events. How do historical patterns of environmental conflict compare with contemporary challenges?

MODULE 3: RESOURCE SCARCITY & ABUNDANCE [June 16-22]

Analyzing myriad connections between resources and conflict; explore critical treatments of the resource acquisition paradigm; establishing concrete examples and illustrations. Are resource issues inevitably tied to competitive and/or conflictual outcomes, or can they be leveraged toward peacebuilding efforts? How do qualities of scarcity or abundance influence these processes?

MODULE 4: RECLAIMING THE COMMONS [June 23-29]

Understanding foundational concepts of the commons; analyzing critiques and alternative theories; assessing the validity of commons-based constructs within particular cases. Is the concept of reclaiming the commons viable and sustainable? What is the evidence supporting or contradicting its realization?

MODULE 5: CLIMATE CHANGE & 'DISASTER' CONTEXTS [June 30-July 6]

Exploring current challenges and crises; connecting long-term challenges with acute disasters; analyzing the efficacy of community-based responses. How does climate change intersect with environmental peacebuilding? What unique challenges are presented by climate change and its attendant issues?



MODULE 6: ENVIRONMENTAL PEACEMAKING & PEACEBUILDING [July 7-13]

Establishing core knowledge in the field of Environmental Peacebuilding; analyze theories of how, why, and when the process works; developing a working compendium of cases. What are some of the primary examples of environmental peacebuilding, and under what set of conditions is it likely to be successful?

MODULE 7: TRANSBOUNDARY CONFLICT & COOPERATION [July 14-20]

Exploring cross-border manifestations and illustrations; expanding on and applying lessons from the compendium of cases. How do theoretical principles of environmental peacebuilding integrate with practical outcomes in transnational and transboundary contexts?

MODULE 8: A NEW PARADIGM? [July 21-25]

Exploring emerging frameworks and theories in the field; synthesizing learning in the context of current events; connecting course themes to future plans. Beyond theories and practical applications, what are the worldviews, narratives, and ways if being implied by an environmental peacebuilding perspective?

INFORMATION ABOUT TOOLS AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

As a Georgetown student your online classroom experience will be very different but just as rigorous as your residential student experience. You can expect to:

- Communicate with your professor and classmates regularly via email, discussion boards, and other technologies available.
- Navigate the internet using a web browser (note that certain tools may require a specific browser).
- Use applications such as Microsoft Office or Google Docs to create documents and work on projects.
- Submit assignments in Canvas.
- Upload and download saved files (including text, audio, and video).
- Use a microphone to record audio.
- Use a webcam to record video.

Computer Requirements

- You will need access to a computer (Windows or Mac) and adequate Internet service to complete this course. Although you can use other devices such as smartphones and tablets for some online coursework, please note that some tools, such as Proctorio, do not work on tablets or smartphones.
- You will also need an internal or external microphone and camera to complete this course. While you can use any browser to access Canvas please note that some tools only work with certain browsers (e.g., Proctorio only works with Chrome).

The minimum requirements needed to use Canvas can be found in this [Canvas guide](#).

COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Student Expectations

You are expected to complete all readings, assignments, and activities on time. Participation is essential to your success in this class. You are expected to actively participate in discussions with your peers, and contribute to the group assignments. It is important to subscribe to the course discussion boards so that you receive notifications when new messages are posted. In order to get full credit for participation, you will have to complete all of your module assignments and quizzes on time.

Time Expectations

Our remote learning courses are designed to meet the same academic standards as our place-based (face-to-face) courses. Students should plan on spending approximately 6-9 hours a week on assignments, readings, projects, etc. in addition to the 2.5 hours of instructional time.

Communication Expectations

Building an inclusive climate of mutual respect and inquiry in this class:

I respect your right to be called whatever you want to be called, because I understand that for all of us, social recognition of our sense of self is key to our own integrity and flourishing. I expect everyone in the class to do the same. **In particular, if you would like to be called by a specific set of pronouns or name that might not be obvious from your official school records, please let me know in any way that makes you comfortable.**

Georgetown's Trans, Non-Binary, and Gender Non-Conforming Resource Guide:
<https://lgbtq.georgetown.edu/resources/transatgu/>

Communication with Peers

You will be expected to engage with your peers via the discussion board and other required tools on a regular basis.

Communication with Professor

Please feel free to email me with your questions, concerns, and/or to schedule a time to meet over Zoom. When sending emails please remember to follow the guidelines outlined below.

If you have general questions about assignments and course materials please post these questions in the General Question Discussion Board Forum, which you can access by clicking Discussions in the course navigation menu. This is an open forum, and you are encouraged to give answers and help each other.

- *Check the syllabus.* Before sending your email or message, be sure that your question has not already been addressed in the syllabus or announcements.
- *Be patient.* If you have a concern and send me a message, you can expect a prompt response. Assessments and feedback will be provided before the next assignment.
- *Specify subject.* Subject line should include the topic of the message and class title.
- *Greet & Close.* E-mails should begin with a formal greeting and end with you signing your name in all messages/emails.
- *Check writing.* Proofread (i.e. grammar and spelling) your message before sending.

Netiquette Guidelines

To promote the highest degree of education possible, we ask each student to respect the opinions and thoughts of other students and be courteous in the way that you choose to express yourself. Students should be respectful and considerate of all opinions.

In order for us to have meaningful discussions, we must learn to genuinely try to understand what others are saying and be open-minded about others' opinions. If you want to persuade someone to see things differently, it is much more effective to do so in a polite, non-threatening way rather than to do so antagonistically. Everyone has insights to offer based on their experiences, and we can all learn from each other.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with Disabilities

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, individuals with disabilities have the right to specific accommodations that do not fundamentally alter the nature of the course. Some accommodations might include note takers, books on tape, extended time on assignments, and interpreter services among others. Students are responsible for communicating their needs to the [Academic Resource Center](#), the office that oversees disability



support services,(202-687-8354; arc@georgetown.edu; <https://academicsupport.georgetown.edu/disability/>) before the start of classes to allow time to review the documentation and make recommendations for appropriate accommodations. The University is not responsible for making special accommodations for students who have not declared their disabilities and have not requested an accommodation in a timely manner. Also, the University need not modify course or degree requirements considered to be an essential requirement of the program of instruction. For the most current and up-to-date policy information, please refer to the [Georgetown University Academic Resource Center website](#). Students are highly encouraged to discuss the documentation and accommodation process with an Academic Resource Center administrator.

Accessibility and Inclusion

One of the central tenets of Georgetown’s educational mission is *cura personalis*, a Latin phrase meaning “care of the whole person.” Georgetown is committed to showing care and concern for each student by creating an inclusive and accessible learning environment that follows universal design principles to meet the needs of its diverse student body.

I am committed to creating a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.). If your name or pronoun needs to be corrected, please let me know early in the semester so that I can make the appropriate changes to my records.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students at Georgetown University are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic and personal integrity. Although most Georgetown students conduct themselves in accordance with these standards, occasionally, there are students who violate the code of conduct. Cheating harms the University community in many ways. For example, honest students are frustrated by the unfairness of cheating that goes undetected and students who cheat can skew the grading curve in a class, resulting in lower grades for students who worked hard and did their own work.

Academic dishonesty in any form is a serious offense, and students found in violation are subject to academic penalties that include, but are not limited to failure of the course, termination from the program, and revocation of degrees already conferred. All students are expected to fully adhere to the policies and procedures of [Georgetown’s Honor System](#) and to take the Honor Code Pledge.

Honor Code Pledge

In pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life I commit myself to respect and to uphold the Georgetown University honor system:

- *To be honest in every academic endeavor, and*



- *To conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community as we live and work together.*

Plagiarism

Stealing someone else's work is a terminal offense in the workplace, and it will wreck your career in academia, too. Students are expected to work with integrity and honesty in all their assignments. The Georgetown University Honor System defines plagiarism as "the act of passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of another." More guidance is available through the [Gervase Programs](#). If you have any doubts about plagiarism, paraphrasing, and the need to credit, check out [Plagiarism.org](#).

All submissions must be your original work. Any submission suspected of plagiarism will be immediately referred to the Honor Council for investigation and possible adjudication. All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. If you have not done so, please read the honor code material located online at the [Honor Council website](#).

SUPPORT SERVICES

Georgetown recognizes that COVID-19 has a significant impact on everyone in the Georgetown community. Georgetown offers a variety of support services for students that can be accessed online and has put together [this newsletter](#) which aims to provide you with information about well-being resources and virtual meetings that can connect you with mental health professionals on and off campus during this time. Below are some resources available to you:

- [Academic Resource Center](#)
202-687-8354 | arc@georgetown.edu
- [Counseling and Psychiatric Services](#)
202-687-6985
- [Institutional Diversity, Equity & Affirmative Action \(IDEAA\)](#)
(202) 687-4798

Title IX/Sexual Misconduct

Georgetown University and its faculty are committed to supporting survivors and those impacted by sexual misconduct, which includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, and stalking. Georgetown requires faculty members, unless otherwise designated as confidential, to report all disclosures of sexual misconduct to the [University Title IX Coordinator or a Deputy Title IX Coordinator](#). If you disclose an incident of sexual misconduct to a professor in or outside of the classroom (with the exception of disclosures in papers), that faculty member must report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator, or Deputy Title IX Coordinator. The coordinator will, in turn, reach out to the student to provide support, resources, and the option to meet. [Please note that the student is not required to meet with the Title IX coordinator.].



Please note that University policy requires faculty to report any disclosures about sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator, whose role is to coordinate the University's response to sexual misconduct. Georgetown has a number of fully confidential professional resources who can provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual assault and other forms of sexual misconduct. These resources include:

- Jen Schweer, MA, LPC, Associate Director of Health Education Services for Sexual Assault Response and Prevention (202) 687-0323 | jls242@georgetown.edu
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS), (202) 687-6985 | After Hours: (833) 960-3006
- Sexual Assault Response and Prevention (SARP) confidential email: sarp@georgetown.edu
- [Get Help Resources](#)

More information about reporting options and resources can be found on the [Sexual Misconduct Website](#). If you would like to find out how recent changes to Title IX regulations are impacting Georgetown's policies and procedures, see [this video briefing](#).

Title IX/Pregnancy and Parenting Accommodations

Georgetown University is committed to creating an accessible and inclusive environment for pregnant and parenting students. Students may request adjustments based on general pregnancy needs or accommodations based on a pregnancy-related complication. Specific adjustments will be handled on a case by case basis and will depend on medical needs and academic requirements. Students seeking a pregnancy adjustment or accommodation should follow the process laid out on the [Title IX website](#).

Discrimination based on sex, including sexual misconduct and discrimination based on pregnancy or parenting status, subverts the University's mission and threatens permanent damage to the educational experience, careers, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff.

Georgetown Library

If you have a question for a librarian you can go to their ["Ask Us"](#) page where you will have the option to chat online, send an email, or schedule a Zoom appointment to discuss a research topic, develop a search strategy, or examine resources for projects and papers. Librarians offer an overview of and in-depth assistance with important resources for senior or master's theses, dissertations, papers and other types of research. This service is available to currently enrolled students who need assistance with Georgetown-assigned projects and papers. Please review the [Services & Resources Guide for Online Students](#) for additional information.

eResources

Students enrolled in courses have access to the University Library System's eResources, including 500+ research databases, 1.5+ million ebooks, and thousands of periodicals and other

multimedia files (films, webinars, music, and images). You can access these resources through the [Library's Homepage](#) by using your NetID and password.

Learning Resources

Georgetown offers a host of [learning resources](#) to its students. Two that you might find particularly helpful in this course are the [Writing Center](#) and [Refworks](#).

- [The Writing Center](#) offers peer tutoring by trained graduate and undergraduate students who can assist you at any point in the writing process. They help at any stage of your writing process, from brainstorming to revision. Tutors can offer advice on thesis development, use of evidence, organization, flow, sentence structure, grammar, and more. The Writing Center will not proofread or edit papers; rather, they will help to improve your proofreading and editing skills to become a better writer. Appointments can be booked online through their website.
- [Refworks](#) is an online research management tool that aids in organizing, storing, and presenting citation sources for papers and projects.

Technical Support

All students have 24/7 access to Canvas technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including live chat and a support hotline at 855-338-2770. Use the 'Help' icon in the lower left of your Canvas window to view all available support and feedback options. If you're looking for help on a specific feature, check out the [Canvas Student Guide](#).