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## syllabus

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# Managing Our Planet

EVPP 692 (1.0 credit) and 991 (2.0 credits, Ph.D. students only),  
 FALL 2013 – Wed. 4:30–7:10pm in Founders Hall Room 465  
 George Mason University Arlington campus  
 (option for select Wednesdays at [Woodrow Wilson Center](#), Washington, DC 3–5pm)

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**References:** webinar [archives](#) and [links](#) uploaded files (as wiki [list](#) | in [folder](#))

*Welcome to the Anthropocene, a time when humanity is profoundly impacting our planet -- its air, soil, oceans and myriad life forms. By both intention and neglect, unprecedented billions of Homo sapiens and our collective technologies are transforming Earth's planetary systems into something novel. At the same time, as University Professor Thomas Lovejoy has noted, "the world's actions today are producing an unacceptable environment for those who will be living at the century's end." Are we dooming ourselves to a world substantially less hospitable for our descendants than the one we inherited? Or can we consciously manage our planet at a global scale -- simultaneously maintaining predictable climates, sustaining 9 billion plus people by mid-century, and preserving natural ecosystems upon which we depend for our life support? And if we can act at this planetary scale, how should we do so?*

## Goals

By the end of this seminar, students should be able to:

1. Identify key characteristics and consequences of our generation's enormous, unprecedented global impact.
2. Examine means by which humanity has (e.g., stratospheric ozone) and could soon act at a global scale to manage the ecosphere and life support upon which we depend.
3. Explore ways in which we might act throughout our own careers in order to promote more responsible, conscientious management of our planet.
4. Identify and examine roadblocks/obstructions to environmental management at the local and/or global scale.

## Approach

Unlike typical graduate seminar courses, this course will incorporate both classroom-based and public discourse. Our seminar is based on an ongoing monthly panel discussion/seminar series, "Managing Our Planet," Mason and the [Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars](#) have co-organized its sessions on Wednesday afternoons monthly at the Wilson Center for the past 5 semesters. (See [archives](#) for links to past webinars and summaries.) The series focuses on how to take "environmental management to the scale of the entire planet," as climate change, increasing energy consumption, and population growth place increasing stress on natural resources. As my co-organizer, Dr. Lovejoy declared at the outset, we need to "chart a better course for the human future." How do we do so is the subtext of our seminar.

The course will be organized by both the professor AND you through a series of collegial seminars and activities. As a result, the syllabus may be augmented and adjusted as student interests and expertise are revealed. To keep on track, please refer to the on-line [syllabus](#) page which will link to session plans and assignments at least 1 week in advance.

### Course Web Site(s)

You access link to our activities site here: <http://evppmop.pbworks.com> . Updated syllabus, all assignments (including deadlines), submissions and professor's presentations and students notes will be posted to this site.

### Course Schedule

See <http://evppmop.pbworks.com/schedule>.

### Texts and Materials

All texts and materials will either be accessible via our wiki site,

<http://evppmop.pbworks.com/>

or handed out in prior class. Students should feel empowered to add to this list as they see fit to convey their discoveries and ideas.

### Performance Assessment

Students scores for the course will be based on performance on the following activities:

1. 692 Students (1 credit):
  - i. 80% x the average of scores (0-4) for active participation in 5 (MS and ND students) or more scheduled sessions
  - ii. 20% x 1 in-class presentation on your MOP topic and/or in-class discussion/leadership (0-4 score; one half session)
2. 991 Students (2 credits)
  - i. 80% x the average of scores (0-4) for active participation on 10 or more scheduled sessions
  - ii. 10% for 1 in-class presentation on your MOP topic and/or in-class discussion/leadership (0-4 score; one full session or two half-sessions)
  - iii. 10% for session summary in format akin to New Security Beat articles in the [archives](#).

If you are unable to attend a Wilson Center event in person, please inform your professor at least 1 week in advance to make alternative arrangements to (a) view the webinar in real-time or as an archive, then provide written insights and perspectives (in real-time or via email before next scheduled session). If not in real-time, please discuss and reference at least 2 peer reviewed articles in your communique.

Assignment and Rubric	1	2	3	4
1. Participation	Partially and passively attend	Fully attend, but passive	Attend and participate	A leader in contributing substantively and actively
2. In-Class Leadership	Delivered but irrelevant	Marginally on topic and informative	Informative and professional	Publish this!
3. Session Summary	Submitted but irrelevant	Captures what occurred (activities), but does not adequately cover <u>outputs</u> (substance of information created/produced) or <u>impacts</u> (what was learned)	Broadly captures both outputs and impacts, but not specific enough for a New Security Beat article	Fully and specifically captures outputs and impacts in a format ready for publication as a New Security Beat article

**Participation:** Students are expected to participate actively in every session they attend. If you need to miss a session, please inform your professor in advance whenever feasible. Doctoral students who attend less than 10 scheduled sessions and Master's students who attend less than 5 scheduled sessions will be required to make supplemental contribution to the course products in order to receive full participation credit. (If that's likely for you, please discuss with your professor ASAP to make alternative arrangements.)

**Leadership:** Students should plan to present and/or lead a ~50 min discussion of the priority MOP topic for that day, examining global concerns and means for addressing them. Multiple students leading same topic may (optionally) collaborate on their leadership, for which time should then be additive (i.e., 2 students = 100 min.; 3 students = 150 min). Creative formats -- such as debates or substantively appropriate role-playing simulations and debriefs -- are warmly welcome!

**Summaries:** Should emulate the style and length of a New Security Beat session summary. See [archives](#) for examples.

## Grading Procedure

The final grade is based on your performance out of the possible 100 points:

Grade	Points
A - Exceptional/Passing	90.001 - 100
B - Satisfactory/Passing	80.001 - 90
C - Unsatisfactory/Passing	70.001 - 80
F - Unsatisfactory/Failing	0 - 70

In the past, roughly half of the students in this course have received A's and half B's, however a few have also received a C. The professor is not required, but reserves the right to provide + or - to grades to provide further clarification regarding the quality of students' work.

## Disability Accommodation

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see Debbie Wyne and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

If you are unable to attend class in person, please make arrangements in advance [if possible], so that the professor can try to make accommodations for your participation via [skype](#).

## Honor Code

Adherence to the GMU Honor Code is expected of all students, specifically:

*Members of the George Mason University community pledge  
not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.*

In all assignments and communications, plagiarism will not be tolerated. This applies equally to oral and written communications in the context of any evaluated (graded) course assignments. In presenting quotes, paraphrasing statements or logical arguments from others in any medium (on-line, oral or written), students should properly cite their source. Results of team work should only be attributed to those who directly contribute to the final product (even if more than those people were designated as being part of the team). Any or all members of a student team may be held accountable for any Honor Code violations in their shared work. Any public usage of original material from this course (e.g., presentations, images, etc.) without explicit permission of its creator shall be construed as stealing. As stated in the Honor Code, infractions may result in invalidated credit for dishonorable work and lowered grade, including failure from the class, suspension or dismissal. Inquiries for clarification from the professor are welcome. Thank you in advance for your conscious attention to these issues.

## Absenteeism

As adults with outside responsibilities, many of you may have to miss a class once during the semester. If you know this is likely to happen, please contact your professor as soon as possible to arrange means to ensure you can still learn the material and/or obtain full credit for any learning activities.

If there is any exceptional threat posed by **pandemic flu** this season, students who promptly inform the professor of their flu symptoms (see [next underlined link](#) hereafter) are then *strongly urged* to **stay at home**, per [CDC direction here](#). **Do not come to class** until 24 hours after any [ $\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$ ] fever passed without medication. Insofar as students adhere to the GMU Honor Code when declaring their flu-related need to work from home, they will be eligible to receive reasonable accommodation for their illness, as deemed appropriate by the professor.

## About the Instructor

**Dr. Dann Sklarew**, Associate Professor, Dept. of Environmental Science and Policy ([ESP](#))  
and Associate Director, Potomac Environmental Research and Education Center ([PEREC](#)),

Office hours:

- Tues. 3-4pm in Fairfax campus' David King Hall room 3018
- Wed. 3-4 pm in Fairfax campus' Founders Hall room 504 (except during Woodrow Wilson Center weeks, when available there at 5:01)
- Or by email-arranged appointment

E-mail: [dsklarew@gmu.edu](mailto:dsklarew@gmu.edu) (best way to contact him)

Website: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~dsklarew>



Skype: [jendann](#)

Phone number: (703) 993-2012 (leave message; better yet, try email first)

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