Thursdays for ... Predicting Environmental Policy

Syllabus
Fall 2019/2020

Prof. Detlef F. Sprinz, Ph.D.

Purpose and Contents

This course combines environmental policy and applied methods training in a format accessible to undergraduate and graduate students. To this end, students will be introduced to forecasting political negotiations in the field of environmental policy, employing the “The Predictioneer’s Game” software.

The seminar will combine lectures on specific aspects of environmental policy and on the simulation software, hands-on sessions using the Predictor’s Game, actor papers, and group simulation papers. In particular, students will undertake two major strands of predictions: (1) the eligibility of forest carbon under the market mechanisms of the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and (2) minimum price for carbon emissions in Germany (t.b.c).

As a result of this course, students will be able to use the Predictioneer’s Game to forecast the outcomes of generic multi-party (environmental) negotiations to assist strategic decisions in a variety of settings within and outside of the environmental policy field.

Learning Goals

Knowledge & Understanding

- understand the core inputs of a prediction model, and
- understand the core outputs

Applying, Analyzing & Evaluating

- undertake predictions of multi-actors negotiations for hitherto unresolved challenges of global environmental and climate policy
- agree, among students and facilitated by the instructor, standardized position input scales that are topic-specific for comparability of student actor papers, and
- research, execute, and evaluate their own model runs

Creating

- students develop their own research strategy amendable to using prediction tools, e.g., for subsequent use in their thesis.
Logistics

**Time & Location:** →Course Overview

**Location:** →Course Overview

**Prerequisites:** M.A. or Ph.D. student status in Political Science, Public Administration, MasterIB, Master of Public Management or related discipline; see →https://puls.uni-potsdam.de for details; undergraduates admitted by special permission

**Course Registration:** →https://puls.uni-potsdam.de, Course: 430511

**Deadline for Dropping the Course:** 10 Nov. 2019

**Credit Points:** 9 (ECTS)

**Course website:** Moodle →https://moodle2.uni-potsdam.de/course/view.php?id=21751

**Capacity:** 20

**Teaching Assistant:** Ms. Montana Attwood (attwood@uni-potsdam.de)

**Contact Details:**
dsprinz@uni-potsdam.de (include “T4...PEP, Fall 2019” in the subject line)

www.sprinz.org

**Office Hours:** by appointment

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**Note**

For prediction 2 on contemporary German climate policy decisions, reading capacity of German will be of great advantage. Please inform the instructor if you do not have a capacity to read German sources.

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**Code of Conduct**

All students are assumed to be familiar with and will abide by the rules of proper academic conduct as specified by the University of Potsdam and courses offered jointly with other universities and academic programs (→https://www.uni-potsdam.de/am-up/2011/ambek-2011-01-037-039.pdf). You are expected to undertake all your individual assignments independently. For group assignments, resulting products shall be authored exclusively by all group members (with individual components clearly marked). Failure to comply with such rules may lead to the consequences stipulated → https://www.uni-potsdam.de/am-up/2018/ambek-2018-06-371-395.pdf (German) and https://www.uni-potsdam.de/fileadmin01/projects/studium/docs/03_studium_konkret/07_rechtsgrundlagen/BAMAO_Lesefassung_EN.pdf (English) (§17).

Each written submissions in this course shall include page 2 of →https://www.uni-potsdam.de/fileadmin01/projects/wisofak/Dateien/Studium/informationen_f__r_studierende_plagiatsoftware_april_2014.pdf (also made available on the →Moodle website for this course).

Select students appear to have fallen in love with around-the-clock connectivity and social media. During our seminar sessions, I expect you to concentrate on this course!
All personal information that you encounter in conjunction with this course or on Moodle shall be exclusively used for course-related purposes. Students are expected to attend all sessions. In case you cannot submit assignments due to medical reasons, you must submit an appropriate medical certificate. In addition, in case you need accommodations (“Nachteilsausgleich”), please inform the instructor to this effect and provide the necessary documentation during the first four modules of this course.

In case observation of religious obligations interferes with academic deadlines, please notify the instructor well ahead of the deadline.

You have to read the EULA (End User License Agreement) of the Predictioneer’s Game software and you accept it automatically when submitting the first simulation paper.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

This course combines short lectures and an excursion with colloquia, hands-on sessions in structured workshop-style settings, quizzes, breakout groups, paper assignments, as well as their presentation (see below for details). Students are expected to have read all assigned readings prior to class and are expected to ask questions in the beginning of class to advance their understanding of the readings and to enhance the usefulness of hands-on exercises.

Your grade comprises the following components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>9-10 ECTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Participation (<em>throughout</em> the course), incl. quizzes and other short assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Individual) Actor Paper &amp; Presentation</td>
<td>15% each</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Group) Simulation Paper &amp; Presentation</td>
<td>25% each</td>
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</table>

If you take only 6 ECTS, the three best of your four {papers & presentations} assignments will be chosen and reweighted.

**Textbooks**


All other readings will be made available via Moodle (→Schedule & Readings).

**Software**

## Course Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time &amp; Location</th>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 Oct. 2019</td>
<td>9:00-12:30h, 3.06. S15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Course Overview, <a href="#">TED Talk</a> (video)</td>
<td>Ice Breaker: What is Prediction Good For?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Oct. 2019</td>
<td>9:00-12:30h, 3.06. S15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Predictioneer’s Game: Overview [Scaling]</td>
<td>[Develop a position scale]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Oct. 2019</td>
<td>9:00-12:30h, 3.06. S15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>The Predictioneer’s Game: Advanced Issues and Q&amp;A</td>
<td>Icebreaker: Introduce your neighbor; Quiz on core components of the Predictioneer’s Game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Oct. 2019</td>
<td>9:00-12:30h, 3.06. S15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Actor Papers and Issue Scaling; Replicating an Analysis; Brief Course Feedback</td>
<td>“Cascade” group work on scales (e.g., on mitigation)/ think-pair-share; replication analysis using the Predictioneer’s Game (please bring your laptop to class); Assignment to Actor Papers for Prediction 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>31 Oct. 2019</td>
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<td>07 Nov. 2019</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td><a href="#">Reading Week on Climate Policy</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Nov. 2019</td>
<td>9:00-14:00h, German Foreign Office, Weltsaal, Werderscher Markt 1, 10117 Berlin</td>
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<td>Briefing for UNFCCC COP-25:</td>
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<td>Register at: <a href="https://www.deutsches-klima-konsortium.de/registrierung">https://www.deutsches-klima-konsortium.de/registrierung</a></td>
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### Prediction 1: Forest Carbon & Market Mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Lecture/Assignment Details</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 Nov. 2019</td>
<td>14:00-15:30h, 3.06. S24</td>
<td>6  Guest Lecture: Montana Attwood (PIK &amp; UP): Policy Overview</td>
<td>HW: one-paragraph paper due: Which is the most pressing negotiations issue on forest carbon &amp; market mechanisms?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Nov. 2019</td>
<td>16:00-17:30h, 3.06. S24</td>
<td>7  Forest Carbon &amp; Market Mechanisms: Actors and Positions, Q&amp;A</td>
<td>HW: one-paragraph assignment due: position scale &amp; graph; “Cascade” group work/think-pair-share on position scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Nov. 2019</td>
<td>9:00-10:30h, 3.06. S18</td>
<td>8  Prediction 1 – Actor Papers &amp; Presentation: Forest Carbon &amp; Market Mechanisms, Q &amp; A</td>
<td>Prediction 1: Actor Paper due &amp; Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Nov. 2019</td>
<td>9:00-10:30h, 3.06. S13</td>
<td>9  Prediction 1 – Presentation of Simulations: Forest Carbon &amp; Market Mechanisms, Q &amp; A</td>
<td>Prediction 1: Simulation Paper due &amp; Presentation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Prediction 2: The 2019 Climate Package of the German Federal Government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Lecture/Assignment Details</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28 Nov. 2019</td>
<td>11:00-12:30h, 3.06. S13</td>
<td>10 Guest Lecture: Dr. Michael Pahle (PIK): The 2019 Climate Package of the German Federal Government</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>05 Dec. 2018</td>
<td>9:00-10:30h, 3.06. S22</td>
<td>11  The 2019 Climate Package of the German Federal Government: Q&amp;A</td>
<td>HW: one-paragraph assignment due: position scale &amp; graph; “Cascade” group work/think-pair-share on position scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Dec. 2019</td>
<td>9:00 – 11:30h, 3.06. S13</td>
<td>13  Prediction 2 – Presentation of Simulations: The 2019 Climate Package of the German Federal Government, Q&amp;A</td>
<td>Prediction 2: Simulation Paper due &amp; Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Dec. 2019</td>
<td>11:30-12:30h, place t.b.d.</td>
<td>14  Course Review</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

*HW: one-paragraph paper due: Which is the most pressing negotiations issue on forest carbon & market mechanisms?*
Assignments
Actor and Simulation Papers

Students will write a total of four papers:

- one individual actor paper each on (1) the eligibility of forest carbon under the market mechanisms of the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and (2) minimum price for carbon emissions in Germany (t.b.c.), and
- one group simulation each on (1) the eligibility of forest carbon under the market mechanisms of the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and (2) minimum price for carbon emissions in Germany (t.b.c.).

Actor papers will be approx. up to 1,000 words in length, simulation papers will be approx. 1,000 words in length per group member. Details on the paper format and the submission procedure will be provided in the formal assignments. All papers are due the day prior to their presentation in class. Papers are submitted via Moodle. Papers have to include student IDs and a brief description who did what (the latter refers only to group papers), the topic, and a word count on the cover page.

We will elaborate relevant position scales for the respective predictions in class (Modules 7 & 11), using working groups.

For the actor papers, please provide a brief historical overview of the actor, its central positions over time on the particular issue under investigation, and score the actor with respect to influence, position, salience, flexibility, veto status (as introduced in Modules 1-4). Each of these scores has to be justified and sources fully referenced. The actor papers will be presented in class (Modules 8 & 12) and will be subject to Q & A by your peers.

For the simulation paper, you will have to determine which actors to include (beyond the actors covered by actor papers), potentially revise the scores offered in individual actor papers, and devise a strategy for employing the Predictioneer’s Game, including robustness checks (variations of the input structure, e.g., on parameters where point values cannot be reasonably or reliably ascertained). Please appendix the input file for the simulations as .txt file(s) and provide full references for all sources. The simulation papers will be presented in class (Modules 9 & 13) and will be subject to Q & A by your peers.
Modules

Module 1: Course Overview

Course Overview

Module 2: The Predictioneer’s Game: Overview


Module 3: The Predictioneer’s Game: Advanced Issues and Q&A


Module 4: Actor Papers and Issue Scaling; Replicating an Analysis; Brief Course Feedback


Prepare a “.txt” data input file from the table on page 217.


Module 5: Reading Week


Module 7: Forest Carbon & Market Mechanisms: Actors & Positions, Q & A


Explore:
- http://enb.iisd.org/process/forest_desertification_land.htm
- https://unfccc.int
- http://enb.iisd.org/process/climate_atm.htm

Module 8: Prediction 1 – Forest Carbon & Market Mechanisms: Actor Papers & Presentation, Q & A

In-Class Student Presentations

Q & A

Module 9: Prediction 1 – Forest Carbon & Market Mechanisms: Presentation of Simulations, Q & A

In-Class Student Presentations

Q & A

Module 10: Guest Lecture: Dr. Michael Pahle (PIK): The 2019 Climate Package of the German Federal Government

Module 11: The 2019 Climate Package of the German Federal Government: Actors and Positions, Q&A

Module 12: Prediction 2 – The 2019 Climate Package of the German Federal Government: Actor Papers & Presentation, Q&A

In-Class Student Presentations
Q & A

Module 13: Prediction 2 – The 2019 Climate Package of the German Federal Government: Presentation of Simulations, Q&A

In-Class Student Presentations
Q & A

Module 14: Course Review