POL 1003 Examination

ENGLISH VERSION

This examination consists of two parts that count equally in the grading. Part I consists of short-answer questions. We expect short but concise answers to these. You must answer 5 out of 6 questions.

Part II consists of one essay question. You may choose from the two questions offered.

Remember that the two parts count equally and budget your time wisely. Beware of writing too much in answer to the questions in Part I. Think in terms of providing the essential or most important points in the time you have available. We expect about a half a page. If you want to write more, come back to that question after you write the essay question.

Part I:

Short answer questions. Answer only 5.

1. Explain the basic plot of the tragedy of the commons. Use at least one example.
   The concept “tragedy of the commons” originates from a publication by Garrett Hardin in 1968 where he explains why individually rational decisions do not lead to collectively optimal outcomes when there is a finite resource base. The plot is that while the benefits of exploiting the commons are individual, the costs are shared within the collective. The most popular example used by Hardin is the idea that when peasants are to put their own sheep on the village commons, they recognize that putting an extra sheep on to the field will benefit their self-interest, while the costs are shared among all the peasants that use the commons. This logic makes all peasants put an extra sheep on the field, ultimately leading to the destruction of the commons. Hardin’s example is a metaphor for various sorts of environmental problems, and may be related to i.e. global greenhouse gas emissions, fishing or traffic congestion. Satisfactory answers should cover most of these points when explaining the basic plot, as well as placing the concept within the “Survivalism discourse”. Particularly good answers may also include notions from game theory: optimal outcomes, sub-optimal outcomes, complete or incomplete information. Additionally, students will be duly rewarded for discussing Hardin’s criticism of Smith’s market liberalism and for criticizing some of Hardin’s reactionary thoughts on population control.

2. What is the interest-based explanation of environmental policy?
   This comes specifically from the Sprinz and Vaahantoranta article by this name, but students could also have drawn upon realism and other sources to answer it. The essence of this notion is that group and national interests guide the international environmental policy of any given country. This is a unit-based explanation as opposed to a systemic-based understanding. It assumes that each country is a self-interested actor who rationally seeks wealth and power by comparing the costs and benefits of alternative courses of action. The article specifically looks at two major factors to explain a country’s environmental policy: ecological vulnerability and abatement cost. The article goes on to illustrate the utility of this parsimonious approach by looking at stratospheric ozone problem. It is acceptable if the student draws upon the realism/liberalism literature instead of this specific article, but the idea of cost-benefit based analysis and action should be central in the explanation.
3. What is the difference between an anthropocentric and an ecocentric view of nature? Give examples of discourses with differing views on this matter.

The anthropocentric view of nature places man at the center of analysis, and views nature in terms of its utility towards humans. An ecocentric view places nature in the center, valuing nature on its own terms and for its own sake. Most of the discourses covered in Dryzek fit into the anthropocentric view category: Promethean, the solving environmental problem discourses (administrative rationalism, democratic pragmatism, and economic rationalism), the sustainability discourses (sustainable development and ecological modernization). Even survivalism is really an anthropocentric orientation since it looks at the world in terms of carrying capacity (how many humans with what level of consumption the earth can tolerate). It is only really green radicalism (romanticism and possible rationalism).

4. The United States has declined to adopt the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change. Does this mean that there has been no action at all in the US or by US authorities to limit or reduce GHG emissions? Give examples

This comes from Tjernshaugen, as well as from lectures. The essence of this answer is that much has happened on the state and local level as opposed to the federal level. The student might mention that Bush has pushed voluntary reductions and has pledged to reduce the intensity of CO2 emissions. As a part of its voluntary approach the US government has backed non-binding agreements on climate technology cooperation (Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum (CSLF), the International Partnership for the Hydrogen Economy (IPHE) and the Methane to Markets Partnership (MMP). The Bush administration has also invested in new technologies, which Tjernshaugen characterizes as “substantial”. However, I would expect the students to focus most on the action at state level. Among the initiatives that the students could mention are: the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (for the Northeast), the New England Governors’ Climate Change Action Plan, the West Coast Governor’s Initiative, the Southwest Climate Change Initiative, Power the Plains, and the Western Governors’ Association. At the local level, students might mention the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (in which US cities participate and the U.S: Council of Mayors Resolution of 2005 to meet or exceed Kyoto. There is also the Chicago Climate Exchange which is, however, a private initiative but supported by various authorities. The Tjernshaugen article stressed the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, and also the central role of California, which has emerged as a real trend setter.

5. Why does John Dryzek think that the environmental discourse of “administrative rationalism” has been a particularly useful one?

In short, this is because Dryzek sees this approach as the most productive one to date. This is a discourse that belongs to the “solving environmental problems” category. It features an essentially bureaucratic response to environmental problems, which Dryzek calls the “leave it to the experts” perspective. Once environmental problems were identified, they were met by institutional and policy responses. The analysis of this discourse derives almost entirely from examining practice rather than the work of theorists. In short, this is the discourse behind the vast majority of policy initiatives that have actually been put into place. It “delivered the
goods”. However, Dryzek does also suggest that this discourse is in a crisis—bureaucracy is everywhere unpopular, and the approach of breaking down problems into bits and distributing them to the appropriate bureaucratic agency (disaggregation) creates “problem displacement” that is, it tends to shift the problem to another venue rather than solve it. This approach also does nothing to tackle basic problems such as the effects of capitalism or the growth of consumption.

6. Name some characteristics of Norwegian environmental NGOs. What is supposed to make them distinctive?

This turned out to be a question better suited to the English than the Norwegian text, so we will have to be a bit flexible in how we grade it. The answers may differ, depending on the Norwegian or the English text. The characteristics of Norwegian NGOs everyone should be able to say something about: The Norwegian environmental movement was generally opposed to nuclear power, but its big early organizing issues were the “vassdrag” issues regarding Mardøla and Alta; they might mention some of the organizations themselves and note that Greenpeace has been relatively weak in Norway; they might explain the distinction between old and new organizations; that ENGOs in the past were more democratic but have become more centralized, professional, market oriented and closer to business/industry (the success of Bellona figures here); non-core groups have a broader notion of the environment (NOAH, NØLL and DNT are not accepted as a core (kjerne) environmental organizations). They might also mention the waves of rising and falling support for ENGOs. Norwegian organizations are distinctive because they are so closely tied to the state (a part of an exceptionally state-friendly society) and because they are so locally oriented. These latter points do not come out so well in the Norwegian text, and so we must be more flexible in the answers we accept in this part.

Part II:

Essay Question:

1. Describe the “Ecological Modernisation discourse”. Discuss in what way the Kyoto and Montreal protocols are a reflection of Ecological Modernization.

The Ecological Modernisation (EM) discourse is placed within the “Sustainability discourse” by John Dryzek and is thought to be reformist, yet imaginative when it comes to solving environmental problems. Students may draw on the chapter from Dryzek, the articles by Huber, Pellow et al, Reitan and the lectures given in class. As a broad concept, both Dryzek and Huber points to the EM discourse as a concept of structural change. In order to overcome the mutually exclusive categories economy/environment, a new approach of environmental sensitivity is needed. EM is a discourse that recognizes this need, but that the categories no longer need to be mutually exclusive. Economic growth may take place without having the negative effect of environmental degradation. For this to happen, regulations must be designed in a way that positively discriminates environmentally sound initiatives as societies acknowledge the problems caused by pollution. In this way, EM demonstrates that societies are reflexive and willing to learn. According to Dryzek, societies with a distinct corporatist legacy (such as Norway, Sweden, Germany, Netherlands) have proved more reflexive.
This has consequences for an industrial approach to the environment-economy relationship. Huber’s point then is that within an ecologically modernized society, it “pays” to be green. One thing is to avoid the “sticks” and accept the “carrots” as explained above, but according to other authors (Porter and Van der Linde were mentioned in the lecture) it also pays to be green because it involves 1) more efficient resource management, and 2) gives a competitive edge in markets increasingly affected by eco-demanding customers.

Students are at least expected to account for the structural part of the EM discourse, but will be rewarded for including the “industrial” motives for environmentally sound action. Additionally, students may include notions of “weak” and “strong” EM. By including these notions, it is also easier to discuss whether the discourse has been successful or not.

The Montreal Protocol has typically been seen as a reflection of EM because it shows willingness among states to do something about the problems caused by the emission of CFCs because of what Hajer (in Dryzek) calls critical self-awareness or reflexivity. One has to give credit to the parties to the protocol, but students should also mention Dryzek’s comments on why the formerly ozone theory-sceptic chemical company Du Pont suddenly became eager on the implementation of the Montreal Protocol when they developed a substitute product that their competitors did not possess at an early stage. Moreover, considerable CFC emissions still occur in many less developed countries and in black markets around the world. In this way, particularly good answers may say that the Montreal protocol only partly reflects EM.

The Kyoto Protocol has been considered to be another “proof” of EM as states have been willing to cut emissions of greenhouse gases. Students may argue that the negotiations and member obligations demonstrate that states have been reflexive in their actions. They may also argue that the Kyoto flexible mechanisms are designed to benefit green businesses and states. However, points of criticism are obvious. First, not all signatory states (Notably USA) have ratified the protocol, seriously undermining the effectiveness of this regime. Secondly, the flexible mechanisms are criticized for being an easy way out to avoid cutting domestic emissions. Students may also discuss the fact that major polluters such as China and India do not have mitigation obligations. The best students may relate this discussion to the debate on “weak” or “strong” EM.

2. Making an international environmental agreement that is truly effective is difficult. Why is this? (Be sure to discuss what you mean by “effective”). What can regime builders do to make it easier for states to agree?

Here the student can draw upon many different parts of the pensum as well as the lectures given in the class. “Effectiveness” is discussed most directly in the Young and levy article. One meaning of an “effective” when used with respect to an international agreement or regime is whether the regime/agreement itself has had any impact: was it the cause of change? Other meanings are: 1) the legal definition: the degree to which contractual obligations are met (rules are complied with), 2) economic: are achievements cost-effective? 3) normative: does the regime/agreement achieve various normative principles such as fairness, justice, stewardship, participation, etc.; 4) political: does the agreement/regime change behavior of actors in ways that contribute to positive management? Young and Levy focus on a variant of the latter: “the behavioral impact” of a regime or agreement. Note that these don’t actually ask whether the environment is actually improved, but that can also be a meaning of “effective.”

Why it is difficult to achieve effective regimes. There can be many answers here. Students can use the “interest”-based explanation to talk about different national interests;
they can draw upon the International Relations literature to talk about realism and the nature of the international system (the concept of relative gains would be useful here); there is the difficulty of many environmental problems themselves (there is material here from the discussions as to why action has been easier with respect to ozone issue than the climate change issue), the distributions of costs, benefits and capacities (– see the Fermann article, among others). The tragedy of the commons would be useful to bring up in this context.

**What can we do to make it easier for states to agree?** (meaning to effective regimes): Here the student is expected to talk about institutional solutions especially the design of regimes, institutions and agreements, and these are also mentioned in the Young and Levy article. Many of these points revolve around information and communication, which regimes can be designed to promote. Agreements/institutions/organizations can promote the production and collection of information, thus making states aware of problems and showing that it is their interest to take action; they promote social learning; they also collect and distribute information on whether states are complying. The IPCC process is an important example of this: their assessment reports provide an authoritative account of the problem and recent reports are prompting state action. They also structure rules that will solve a “tragedy of the commons problem” (where there is no government) and other collective action problems. They structure rules that affect cost-benefit calculations – by for example providing penalties for and thus raising the costs of lack of compliance. They establish a new set of rules and roles, and may be agents of change with regard to norms of behavior in the international system. Regimes promote transparency and reduce suspicion among states.

While this was covered in class and is in the readings, I expect this part of the question to be difficult.

**BOKMÅL**

Pol 1003 Eksamen

Denne eksamenen består av to deler som teller likt når karakteren skal settes. Del 1 består av kortsvarsspørsmål. Vi forventer korte og presise svar her. Du må svare på 5 av 6 delspørsmål.

Del 2 består av 1 essayspørsmål. Du kan her velge mellom de 2 spørsmålene som er oppgitt. Du skal altså kun besvare 1 spørsmål i Del 2.

Husk at Del 1 og Del 2 teller likt. Du bør derfor planlegge tidsbruken din nøye. Vær økonomisk med tidsbruken og tenk på å få fram det essensielle i Del 1. Vi forventer omtrent en halv sides besvarelse per delspørsmål i Del 1. Hvis du ønsker å skrive mer, kan det være lurt å komme tilbake til Del 1 etter at du har skrevet essaybesvarelseren i Del 2.

**Del 1: Kortsvar**

*Besvar kun 5 av 6 spørsmål:*

1. Forklar ”plottet” i ”almenningens tragedie”. Bruk minst ett eksempel.
2. Hva er den interessebaserte forklaringen på miljøpolicy?
4. USA har ikke føyd seg til Kyotoprotollen. Betyr dette at det ikke har blitt foretatt noen handleligner i USA eller av amerikanske myndigheter som kan begrense eller redusere klimagassutslipp? Gi eksempler.
5. Hvorfor synes John Dryzek at miljødiskursen ”administrativ rasjonalisme” har vært spesielt nyttig?
6. Gi noen karakteristikker av norske miljøorganisasjoner (NGOs). Hva gjør dem særeigne?

Del 2. Essay.
Besvar kun 1 av 2 spørsmål.


2. Det er vanskelig å lage en internasjonal miljøavtale som virkelig er effektiv. Hva kommer dette av? (Vær nøyde med å diskutere hva du mener med ”effektiv”). Hva kan regimebyggere gjøre for at stater lettere skal bli enige?

NYNORSK
Pol 1003 Eksamen

Denne eksamenen er sett saman av to delar som tel likt for karakteren. Del 1 har kortsvarspørsmål. Me forventar korte og presise svar her. Du må svare på 5 av 6 delspørsmål.

Del 2 har 1 essayspørsmål. Du kan her velje mellom dei 2 spørsmåla som er oppgitt. Du skal altså berre svara på 1 spørsmål i Del 2.

Husk at Del 1 og Del 2 tel likt. Du bør difor planlegga tidsbruken din nøyde. Ver økonomisk med tidsbruken og tenk på å få fram det essensielle i Del 1. Me forventar omtrent ei halv side svar per delspørsmål i Del 1. Dersom du ynskjer å skriva meir, kan det vera lurt å koma attende til Del 1 etter at du har skrive essaysvaret i Del 2.

Del 1: Kortsvar
Svar berre på 5 av 6 spørsmål:

7. Forklar ”plottet” i ”allmenningens tragedie”. Bruk minst eitt døme.
8. Kva er den interessebaserte forklaringa på miljøpolicy?
10. USA har ikkje føyd seg til Kyotoprotollen. Tyder dette at det ikkje har blitt gjort nokre handlingar i USA eller av amerikanske styresmakter som kan avgrensa eller redusera klimagassutslepp? Gje døme.
11. Kvifor tykkjer John Dryzek at miljødiskursen ”administrativ rasjonalisme” har vore spesielt nyttig?
12. Gje nokre karakteristikkar av norske miljøorganisasjonar (NGOs). Kva gjer dei særeigne?

Del 2. Essay.
Svar berre på 1 av 2 spørsmål.

4. Det er vanskeleg å laga ein internasjonal miljøavtale som verkeleg er effektiv. Kva kjem dette av? (Ver nøye med å diskutera kva du meiner med ”effektiv”). Kva kan regimebyggjarar gjera for at statar lettare skal verta einige?