

Seminar 7 — Conditions for Environmental-Governance Success

IR227 Politics of Change

July 2026

Mid-term essay: the suggested structure

[Bridge to seminar] *Four sections, four jobs. The structure is guidance, not a template — but each section has a specific job, and the biggest risk is writing 1,250 words of description before you argue anything.*

- 1. The case (~250w)
- 2. Framework choice (~300w)
- 3. The diagnosis (~700w)
- 4. Verdict and implications (~250w)

1. The case (~250 words)

- **Relevance** — why this transition, why now. Not scene-setting history.
- **The puzzle** — what needs explaining; what's contested about the time boundaries you've drawn.

2. Framework choice (~300 words)

- Order frameworks by what the case needs, not the order you learned them.
- Name the combination strategy explicitly: complementary, synthesis, or contradictory. (Cairney 2013)
- Justify, don't assert: why these frameworks answer *this* case's question.
- Match framework to question, not framework to topic — a stalled case may need veto players, not a transition-specific model.

3. The diagnosis (~700 words)- Ideal setup

Framework: Point → Evidence → Explanation/Evaluation → Link

- **Point** — what this framework claims is happening.
- **Evidence** — named actors, dates, mechanisms from the case.
- **Explanation/Evaluation** — does the concept discriminate between rival readings, or just relabel the case?
- **Link** — to the verdict of the following section.

Run this once per framework. Frameworks name-checked without doing this work don't earn precision-of-application credit.

4. Verdict and implications (~250 words)

- Restate the thesis — now substantiated, not verbatim.
- Commit: what kind of transition dynamic, what state it's in.
- Governance implications follow from the verdict, not bolted on.
- Hedged verdicts (“elements of both”) only survive if you name what evidence would resolve the ambiguity.

Workshop: structure audit (10–15 min)

Case: Peer structure audit

- **Solo (2 min):** write your thesis in one sentence: “This case is best read as ____, because ____.”
- **Swap (6–7 min):** partner reads only sections 1–2. Can they predict your verdict? Is the combination strategy named, or just two frameworks listed?
- **Feedback (3–4 min):** partner gives two comments — one on whether the verdict is forecast early enough, one on whether the frameworks do genuinely different work. Writer notes one concrete fix.

If your partner can't predict your verdict from sections 1–2, that's the Explanation/Discussion trap — fix before the next draft.

What you'll do in 90 minutes

[Bridge to seminar] *Take your assigned environmental-governance case. Apply the conditions-for-success checklist. Identify what's present, what's missing. Deliver a status verdict. Then a brief reflection: what does this case tell us about the climate-governance challenge in Lecture 9?*

- Six cases, three pairs, deliberately paired.
- Each group: 3–4 students, one case.
- Conditions assessment, then drafting, then plenary.

Three methodological points up front

1. “Epistemic community” is more than scientific consensus. Network + shared norms + policy-connectedness. (Haas 1992)
2. Industry is a variable, not just an opponent. Some firms benefit from regulation. (Kennard 2020)
3. The conditions vary in centrality across cases. Identify the binding constraint.

Six cases, three pairs

Pair archetype	Case A	Case B
International atmospheric	Montreal Protocol + Kigali	Minamata Mercury Convention
Market-based emissions	US Clean Air Act SO ₂	EU ETS
Unfavourable conditions	UN Plastic Treaty (2022–25)	CBD / BBNJ Treaty

Within each pair: same archetype, different conditions or stage of regime-building. (World Bank 2025; Young 2011)

Recap: the conditions checklist

Framework: Conditions for success

1. Scientific consensus + epistemic community. (Haas 1992)
2. Concentrated industry / actors.
3. Available technological substitutes.
4. Asymmetric costs favouring cooperation.
5. Distributional mechanisms.
6. Institutional design (monitoring, verification, enforcement). (Young 2011)
7. Political leadership.

Recap: industry as variable

- Naive view: industry is monolithically opposed to environmental regulation.
- Empirical reality: firms strategically lobby *for* environmental regulation when they are advantaged by it. (Kennard 2020)
- Examples: USCAP coalition pre-2009 (BP, Duke Energy, Caterpillar, GE); aluminium-industry support for carbon-border adjustments; DuPont's 1988 CFC phase-out announcement.
- Implication: identify and empower the pro-regulation firms.

Phase 1 — conditions assessment (20 min, no laptops)

For each of the seven conditions:

1. Identify whether it is present, partially present, or absent.
2. Defend the verdict with evidence from the case extract.
3. Reach a status verdict — succeeding, partially succeeding, or stalled — and identify the binding constraint: the missing or unfavourable condition that most explains it.

Output: a sentence per condition, a status verdict, and the binding constraint — something you can defend and will report to the class.

Phase 2 — draft your briefing (15 min, Claude allowed)

Case: Diagnostic memo

- One paragraph: conditions-and-status memo. Conditions verdicts, binding constraint, status verdict.
- Two-to-three sentences: climate reflection. What specific implication does this case have for the climate-governance challenge in Lecture 9?

Be specific. “Useful for thinking about climate” is not a reflection.

Phase 3 — exchange briefings (5 min)

- Swap your written briefing with your comparative-case group (same pair archetype, paired case).
- Read their conditions verdicts, binding constraint, and status verdict.
- Note one point of contrast to raise in the plenary: same archetype — why does the verdict differ?

Phase 4 — present (5 min per group)

Each group presents its own verdict, then names the contrast with its comparative case.

- International atmospheric: Montreal+Kigali vs. Minamata — same archetype, different conditions. Why?
- Market-based emissions: US SO₂ vs. EU ETS — same instrument-type, different scale and design lessons. Why?
- Unfavourable conditions: Plastic Treaty vs. CBD/BBNJ — both have weak conditions; one is stalled, one is partially advancing. Why?

Three things to take away

1. The conditions checklist is a diagnostic, not a recipe. Identify which conditions matter most in each case.
2. Industry is a variable, not just an opponent. Identify and empower pro-regulation firms. (Kennard 2020)
3. The climate-governance challenge (Lecture 9) has unfavourable conditions across most dimensions. The diagnostic identifies where to invest political and design effort.

Tomorrow: digital governance — a transition where institutional infrastructure is still being built.

- Cairney, P. (2013). **“Standing on the Shoulders of Giants: How Do We Combine the Insights of Multiple Theories in Public Policy Studies?”** In: *Policy Studies Journal* 41.1, pp. 1–21.
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- Kennard, A. (2020). **“The Enemy of My Enemy: When Firms Support Climate Change Regulation”**. In: *International Organization* 74.2, pp. 187–221.
- World Bank (2025). **State and Trends of Carbon Pricing 2025**. Tech. rep. License: CC BY 3.0 IGO. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Young, O. R. (2011). **“Effectiveness of international environmental regimes: Existing knowledge, cutting-edge themes, and research strategies”**. In: *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 108.50, pp. 19853–19860.