



Earth in crisis: environmental policy in an international context

What DU311 offers

Penny Boreham

What would you hope, Dave, that students would take from the course and what new ways would you hope they might become engaged through doing this course?

Dave Humphries

Several ways really. It's an interdisciplinary course, we present quite a bit on the science of climate change very early on in the course so that the students can understand the scientific process and how scientists have reached the conclusion that they have. We've developed a model for students to look at. I hope they'll also understand a lot more about the environmental policy process, how policy-makers make policy, the constraints they face and the challenges that they have to overcome in order to make a difference. I hope that students will understand also a little bit more about their own way of life and perhaps engage critically and reflectively, as we on the course team have done in the process of making the course, something more about their own environmental impacts, their own ecological footprints and what they can do as concerned citizens and consumers to make a difference on what is, I would suggest, the most pressing public welfare issue of the 21st century. Which is global environmental change and humanity has not faced a crisis like this before. We've had other risks in the past, the threat of nuclear warfare during the Cold War, for example, but this problem is of a different order of magnitude, I would suggest and I would agree with the ambassador we interviewed that would say that we have a moral responsibility to act now to deal with these problems.

Penny Boreham

Jessica, and this is something, isn't it, that has to be taken on, I know this is idealistic, but in a global way for it to really work though, doesn't it?

Jessica Budds

Very much so. I hope what the films in Bangladesh show is the actual tangible effects that climate change and other environmental issues are having on local people in Bangladesh, which will allow people to reflect upon their own perception of issues, for example not just focusing on things at their own national level, but looking wider to the effects in other countries and reflecting on their own behaviours.

Penny Boreham

Mariam?

Mariam Rashid

Yes, I am very optimistic, I must say. And what I've seen working with climate change for the past four or five years that people are slowly getting involved, but I think we need to get involved a bit more, a bit more rigorously and everyone can do their little bit. And because I've seen the effects of climate change firsthand, I live in Bangladesh so I know what goes on, it gets me more interested but even though you don't live in Bangladesh you can still see all the impacts that are happening even in your own country. And I believe like everyone can make a difference, every little thing that we do together combines it a lot, so instead of waiting for international negotiations to take hold and start working properly, I think we could do our little bits. Every single one of us.

Penny Boreham

Dave, is that what it's going to take – lots, and lots, and lots of little bits?

Dave Humphries

I agree, I think that it does need some mass action by people to change their habits and to apply pressure to governments and I there's a message here – not just for those students who will enrol for the course, but I think for everybody that will listen to this album. This is a problem that affects every single one of us. It's not going to go away, there's a huge problem, and I think that we all have a role to play in addressing this problem.