In the face of population growth, environmental degradation, food crises and global climate change, human-environment relations have never been more complicated than they are today. In this class, we will conduct an advanced study of environmental trends, governance, social movements, and the prospects for change. Our goal is to explore how issues of the environment are related to historical and contemporary political and economic relations such as capitalism, class relations, the state and scientific knowledge. We will draw on examples of environmental challenges from local to global scales in order to understand environmental politics as simultaneously social and ecological.

Images like this, which suggest that the future of the planet is in ‘our’ hands, are common. But whose hands are these? What are the environmental politics that have yielded contemporary social and ecological interactions? What are the prospects for the future of human-environment interactions?