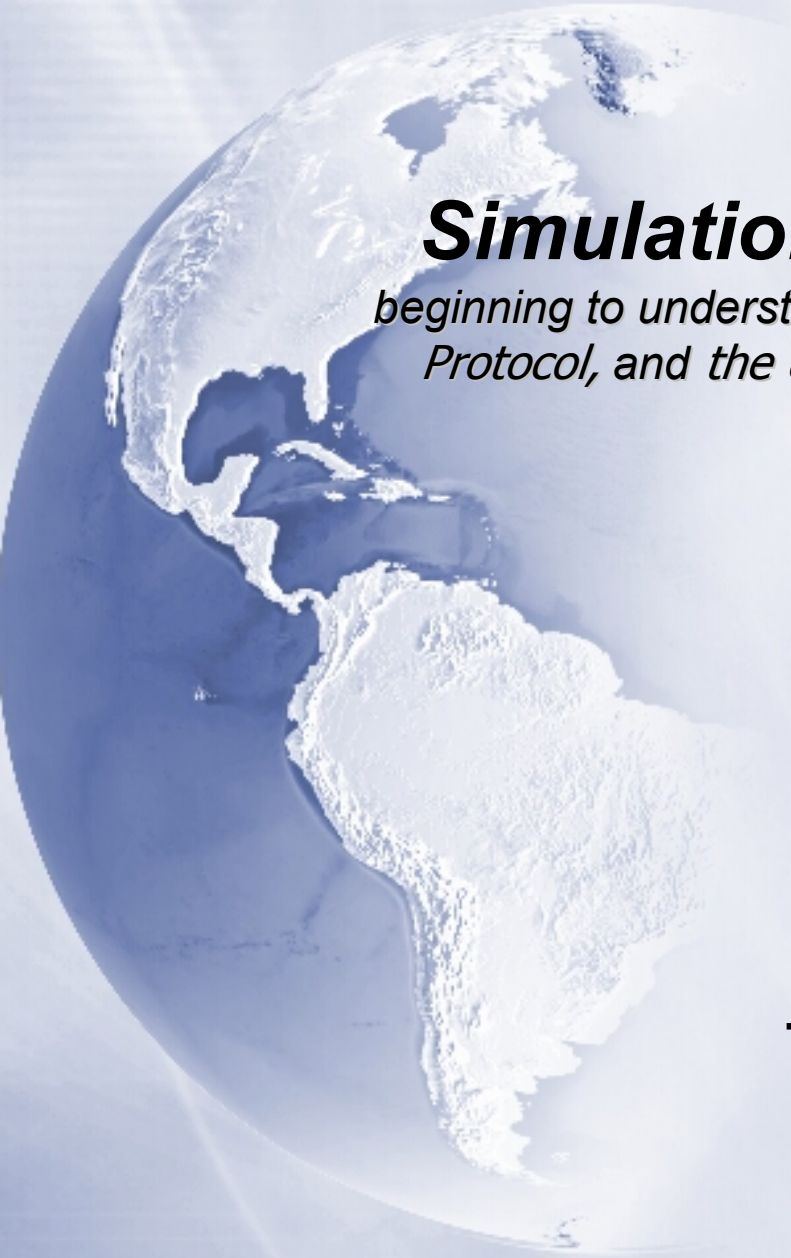

Simulation of Conference of the Parties:

beginning to understand the intergovernmental negotiation process, the Kyoto Protocol, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

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Background

- Climate change is the most critical global environmental problem facing society today, and will continue to be a vexing problem. Scientists have agreed that global temperatures have increased significantly over the past century and that this increase in attributable, in large part, to human activities. Now, the most difficult challenge is to determine appropriate responses in order to limit future climate change.

- In order to teach how the international community is responding to climate change, I have developed a simulation of the international negotiation process. Students learn first hand the varied interests of different countries and the wide range of complex policy responses to mitigate future climate change.

Overview:

1. Lecture and background readings presenting an overview of international climate change negotiations
2. Students choose countries to represent including:
   G77 + China, EU, island nations, oil producing countries, and JUSCANZ (Japan, US, Canada, Austr., NZ)
3. Students write:
   a) background paper about their country and future energy demands;
   b) draft resolution on how to mitigate climate change reflecting their countries interests.
4. Informal discussion between countries (aka caucusing)
5. Students revise and refine draft resolution to produce a formal position paper
6. Final negotiation session, including a brief speech that summarizes their resolution.

Background paper

Incorporates relevant facts and statistics regarding their particular country, including geographic location, important cultural practices, income per capita, current energy consumption per capita, and future energy demands based on population growth, energy growth, and type of energy used.

Position paper

Each student drafts a resolution on how to mitigate climate change that best represents the interests of their country. After reading and hearing resolutions from other countries, the class makes a collective effort to reach a compromise agreement that will be agreeable to all, or most, of the countries.

Fact or Fiction?

This exercise should be based largely on fact and reality, but some of it will, by necessity, be fictitious.

Students are encouraged to base their arguments and proposals on real information that they can document.

They are also encouraged to take the liberty to develop more creative and innovative proposals.

NGOs and industry groups

For better or for worse, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) including environmental organizations (i.e. Sierra Club and World Wildlife Fund) and industry groups (i.e. Shell Oil and General Motors) are not represented in the formal negotiations.

However, students are encouraged to consider how these institutions would influence their decision, and include this in their position papers.

Preparation:

This exercise will only work when the class takes it seriously, and if students spend time developing proposals that reflect a substantial amount of research. There is ample web-based material to help develop proposals and resolutions and excellent books available on reserve.

There are numerous web sites associated with model UN simulations, which is essentially what this exercise is like. Some relevant web sites include:

- *http://www.nmun.org/*
- *http://www.thimun.org/*
- *http://www.unausa.org/*
- *http://cyberschoolbus.un.org/modelun/index.asp*

Suggestions for students:

- Learn about the country's viewpoints on issues related to climate change (e.g. sea level rise, energy use, fossil fuel reservoirs).
- Know your allies and your opposition. In order to adequately represent your country during the conference, you will need to interact with delegates from other countries. Knowing their positions will help you predict their arguments during debate. This will be very useful in helping you decide in advance where it might be useful to seek cooperation or compromise.
- Remember it is not your opinion you are representing but “your” country’s perspective.
- Be aware of different political perspectives: East vs. West and North vs. South.
- Compromise is an art, treat it that way.

Schedule:

Readings are assigned in advance on the climate change negotiation process.

Day One

- Draft copy of *Background paper* and *Position paper* is due.
- A representative from each country reviews their interests and concerns regarding the upcoming negotiations.
- *Lecture-based overview* of the Kyoto Protocol, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Day Two

- *Informal meetings and discussion* to prepare for formal negotiations. I have, in the past, done this in a venue appropriate to the actual meeting site (e.g. over Italian coffee and pastries when COP 9 was in Milan, Italy).

Day Three

- *Final copy* of *Background paper* and *Position paper* is due.
- *Formal negotiations* occur in class. *Final plenary of meeting* with final resolution(s) on how to mitigate climate change. (this can last for two classes if desired).

Some useful web sites:

Official site for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change:

http://unfccc.int/

Lots of information – take care and don't get bogged down in irrelevant bureaucracy.
Specifically: http://unfccc.int/essential_background/

Climate Change resources in the United Nations:

http://www.un.org/partners/civil_society/m-climat.htm

Key UN documents on Climate Change

http://www.un.org/partners/civil_society/docs/d-climat.htm

Documents for the previous COP 9 meeting in Milan, Italy:

http://unfccc.int/cop9/index.html

replace the number "9" with 10, 11, 12 for following meetings

UN carbon market program

http://r0.unctad.org/ghg/

Climate Change Knowledge Network

http://www.cckn.net/

Summary

- Teaching about policy solutions to climate change using an in-class simulation results in increased understanding of the process and is more interesting for the students compared to a lecture-based approach.
- For teachers like myself whose expertise is science-based rather than policy this approach has the added advantage that student learning derives from their own initiative and resourcefulness instead of the "teacher as expert."
- This develops essential skills including collaboration, cooperation, negotiation, and requires an understanding of different perspectives.
- I have used this simulation effectively in small classes with up to a dozen students; in medium-size classes grouping students in pairs simplifies the in-class negotiations