Dr. David Deese, a professor from Boston College, is a Visiting Scholar at YCELP for the 2016-2017 academic year. He is writing a book on global climate change policy and seeks an FES student as a research assistant. The student will work directly with Dr. Deese as described here, and will receive 1-2 credits of Independent Study in exchange.

Project Description

Despite recent optimistic reports by some scholars, very few national level elected leaders have taken effective, sustained measures to reduce national greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Among the sixty largest emitting countries, only a very few have established comprehensive climate change mitigation plans and programs, enacted effective policies and reduced emissions. Most others have enacted numerous policies without actually decreasing emissions. Overall, a set of about 60 largest emitting countries have enacted thousands of energy/climate change policies and measures of several different types. Thus, the “policy output” is high, but most of these steps have been ineffective in terms of actual policy “outcomes.”

Current research tests qualitatively and quantitatively for the most effective types of policies and measures, builds focused, structured analyses of the most important trends and patterns across the 60 country narratives, and analyzes the results in terms of the theoretical model. Equally important, it assesses the political institutions and processes that enabled or blocked effective policies and measures in each country case, including main shifts over time from the 1980s onward. The final results are an integrated qualitative-quantitative framework of assessment that maps out the types of policy measures from most to least effective, the selected least and most effective country and sub-national cases, and the underlying politics that blocked or enabled effective policy enactment in these crucial cases.

Student Research Tasks

1. Assist with the detailed, in depth cross national comparative policy analysis, drawing on data and information for the largest 60 GHG emitting countries.
2. Take responsibility for creating initial drafts of narratives on one or more of the ten major cross national trends and patterns under investigation.
3. Help conduct final checks of the accuracy of key findings in our analyses.

To Apply

A background in international or comparative environmental governance is essential. Good writing skills and strong analytical skills are also important. Students will work 5-10 hours / week, with most of those hours flexible. Regular meetings with Dr. Deese will also be built into the schedule. To apply, please submit a cover letter, CV and unofficial transcript to lisa.dale@yale.edu.