

# Paul Steinberg – Biography

## Short Bio

Paul Steinberg is Professor of Political Science and Environmental Policy at Harvey Mudd College. He has spent the past 20 years studying biodiversity conservation and the human dimensions of global environmental problems. He is the author of three books: *Who Rules the Earth?* (Oxford University Press), *Comparative Environmental Politics* (MIT Press), and *Environmental Leadership in Developing Countries* (MIT Press), which won the Harold and Margaret Sprout Award for the best book in international environmental affairs. He is the director of the Social Rules Project, a multi-media initiative designed to raise public awareness about the importance of changing policies and other binding rules to promote sustainability.

## Long Bio

Paul Steinberg is a political scientist who has spent the past 20 years studying biodiversity conservation and the human dimensions of global environmental problems. Raised in Berkeley, California, he attended the University of California at Santa Barbara where he began his research career working in laboratories in photochemistry and neuroscience before graduating with honors in the biological sciences. He studied abroad in Paris and Pau (in the French Pyrenees) and in 1987 he founded the group Scientists and Engineers for Responsible Technology, which was active in Santa Barbara over the next decade on arms control and environmental issues.

Steinberg is an expert on policymaking processes in developing countries, and in particular why some countries have managed to do a reasonably good job of protecting the environment despite the extremely challenging circumstances facing reformers in developing countries. His experience in the tropics began as a US Peace Corps volunteer in Liberia, West Africa, from 1988-90. In 1990 he decided to combine his interests in biology, politics, and international development by pursuing a career in international environment policy. He worked for the Natural Resources Defense Council in San Francisco, where his research on conservation policy in the Russian Far East served as the principle report for NRDC's first visit to the region. He also held research posts at Pesticide Action Network International and Bendix Environmental Research.

Steinberg received his master's degree from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. At Harvard he was the only policy student selected to participate in E. O. Wilson's first graduate seminar on biodiversity. During this time he also worked for the US Global Change Research Program, leading a project on how to make climate science relevant to developing countries. In 1994, Steinberg was admitted into Harvard's Ph.D. program but decided to be part of the founding class of Ph.D. students in environmental studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz. His doctoral research focused on conservation policymaking in Costa Rica and Bolivia, where he spent over a year interviewing dozens of policy reformers to understand the political underpinnings of institutional change in the tropics. This work was published by MIT Press as the book *Environmental Leadership in Developing Countries*, which won the International Studies Association's Harold and Margaret Sprout Award for the best book in international environmental affairs. During this time he also served

as a research consultant to the New England Bioregional Roundtable and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) Commission on Protected Areas.

Steinberg joined the faculty of the Nicholas School of the Environment at Duke University in 1999, where in his second year he was selected from among 50 faculty to receive the teaching award. In 2001 he moved to Washington DC as a visiting scholar at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, where his research focused on environmental foreign policy in developing countries. During this time he served as a principal consultant and co-author of the World Bank's capstone research project, The World Development Report. In 2002, he was invited to serve as the founding director for a new program in Conservation Policy and Governance at RARE, a leading NGO concerned with grassroots mobilization of conservation constituencies in the tropics.

In 2003, Steinberg joined the faculty of Harvey Mudd College, which is part of the Claremont Colleges consortium in Southern California and is ranked by US News & World Report as the most highly selective liberal arts college in the United States, based on the qualifications of its admitted students. Steinberg directed the Center for Environmental Studies at Harvey Mudd from 2003-10. During this time he helped to define a new subfield of environmental social science known as comparative environmental politics, co-authoring with Stacy VanDeveer the book *Comparative Environmental Politics: Theory, Practice, and Prospects*. Steinberg is the founder and director of The Social Rules Project, a multi-media educational initiative designed to raise public awareness about the importance of changing policies and other binding rules to promote the transition to sustainability. Translating insights from the social sciences for general audiences, this initiative involves upward of 100 student artists, computer programmers, environmental studies majors, engineers, and others who have created an animated film (Who Rules the Earth?), a videogame (Law of the Jungle) and other educational materials. He is currently working on his book *Who Rules the Earth?*, to be published by Oxford University Press. He lives in Southern California with his family, where his hobbies include gardening with native plants, microbrews, and marathon wrestling matches with his son.