NOTE: All information contained in this syllabus is subject to reasonable clarification and change. I will make any necessary announcements on such matters in class. All announced clarifications and changes will become the official policy of the course.

Description: In policy discussions, lawmakers frequently talk about their concern for future generations. In debates about environmental issues, budget deficits, Social Security, medical technology, and many other areas of government policy, we often express concerns about whether and how our current decisions will affect our own lives in the future and the lives of those who will follow us. This seminar will explore our obligations to future generations in the determination of government policies. We will look at arguments by philosophers, economists, biologists, and others regarding the balance between our current needs and the future effects of our policy choices.

Use of Laptop Computers and Other Electronic Devices: Laptop use is prohibited in the seminar room. This prohibition applies equally to use of Blackberries, Treos, mobile phones, and other handheld devices. Turn off such devices before coming to class. I will police this prohibition vigorously (and ruthlessly). Because there are no exams in this course, this policy is designed to ensure that we are all engaged in the conversation and listening to each other.

Prerequisite: There is no prerequisite for this course.

Readings: There is no text for the seminar. One book is recommended for purchase: Albert Gore, *An Inconvenient Truth*. In addition, I will assign law review articles, judicial opinions, scholarly writings, and selections from general periodicals for each week’s meeting. These readings will be available either from WestLaw/Lexis or on the Blackboard page for this seminar.

Requirements and Grades: At each meeting (after the first one), four students will lead discussion of the readings for the week. This will result in each student co-leading two meetings. Each student will receive an individual grade for each time that they co-lead the seminar. The average grade for these leadership exercises will count 20% toward the final grade.

Regular attendance and participation in the seminar counts an additional 30% toward the
The remaining 50% of the grade will be based on weekly “reaction papers,” 300-500 word papers which you will write each week in response to one or more of the coming week’s assigned readings. These papers will also form an important part of the basis for discussion each week. You will be allowed to skip two weeks (of your own choosing), such that you will have written ten reaction papers by the end of the term.

As noted, class attendance counts toward the final grade. I expect students to plan to attend every class, subject to illness or other unavoidable circumstance.

Writing Requirements: The required reaction papers for this seminar are sufficient to fulfill NYU’s Writing Part B requirement. Students who wish to use the seminar to fulfill the Writing Part A requirement are required to turn in the reaction papers under the same rules as all other students in the seminar. In addition, students must write a separate research paper for Writing Part A credit. If a student chooses the Writing Part A option, the seminar will not fulfill their Writing Part B requirement.

Students who wish to write a paper for Writing Part A credit must talk to Professor Buchanan after the first class meeting on August 30 to approve a topic. The deadline for submission of a proposed outline and description of the research paper is Friday, September 1, 2006. The first draft will be due on Friday, September 29, 2006. The second draft will be due on Friday, November 3, 2006. The final draft will be due on the last day of classes, Friday, Dec. 8, 2006. Each draft must be approximately 40 pages, double-spaced. Style guidelines will be distributed to interested students on August 30, 2006. Professor Buchanan will comment on the outline and proposal as well as the interim drafts, providing feedback regarding what to cut and what to include and to expand in subsequent drafts.

Office Hours: I will hold office hours on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 1:30-3:30pm in Vanderbilt Hall 430A. If you would like to meet with me but cannot make it to my office hours, please talk to me after class or via email about setting up a mutually convenient meeting time.

I am always available to answer questions via email. My email address is <buchanan@juris.law.nyu.edu>. If you email me and have not heard back by the end of the next business day, please assume that I have not received your message and try again.

My administrative assistant’s name is Maribell Wiscovitch. Her office is Furman Hall 474, her phone number is 212-998-6156, and her email is maribell.wiscovitch@nyu.edu.