

ENVI 230/PLSC 282A – Introduction to Environmental Policy

Spring 2016
2:50-4:15 p.m. T/Th
UU 202

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Office: Science I, 164
Office Hours: Tues 1-2, Wed 10-11, or by appointment

Important Dates

Exam 1: February 25
Exam 2: April 7
Final Exam: TBD
Policy Brief 1 Due: March 17
Policy Brief 2 Due: April 28

Environmental policies are among the most contentious topics in American politics, ranging from debates over local trash storage to global environmental change. This is because many environmental policies have a direct impact on human health, recreation, and economic opportunity. To understand why certain policies exist and others do not requires an understanding of the mechanics of the policymaking process. Throughout this course, we will focus on a positive evaluation of how the policymaking process works, the rationales and conflicts that have led to current environmental policies, the tradeoffs between alternative regulatory structures, and, when applicable, important normative debates surrounding environmental issues. Though we will discuss international environmental policy at times, *this course is primarily concerned with domestic policymaking in the United States.* A basic understanding of how governmental institutions operate within the context of U.S. federalism is crucial to success in the course.

This course provides an introduction to the key actors, institutions, and issues involved with the design and implementation of environmental policy. The course is roughly divided into three equal sized units, each of which will be followed by an exam inclusive only of that unit. We begin by defining environmental and collective action dilemmas, respectively, and by investigating the origins of domestic environmental policy. The second unit develops a theoretical framework of policymaking, by focusing on key actors and institutions involved in the process. The last unit focuses largely, though not exclusively, on federal-state policy interactions and international environmental policy. Throughout the course, we will identify major pieces of environmental legislation, including (but not limited to) the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); the Clean Water Act; the Clean Air Act; the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA); and the various acts that established federal land management, among other important pieces of environmental legislation.

The course requires regular attendance as much of the material that defines the course will only be discussed in-class. Additionally, regular readings are assigned and required. To ensure that students are keeping up on the reading and are regularly attending class, there will be at least six pop reading quizzes. Please note that a reading quiz could take place at the start of, in the middle of, or at the end of class.

Grading

Grading for this course will be based on the performance on two in-class exams, a comprehensive final exam, two written policy briefs, and pop reading quizzes. See below for more details on each of these assignments. The breakdown of grading is as follows:

Exam 1:	20%	(100 points)
Exam 2:	20%	(100 points)
Final Exam:	25%	(125 points)
Policy Brief 1:	10%	(50 points)
Policy Brief 2:	10%	(50 points)
Pop Reading Quizzes:	15%	(75 points)

The grading scale at the end of the course is out of 500 total points and proceeds as follows: A 465-500; A- 450-464; B+ 435-449; B 415-434; B- 400-414; C+ 385-399; C 365-384; C- 325-364; F 0-324. Please note: a grade of 'D' will **not** be assigned in this course.

“This course is a 4-credit course, which means that in addition to the scheduled meeting times, students are expected to do at least 9.5 hours of course-related work outside of class each week during the semester. This includes time spent completing assigned readings, participating in lab sessions, studying for tests and examinations, preparing written assignments, and other course-related tasks.” (sample statement regarding expected work-load, provided in Binghamton University Faculty Handbook adopted March, 2014).

Exams

The first two exams (Exam 1 & Exam 2) will be given in-class on the dates specified in this syllabus. Exam 1 (February 25) covers material discussed in-class and in readings from January 26 through February 23 and is worth 100 points (20% of final grade). Exam 2 (April 7) covers material discussed in-class and in readings from March 1 through April 5 and is worth 100 points (20% of final grade). The Final Exam consists of two parts—the first 100 points of the Final Exam (date & time TBD) is based on material discussed in-class and in readings from April 12 through May 10; the last 25 points of the Final Exam is based on materials discussed in-class and in readings from *the entire semester*. In this way, the Final Exam is both a topic-exam *and* a cumulative exam. Towards the end of the semester, the Instructor will provide a more detailed explanation of expectations for the Final Exam.

Please note that much of class time will be spent discussing concepts and material that is not found in the assigned readings. This material will certainly be on the exams. Similarly, much of the material in the assigned readings will not be discussed in class. This material will also certainly be on the exams. It is the student's responsibility to obtain notes from another student if s/he misses a class.

Those requiring specific accommodations should contact the Instructor *at least two weeks prior* to the exam requiring accommodation so that alternative arrangements can be made. There will be no make-up exams, except (possibly) in the case of **extreme** emergency, though the Instructor reserves the right to define 'emergency' and subsequently determine whether an emergency has, in-fact, occurred. Plan accordingly.

Policy Briefs

During the course of the semester you will be responsible for preparing two written policy brief assignments. For both assignments you will investigate a particular environmental policy dilemma in detail and write a briefing on the topic in which you first discuss the dilemma, then tie it into course themes, and then provide an argument about what the outcome of the dilemma should be, based on course themes and the specifics of the case. More detail for these assignments will be provided in-class.

Please note that policy briefs are due **at the start of class** on the date listed and should be uploaded to TurnItIn before class begins—it will be marked as one-day late whether it is turned in at 2:51 p.m. or at 4:15 p.m. The Instructor reserves the right to deduct as much as 10% of the assignment's grade for **each day** it is late.

Pop Reading Quizzes

To ensure that students are adequately keeping up on the assigned readings and to take stock of attendance in-class, there will be an unspecified number of pop reading quizzes throughout the semester that cumulatively will count for 75 points (15% of final grade). These quizzes will consist of a few questions taken from the day's assigned reading. The Instructor will drop each student's worst quiz at the end of the semester. Therefore, there are **NO** makeup quizzes for any reason. Quizzes may take place at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of class.

The pop reading quizzes are all **open** note, **closed** book quizzes with a strict time limit.

Extra Credit

There will be *no* outside extra credit opportunities. However, the instructor reserves the right to add extra credit questions to the exams.

Learning Objectives

This is a large introductory lecture class. The primary goal of the course is to provide an overview of current environmental policy in the United States through the use of case studies and political-economic theory. By the end of the semester you should be able to:

1. Identify and cite major pieces of environmental legislation in the U.S.
2. Identify and comprehend variation in complex policymaking environments
3. Understand the linkages between institutions (rules) and behavior
4. Demonstrate proficiency in critical and constructive thought and writing
5. Effectively synthesize complex social-ecological linkages within the policymaking context

Electronic Device Policies

NO CELL PHONE USE IS ALLOWED IN CLASS. Should you be seen to be texting or otherwise engaged with your cell phone during class, the Instructor reserves the right to deduct points from your final grade as a penalty. Similarly, while the use of laptops *is* permitted for students who wish to take notes in that manner, should the Instructor notice you using your laptop for anything other than note taking during class, he similarly reserves the right to deduct points from your final grade as a penalty.

Disability-related Equal Access Accommodations

Students who wish to request academic accommodations to insure their equitable access and participation in this course should notify the instructor by the second week of class. Authorizations from Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) are generally required. Contact SSD at (607) 777-2686 and to schedule an appointment with the Director or Learning Disabilities Specialist. The website www.binghamton.edu/ssd includes information regarding their Disability Documentation Guidelines. The office is located in UU – 119.

Required Textbook and Readings

Layzer, Judith. 2016. *The Environmental Case: Translating Values into Policy*. Fourth Edition. Washington: CQ Press.

Rosenbaum, Walter A. 2014. *Environmental Politics and Policy*. Ninth Edition. CQ Press.

Most readings will come from the required textbooks and are noted in the class schedule below. However, additional readings are also required and will be available on Blackboard.

The Instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time and for any reason

Daily Schedule

Please note—the “Reading” listed for each day should be done **prior** to that day’s class. If there is a pop reading quiz, it will be based on the “Reading” listed for that date.

Week 1—Course Acclamation

January 26—Introduction to course

Reading: Rosenbaum Chapter 1
Layzer Chapter 1

January 28—Environmental harms as externalities

Reading: Hardin (1968) “The Tragedy of the Commons”
Ostrom (1990) “Reflections on the Commons”
Haberman (2015) “The Unrealized Horrors of Population Explosion”

Week 2—Collective Action and Organizing in Environmental Policy

February 2—Early success of environmental policy: The National Parks and Forests systems

Reading: Rosenbaum Chapter 9
Hutchings (1856) “Yosemite Valley”
Muir (1890) “Features of the Proposed Yosemite National Park”
Muir (1890) “The Treasures of Yosemite”

February 4—The Policy Cycle & the Origins of modern environmental policymaking

Reading: Rosenbaum Chapters 2 & 3

Week 3—The Beginning of a Federal Environmental Policy System

February 9— Getting onto the agenda: NEPA, CAA & early command-and-control regulations

Reading: Rosenbaum pages 165-181 (selection of Chapter 5) & Chapter 6

February 11— Policy Entrepreneurs: CERCLA/RCRA

Reading: Layzer Chapter 3
Rosenbaum Chapter 7

Week 4—Environmental Justice and NIMBY

February 16— Environmental (in)justice

Reading: Rosenbaum Chapter 4

February 18—NIMBY, environmental (in)justice & the politics of energy production

Reading: Layzer Chapter 13

Week 5—Shifting Coalitions: Nuclear Power from Environmental Savior to Demon

February 23—The unusual political history of nuclear power

Reading: Rosenbaum, pages 294-311 (sections of Chapter 8)

February 25— EXAM 1

Week 6—Electoral Connections and Policymaking

March 1—Electoral connections: pressuring politicians

Reading: Layzer Chapter 2

March 3—The Iron Triangle & regulatory capture

Reading: Layzer Chapters 6 & 7

Week 7—Bureaucratic Policymaking

March 8—Administrative procedures and Principal-Agent problems

Reading: Rosenbaum (2013), “Science, Politics, and Policy at the EPA” (On Blackboard)

March 10—Principle-Agency & implementation: The Endangered Species Act

Reading: Layzer Chapter 8

Week 8—Bureaucratic and Executive Policymaking

March 15—Executive orders and their limitations

Reading: Selection of Case Studies (On Blackboard)

March 17—The role of the judiciary

Reading: O’Leary (2013), “Environmental Policy in the Courts”

POLICY BRIEF 1 DUE

Week 9—Judicial Oversight

March 22— Key Cases: Chevron, Rapanos, and Others

Reading: May (2009), “The Intersection of Constitutional Law and Environmental Litigation”

March 24— Interest groups and judicial decisions

Reading: Layzer 9

SPRING BREAK (NO CLASSES 3/29, 3/31)

Week 10—Introducing Domestic Regulations

April 5—Regulating fisheries: Interest groups, bureaucracy, and Congress

Reading: Layzer Chapter 10

April 7—EXAM 2

Week 11—Backlashes and New Environmental Movements

April 12—Backlash to over-regulation & introduction of market-based policies

Reading: Layzer Chapter 5

Rosenbaum pages 182-196 (selection from Chapter 5)

April 14—Market-based solutions to environmental dilemmas

Reading: Tietenberg (2003), “The Tradable Permits Approach to Regulating the Commons”

Week 12—Federalism: From the Federal Government to Local Municipalities

April 19—Special districts and nested institutions: Estuary Management

Reading: Layzer Chapter 4

Schneider et al (2003) “Building Consensual Institutions: Networks and the NEP”

April 21—Federalism in the CWA: Combined sewer systems, MS4s, and green infrastructure

Reading: Selection of case studies (On Blackboard)

Week 13—Conventional Energy: The Politics of Oil, Gas, and Coal

April 26—Deepwater Horizon Spill

Reading: Layzer Chapter 11

Selection of news articles (on Blackboard)

April 28—Hydraulic-fracturing

Reading: Layzer Chapter 14

Rosenbaum pages 277-294 (selection of Chapter 8)

POLICY BRIEF 2 DUE

Week 14—International Environmental Policy

May 3—Regulating air through international cooperation & treaties

Reading: Layzer Chapter 12

Rosenbaum Chapter 10

May 5—Carbon policies: Kyoto and beyond

Reading: Lizza (2010): “As the World Burns”

Week 15—Course Wrap Up: Looking to the Future

May 10—The future of environmental policy

Reading: Layzer Chapter 17