

COURSE INFORMATION:
United States Environmental Policy
11:374:313

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Students will develop capacity to evaluate environmental policy issues, including: how policy issues rise to national action; the science and scientific controversies behind environmental issues; major actors in U.S. environmental policy creation and their roles; the relationship between environmental policies and the context in which they operate; how budgets and public administration affect environmental policies; and how environmental policy issues reflect or do not reflect regional or factional differences. Given the enormous variety of environmental issues active at any one time, this course will focus on four high-profile issues as examples for learning about environmental policy development. This is not a survey course of environmental policies.

Class time will also be focused on agency roles and organization, financing and environmental standards. Students will discuss critical issues raised by the lectures, assignment development, and small group exercises. By the end of the class, students should have the ability to apply techniques of policy analysis to other environmental issues, including those for which they personally lack detailed knowledge. These skills are critical for anyone interested in broad-based environmental policy work, where professionals learn the details of the issues as you become involved with them. For those who will ultimately focus on a single environmental field, this course will help students understand how others may affect policy development in your field.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

SEBS Learning Goal c: Student is able to analyze the relationship that science and technology have to a contemporary social issue.

SEBS Learning Goal s2: Student is able to respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, and/or supervisors through successive drafts and revision.

SEBS Learning Goal u – Student is able to evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly.

SEBS Learning Goal v – Student is able to analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

Students will:

- Demonstrate the ability to evaluate and summarize environmental science issues that contribute to environmental policy conflicts
- Write a complete briefing memorandum on an environmental policy issue in a style appropriate for a professional setting

- Practice the application of a policy evaluation method to multiple environmental issues
- Discuss in small group exercises the policy implications of environmental issues from multiple viewpoints and interests
- Demonstrate an understanding of critical readings in environmental policy issues

COURSE MATERIALS:

There is no textbook for this course. All materials are provided through the Canvas course site. The class will be a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences. The synchronous sessions will be recorded for review, and also to address the needs of students who are unable to participate in the synchronous session due to equipment issues, internet problems, or illness.

ASSIGNMENTS/RESPONSIBILITIES & ASSESSMENT:

Class participation (not just attendance) is critical to the learning process. Participation includes both paying attention and engaging in discussion. In addition, there will be interactive assignments, readings, and the development of a briefing paper on a major environmental issue (other than the four presented in class) in a style appropriate to be presented to a Member of Congress. Student briefing papers will be submitted in draft for review, and then in final written form and presented to the class. Please note that the Issue & Science Paper, the draft and final briefing papers, and the final presentation are all linked assignments and comprise an aggregate 55% of the course grade.

Students will be evaluated on the following basis:

25%	Attendance and participation in class discussions
20%	Series of short assignments on issue analysis and readings
15%	Issue & Science paper
5%	Draft Briefing paper
25%	Final Briefing paper
10%	Briefing paper presentation

OTHER INFORMATION:

Students will be responsible for adhering to the academic integrity policies found at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>.

It is important that students have the tools to succeed in this course. Please see Dr. Van Abs as soon as possible with any difficulties or questions regarding the course materials. In addition, the Office of Student Affairs is available at <http://studentaffairs.rutgers.edu> for any other needs or concerns.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

See attached.

Assignments

SHORT ASSIGNMENTS (SEE CANVAS SITE FOR DETAILS)
Critical Environmental Issue (4 points)
Environmental Issues of Development Patterns (4 points)
Water Supply Management (4 points)
Food Production (4 points)
Energy (4 points)
BRIEFING PAPER ASSIGNMENTS (SEE CANVAS SITE FOR DETAILS)
Selection of Briefing Paper Topic (approved, not graded) See Instructions on Canvas
Issue & Science Paper (15 points) (Full paper)
Draft Briefing Paper (5 points) (Full paper)
Final Briefing Paper (25 points) (Full paper)
Briefing Paper Presentation (10 points)
Students will individually present the results of their briefing papers using MS PowerPoint. All students not giving a presentation during each class will assess the other presentations being given.

Will Rogers - *People's minds are changed through observation and not through argument.*

Albert Einstein - *Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school.*

Topic	Readings (All are in Canvas "Files" except where noted)
<p>Course Intro. Environmental policy – What makes it “environmental”? What makes it “policy”? Overview and discussion of what causes policy making to occur, critical actors and critical factors. Why is environmental policy so important; why is it so difficult? When is environmental policy necessarily “public” policy, and why?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Examination of Environmental Policy Issues (attached to this syllabus) 2. Klein, Ezra. 2014 April 6. How politics makes us stupid.
<p>The Environmental Implications of Development Patterns. There is a constant tension in society between various needs for land. What are the historic patterns? How have they changed over time, and why? What are appropriate roles for development, development regulations and preservation? Where are the best places for growth? How does the intersection of environmental policies and development patterns affect social equity and economic sustainability? What makes these choices a national issue?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Collette, 2018. “Flood Games” 4. Ghosh 2020.01.14. “Mapped: The Anatomy of Land Use in America” 5. Plumer and Popovich. 2020.08.24. “How Decades of Racist Housing Policy Left Neighborhoods Sweltering” 6. Valentine 2020.07.05. “The Wrong Complexion for Protection.’ How Race Shaped America’s Roadways and Cities”
<p>Environmental Public Administration. Programs are implemented by people, who are organized...how? Looking at how agency structure and leadership can affect success.</p>	<p>Access through links, NOT on Canvas</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. USDA: https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/agencies 8. USDOI: https://www.doi.gov/bureaus 9. USEPA: http://www2.epa.gov/aboutepa/epa-organization-chart
<p>Water Supply Management. The availability of water has profound effects on societies. Brief history of water supply development and protection. Water rights, East and West. What are the new issues? Water, land, development and technology – how can they be coordinated to provide and protect water supplies?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. BLM. “Water Appropriation Systems.” On Canvas 11. Castle, Anne. “Water Rights Law-Prior Appropriation” 12. Dig Deep. 2019. Closing the Water Access Gap in the United-States 13. Fears, Darryl. 2015.07.05. California’s rural poor hit hardest as massive drought makes remaining water toxic. The Washington Post 14. Little, Jane Braxton. 2009. “Saving the Ogallala Aquifer.” Scientific American Earth 3.0. Vol.19, No.1, pp. 32-29. 15. Walton, Brett. 2013. “Texas High Plains Prepare for Agriculture Without Irrigation.”
<p>Paying for Environmental Protection. Programs cost money – where does it come from? Who controls the purse strings? What effect does that have on implementation?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Crain, N.V. and W.M. Crain. 2005. Impacts of Regulatory Costs on Small Firms. Small Business Administration. (Read Section 1, Intro and Purpose) 17. Dechezlepretre and Sato. 2017. The Impacts of Environmental Regs on Competitiveness 18. Hodges, H. 1997. Falling Prices: Cost of Complying With Environmental Regulations Economic Policy Institute. 19. OMB. 2010. Report to Congress on the Costs and Benefits of Federal Regulations and Unfunded Mandates on State, Local and Tribal Entities. (Read Executive Summary, Ch. 1- Sections A & B).

Topic	Readings (All are in Canvas "Files" except where noted)
Environmental Policy and Agriculture. People require food to live, and urban areas are not self-sustaining. The creation of food to meet market demands requires land, water, energy, nutrients, animal feed, machinery, etc. How sustainable is our food production system from an environmental perspective? What are the critical environmental issues for long-term food production?	20. American Farmland Trust 2020 Farms Under Threat: State of the States: Exec Summary 21. Economist 2016.06.09 The future of agriculture. 22. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Agricultural Production and Prices. https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/ag-and-food-statistics-charting-the-essentials/agricultural-production-and-prices/ (not on Canvas) 23. Van Abs, Daniel J. 2013. Agriculture Sustainability Brief. Prepared for Together New Jersey by the Sustainability Institute, The College of New Jersey, Ewing, NJ.
Environmental Standards. How are environmental standards set, and who sets them? What makes some standards controversial, and not others?	24. International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling (ISEAL) Alliance. 2010. Standard Setting Code . 25. Lombrozo. 2016. "Science Can Quantify Risks, But It Can't Settle Policy" 26. United Nations Environment Programme and International Institute for Sustainable Development. 2005. Environment and Trade: A Handbook (Second Edition) (esp. pp. 9-13). Geneva, Switzerland. 27. USEPA. Integrated Risk Information System. http://www.epa.gov/iris/intro.htm (not on Canvas)
Energy and the Environment. Most energy in the U.S. is from fossil fuels, with a significant amount of electricity from nuclear energy. What are the environmental impacts of energy production and use in this nation? What choices currently exist, and what choices might exist? How do current economic and regulatory systems influence our energy choices? What does energy sustainability mean in this context?	28. DiSilvestro, Roger. 2012. Conflict at Powder River. National Wildlife, Feb/March 2012. National Wildlife Federation. 29. Economist. 2015. Energy efficiency: Invisible fuel: The biggest innovation in energy is to go without. January 17, 2015 30. Orcutt, Mike. 2011. Water Power. MIT Technology Review. May/June 2011. 31. Plumer, Brad. 2015. 11 maps that explain energy in America. Vox, July 29, 2015. 32. USEPA. Web site: "Learn about Energy and its Impact on the Environment." https://www.epa.gov/energy/learn-about-energy-and-its-impact-environment. (not on Canvas)
Student Presentations	NONE

US Environmental Policy

Examination of Environmental Policy Issues

Defining the Issues

1. Why is the issue “environmental” in nature? To what extent is it environmental?
2. What caused the issue? Are the causes still active, or are they historic (“legacy”) issues?
3. What is the intensity of the issue, (e.g., catastrophic, chronic, growing or declining, episodic)?
4. Is the issue local, state, regional, national or international in geographic scope?
5. Does the nature of the issue vary significantly within its geographic scope?
6. Does the scope or intensity of the issue vary over time? In what manner, and why?

Defining the Affected Interests

7. Is the actual scope, intensity and variability of the issue recognized as such by the affected interests, the administration, Congress and the news media? Do perceptions of the issue match the actual situation, or do people or interests exaggerate or minimize the issue for subjective reasons?
8. Who is affected by the issue, either positively or negatively? Are the impacts equitable, or do they fall exclusively, primarily or inequitably on any one or several interests?
9. Who would benefit by resolution of the issue? What is the scope of the likely benefits, and are they short or long term in nature?
10. Who would benefit by failure to resolve the issue? What is the scope of the likely benefits, and are they short or long term in nature?

Defining the Dispute

11. Is there agreement on the facts of the issue, or disagreement? Why? If agreement, is the consensus due to science or politics? If agreement, is the lack of consensus due to science or politics?
12. Is the science behind the issue “mature” (that is, long established, well documented and accepted by all but those with strong motivations to disagree), “innovative” (that is, new and different from prior thinking, but well documented and generating acceptance), “developing” (that is, not yet well grounded due to lack of information, theoretical foundations, good models, etc.), or “junk” (that is, based primarily on selective evidence and thinking provided by those with strong non-scientific motivations to affect policy)?
13. Is there agreement on the desired objective (e.g., environmental, ecological, resource use, public health) regarding the issue, or disagreement? Why?
14. Is there agreement on who should bear the burden of addressing the issue (e.g., costs, changed behaviors, changed technology, changed products)?

Defining Potential Solutions

15. Can the issue be addressed through public policy mechanisms? If not, is it a uniquely private sector matter, or does its scope require international or multi-jurisdictional activities that cannot be required by the federal government?
16. Is there agreement on the best solution regarding the issue, or disagreement? Why?
17. Do the proposed solutions actually address the issue, or do they address symptoms or surrogates for the issue?
18. Is there agreement on indicators or measures of success? Can the results of the proposed solutions be measured effectively?

Assessing Feasibility

19. Do the proposed solutions have the potential, if funded and implemented as planned, to achieve the objectives? Or are they temporary, stopgap or limited solutions?
20. Do the proposed solutions have "opportunity costs" for society or specific interests? If so, are those opportunity costs acceptable or may they exceed the benefits intended?
21. Are the costs to all affected interests equitable?
22. Are the costs to all affected interests bearable? What means of determining the "ability to pay" are appropriate to use in this assessment?
23. Can the proposed solutions be implemented by existing "actors" or will new or revised institutions or mechanisms be necessary? If the latter, what costs will be incurred to put the appropriate structure in place?
24. Does the political will exist to continue implementation of the solution beyond the initial surge of interest, especially in face of mounting opposition or evidence of partial success?
25. What interests are likely to continue support of solutions to the issue beyond the initial public policy response, and which are likely to continue opposition? What influence is the balance between these interests likely to have over time?
26. Does solution of the environmental issue in the United States have international repercussions, either positive or negative? To what extent do these international effects influence the sustainability of the solution?