

Spring 2007  
USP 571/671 Environmental Policy  
Wednesdays, 1:00-3:40; URB 220

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Course Description

Environmental policy encompasses a broad array of issues ranging from public health concerns about leaded paint, genetically-modified food and the proliferation of the 70,000 different chemical compounds that are in daily use, to the allocation of natural resources such as timber and water, and concerns about the impacts of human activities on natural ecosystems and other living species. Environmental policy is contentious and controversial because decision making in this arena, as in most public arenas, is a battle over political control and material gains and losses. Contenders in environmental policy wars differ with respect to how they are personally affected by policies, their conceptualization of the relationship of humans to the environment, and their views about the proper role of government.

This course will provide an overview of the institutional context and the various stakeholding parties in environmental policy making at the national and international levels. We will examine analytical tools, policy strategies and instruments, and decision making aids used in environmental policy making to better understand why policies have evolved as they have and to better enable us as citizens and environmental professionals to effectuate constructive changes. Whereas the topics discussed in this course may vary widely, the approach will consistently focus on a few key questions. These are: How is the environmental “problem” defined? What institutions are involved? Who are the actors involved? What kinds of analytical tools are used in environmental policy making? Who has what kinds of influence?

A secondary objective of this course is to provide planning students with an appreciation of the spectrum of environmental policy issues and national policies and programs. Local public policies both lead and respond to national and global currents. Moreover, innovative local planners know how to leverage federal policies and programs for the achievement of local goals. In other words, while the motivating forces behind the creation of federal policy is important to understand, implementation can present an opportunity (and a constraint) for novel public actions and responses to environmental problems.

This course will begin with an historical overview of the environmental movement in the United States and end with a discussion of the international landscape of environmental policy. The main objective is to develop a solid understanding of the emergence of environmental issues as a public policy concern and its variability in response to political actors. In response to the current conditions, however, we will also consider questions regarding the relationship of traditional environmental concerns to the current spotlight on “sustainability.”

## Course Objectives

Knowledge: Develop a familiarity with the institutional actors and arenas of national and international environmental policy; gain a critical perspective on analytical tools and techniques used in environmental policy analysis; sharpen capacities to identify stakeholders and differentiate perspectives.

Skills: Writing, clear thinking and effective presentation.

## Required Texts (available at the PSU Bookstore):

- Judith Layzer (2006) *Environmental Cases*: (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press).
- Norman Vig and Michael Kraft (2006) *Environmental Policy in the 21st Century*, 8th ed., (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press).
- Selected photocopied works, available at Smart Copy.

## Written Assignments

Choose a contemporary environmental issue. Imagine that you will be proposing action to address this “problem.” Your audience is an individual or group who has the ability to push this issue onto the public agenda.

*Assignment #1*: Due April 17. (15 points)

Objective: To provide a comprehensive view of the environmental condition, its multiple connections to causal factors and effects.

1. Diagram the full path of this problem. Hypothesize causal linkages and causal agents. (Research technical aspects and stakeholders. Create a graphic display with 2-3-page explanatory text.)
2. Identify three different potential technical interventions that may “break the chain” of socially-induced causal linkages.

*Assignment #2*: Due May 2 (10 points).

1. Policy research (place-specific; federal and state government)
  - a. List existing federal and state policies that directly and explicitly affect one formulation of the problem. Explain briefly with respect to your diagram in #1.
  - b. List any additional federal policies that indirectly affect the problem (as formulated).
2. Identify the stakeholders likely to be affected by and involved in a policymaking process on your issue.

*Assignment #3*: Due May 18 (Friday) (15 points)

1. Describe a preferred technical solution to achieving environmental goals.
2. Describe three alternative policy instruments for achieving environmental goals.
3. Assess the political responses of each stakeholder group to a *preferred* approach. Be sure to include data, analogy or argument to support your assessment. (5 pages)
4. Are there any significant gaps in information or a specific dispute over data, analyses or interpretation? Explain.

*Assignment #4:* Due May 30 (draft) (15 points)

1. Prepare a 15-20 page synthesis reporting the above. Include a political analysis recommending a strategy for action to an organization or elected official who has policy making authority over this topic. If there is a dispute over the scientific or technical basis of the policy, suggest a way to handle it.

*Final Paper:* Include an Executive Summary (1-2 pages) Due June 8 (Friday) (25 points)

Presentation (10 points)

*Term paper presentation:* DO NOTE READ YOUR PRESENTATION. You will have approximately 15 minutes, followed by up to 5 minutes of questions.

Class Participation (10 points)

Attendance counts. You will lose participation points according to the following schedule:

Miss 1 class:	-0 pt.
Miss 2 classes:	-5 pt.
Miss 3 classes:	-11 pts.
Miss 4 classes:	-18 pts.

If you miss more than 3 classes, you will be advised to drop the course.

Performance Evaluations

Grades will be based on the following formula:

Each written assignment (as noted)	55
Final paper submission	25
Paper presentation	10
Class participation:	10
Total= 100 points	

\*Written assignments are due no later than the start of class on the due date specified. Late submissions will be penalized 1/2 pt. per day.

**Special Needs**

If you have a disability and are in need of academic accommodation, please see me immediately.

**Class Meeting Schedule**

**April 4 Introduction: Course Philosophy and Overview: What is “environmental “ and “policy”?**  
Recommended reading: Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*.

- April 11      The Historical Context of U.S. Environmental Policy**  
 Reading: Vig and Kraft, Chapters 1-4, pp. 1-99.  
 Dolores Hayden. Chapter 8 “Edge Nodes,” pp. 154-180, in *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000*. .
- April 18      Institutions (and Actors) in Federal Policy Making**  
 Reading: Vig and Kraft, Chapters 5-8, pp. 100-192.  
 Layzer, Chapter 1-2, pp.1-53.
- April 25      Information, Analysis and Expertise**  
 Reading:  
 Layzer, Chapter 9, pp. 223-251.  
 Chris Mooney, Chapter 8, “Wine, Jazz and ‘Data Quality’,”pp. 104-124, in *The Republican War on Science*, New York: Basic Books, 2005.  
 Connie P. Ozawa, Chapter 2, “The Dynamics of Advocacy Science,” pp. 13-43, in *Recasting Science: Consensual Procedures in Public Policy Making*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1991.
- May 2          Public Policy Dilemmas**  
 Reading: Vig and Kraft, Chapters 10-11, pp. 215-263.  
 Layzer, Chapter 5, pp. 105-129, and Chapter 13, pp. 346-374.
- May 9          Policy Instruments**  
 Reading: Vig and Kraft, Chapters 9 and 12, pp. 193-214 and pp. 264-287.  
 Layzer, Chapters 14-16, pp. 375-465.
- May 16        International Environmental Policy– Institutions and Actors**  
 Reading:  
 Raymond L. Bryant and Sinead Bailey. Chapter 4, “Multilateral Institutions” and Chapter 5, “Business” in *Third World Political Ecology*. New York: Routledge, 1997, pp. 76-129.  
 S.F. Moore, “The International Production of Authoritative Knowledge: The Case of Drought-Stricken West Africa,” *Ethnography*, 2(2):243-271. (Available on line through Millar Library.)
- May 23        Global Issues**  
 Reading: Vig and Kraft, Chapters 13-17, pp. 288-373.  
 Layzer, Chapter 10-12, pp. 251-345.
- May 30        Presentations.**
- June 6         Presentations.**
- Finals Week   June 11 (Monday) 12:30-2:40. Presentations and Wrap-Up.**