USP 571 Environmental Policy
Spring 2024

Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning

	Description
Instructor	Dr. K. Meghan Wieters, AICP
Availability	Office hours via Zoom only, by appointment (after 5:30 pm Tuesdays and Fridays, appointments can be available on Saturday 11am- 2pm as needed)
Email	kmeghanwieters@gmail.com
Credits	3 credits
Location	Karl Miller Center 350
Meeting Schedule	Thursdays 4- 6:30 pm

Course Description

This course explores the multifaceted realm of environmental policy, addressing a wide spectrum of issues ranging from public health concerns like leaded paint and genetically-modified food, to resource allocation, ecosystem impact, and the interplay of human activities with the environment. Amidst contentious debates driven by varying personal interests, conceptualizations of human-environment relationships, and governmental roles, the course delves into the institutional context and stakeholders involved in national and international environmental policy making. Analytical tools, strategies, and decision-making aids used in policy formation are examined to unravel the evolution of policies and empower participants as informed citizens and environmental professionals capable of driving positive changes. Through historical insights and global perspectives, the course aims to illuminate the emergence of environmental issues in public policy and their interplay with political dynamics, while also exploring the evolving connection between traditional concerns and the modern focus on sustainability.

Course Outcomes/Learning Objectives

- Understand the context of national and international environmental policy.
- Ability to apply analytical tools and techniques used in environmental analysis.
- Analyze and evaluate varying perspectives and policies that contribute to addressing major environmental efforts.

Required Materials

- Articles and materials posted on Canvas

- Norman Vig and Michael Kraft (2006) *Environmental Policy in the 21st Century*,8th ed., (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press).
- Richard Morgenstern and William Pizer, (2007), *Reality Check: The Nature and Performance of Voluntary Environmental Programs in the United States, Europe, and Japan*. Washington, DC: Resources for the Future.

Assignments

Choose a contemporary environmental issue that you will investigate over the quarter. Each of these assignments should assist you in developing your final paper. You will need a cohesive final paper at the end (not just assembling the previous assignments).

News Report – 10 pts

Read and post to discussion board a news report/article on an environmental issue. Be prepared to present the highlights of the article, connection to any of the class topics (5 minute presentation, 5 minute discussion questions). Sign up for date you will present and lead a brief discussion will be available on the first and second class meetings. You may sign up after that, but your choice of dates may be limited.

Assignment #1 Understanding the Problem/Issue - 10 pts

1. Diagram the paths of this problem (graphic). Hypothesize causal linkages and causal agents. Include assumptions or concepts of where measurement of impacts could occur (how, when). Identify where and possible types of interventions.
2. Prepare 2-3 page explanation of the problem and why it should be addressed.
3. Present in class with a concise 2-3 minute explanation (elevator talk-style)

Assignment #2 Policy research – 15pts

1. Identify federal and state policies that *directly and explicitly* affect your selected problem. Utilize your graphic from assignment #1 to explain where the policy affects pathways of your selected problem. (~1-2 page explanation)
2. Identify and list additional federal or state policies that *indirectly* affect the problem. (Briefly explain connection e.g. 1 sentence per policy)
3. List stakeholders who could be impacted by any change to existing policies and who is impacted now.
4. Revise and update your diagram from Assignment #1 as your understanding of your issue develops.

Assignment #3 Methodology to Address the Problem -15 pts

1. Describe an approach to addressing the problem you have identified. Include:
   a. A preferred technical solution to achieving environmental goals.
   b. A policy instrument(s) for achieving environmental goals.
   c. Recommended approach to gain buy-in from local communities, state, and/or federal agencies/jurisdictions.

2. Assess the political responses of each major stakeholder group to a preferred approach. Be sure to include economic, physical or social data, analogy or argument to support your assessment. (5 pages)

Assignment #4 Synthesis -30 pts

You have at this point detailed the environmental issue and how it is a problem that needs to be addressed. Prepare your final paper integrating this analysis in the form of an analytical paper ("white paper") following a formal structure and using evidence to support your recommended strategy/strategies. Your target audience should be to an organization or elected official you feel may be able to implement your approach. Paper should not exceed 20 pages (in order to synthesize all of your work and make a complete argument, you likely will need at least 10 pages).

You should include:

- Limitations section - a section where you address scientific/technical disputes or anticipated counter arguments
- Executive Summary (no more than ½ page) where if the reader only read that they would understand the environmental issue, why the problem needs to be addressed and the recommended strategy.
- Paragraph explaining (if used, not required) how you used appropriately AI/ChatGPT to assist you (not do your paper for you!) in the preparation of your paper.
- (Depending on total enrollment in class) You will have approximately 10-15 minutes for your presentation and 5 minutes of Q&A. You should practice your presentation to ensure it is no longer than allotted amount and that you have put your best effort into presenting your work.
- Citations/Bibliography

Evaluation element	Total possible points	(you fill in) Your Points
Assignment 1	10	
Assignment 2	15	
Assignment 3	15	
Assignment 4	30 (up to+ 2 points extra for draft submission)	
News Report	10	
Total Points:	80	

Your grade is your points/total possible points: _____ / 80   = _____

Flexibility Statement

The instructor reserves the right to modify course content and/or substitute assignments and learning activities in response to institutional, weather, or class situations.

Course Calendar/Schedule

Week / Date	Topics	Reading	Activity/ Assignment Due
Week 1	Course Overview Framing what is environmental policy Political polarization impacts on economy, equity and environmental policies	The Most Terrifying Video You'll Ever See 2 https://youtu.be/AE6Kdo1AQmY	In class – initial brainstorming for your Assignment #1
Week 2	Historical Context State's Role in Environmental Policy	Vig & Kraft Chapters 1-3 Global Warming: An Inconvenient History 31 min https://youtu.be/GGtAilkWTtl	
Week 3	Federal Institutions and Policy Change	Vig & Kraft Chapter 4-7	Assignment #1 Due; Concise presentations due in class, beginning of class via Canvas
Week 4	Public Policy Dilemmas	Vig & Kraft Chapters 8-9	
Week 5	Public Policy Dilemmas; Assessing policy	Vig & Kraft Chapters 10-11	Assignment #2 Due, beginning of class via Canvas
Week 6	Case Studies, Evaluating Policy programs Role of non-profit organizations on environmental policy	Morgenstern and Pitzer Chapters 2-4	In-class activity – evaluate a policy with a partner

Week 7	Case Studies, Evaluating Policy programs	Morgenstern and Pitzer Chapters 5-8	Assignment #3 Due, beginning of class via Canvas
Week 8	Environmental Justice	1. Bullard, Robert D. "The Mountains of Houston: Environmental Justice and the Politics of Garbage," Cite 93, Rice Design Center (2014). https://offcite.rice.edu/2014/02/Cite_93_Mountains_of_Houston_Bullard.pdf 2. Bullard, Robert D. "Can Houston Be Green Without Brown and Black," Off-Cite, Rice Design Center (March 26, 2014). https://www.ricedesignalliance.org/can-houston-be-green-without-browns-and-blacks 3. Bullard, Robert D., "Differential Vulnerabilities: Environmental and Economic Inequality and Government Response to Unnatural Disasters." Social Research, 75, 2008: 753-784. (PSU library, pdf on Canvas) Principles of Environmental Justice: http://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html	
Week 9	International Environmental Policy Global issues	Vig & Kraft Chapters 12-14	Draft of Assignment due for feedback and 2 extra points, beginning of class via Canvas

Week 10	Class presentations		
Finals date/time	Class presentations Wrap-up discussion		Assignment #4 Final due, beginning of class via Canvas

Course Attendance and Late Assignment Policy

Attendance is critical to the process of learning for the entire class and the individual. Please make every effort to attend and actively participate in each class meeting. However, you are free to choose not to attend a class meeting if the circumstances warrant. Only realize that you are responsible for classes you miss. If low attendance becomes a persistent issue, a more restrictive policy may be put in place.

Assignments are due on time. If you know ahead of time that you will not be able to meet a deadline, please contact me to discuss options. Completing work on time is extremely important in the workplace - you may lose your job if work is always submitted late! While late work will be accepted, deductions per day late will be applied (1/2 to 1 pt per day).

PSU Policies and Resources
Academics
PSU Grading System
https://www.pdx.edu/registration/grading-system

Drop/Withdraw Deadlines
https://www.pdx.edu/registration/withdraw-cancellation-and-drops

Academic integrity is a vital part of the educational experience at PSU. The Student Code of Conduct is the university's policy on academic dishonesty. A confirmed violation of that code in this course may result in failure of the course.

Incomplete Grades Policy
Students do not have a right to receive or demand an Incomplete grade. The option of assigning an Incomplete grade is at the discretion of the instructor when these criteria are met:
- Required satisfactory course completion/participation
- Reasonable justification for the request

- Not sought as a substitute for a poor grade
- Presence of a written agreement (such as the [Incomplete Contract](#))
- A plan in place to resolve Incomplete status

The Office of the Registrar's website has [the full Incomplete Grades policy](#).

Student Services

Disability Access Statement

If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the [Disability Resource Center](#) to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is at 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 1825 SW Broadway; 503-725-4150; drc@pdx.edu.

Basic Needs Hub

The Basic Needs Hub provides students with one place to stop for all concerns related to providing for basic needs support. Visit the [Basic Needs Hub](#) to get more information about emergency funds, food assistance, housing services and other basic needs so you can focus on academics, career goals, and interpersonal relationships. Please notify me for additional support if you feel comfortable doing so.

Understanding Sexual Misconduct

PSU desires to create a safe campus. As part of that mission, PSU requires all students to take the [Understanding Sexual Misconduct and Resources learning module](#). If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources on PSU's [Sexual Misconduct Response website](#).

Title IX Reporting

Students frequently come to me for assistance in matters not related to the course material. Please be aware that PSU's policies require instructors to report any instance of sexual harassment, sexual and relationship violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination to university officials, who will keep the information private. If you would rather share information about these matters with a PSU staff member who does not have these reporting responsibilities and can keep the information confidential, please use these campus resources:

- Confidential Advocates: 503-894-7982 or [schedule online](#) (for matters regarding sexual harassment and sexual and relationship violence)
- Center for Student Health and Counseling: 1880 SW 6th Avenue #200; 503-725-2800

Discrimination and Bias Incidents

[The Office of Equity and Compliance](#) (OEC) addresses complaints of discrimination, discriminatory Harassment, and sexual harassment against employees (faculty and staff). If you or someone you know believes they have been discriminated against, you may file a complaint. Someone from the OEC will contact you to discuss how to best address your complaint.

The Bias Review Team (BRT) gathers information on bias incidents that happen on and around campus, and gives resources and support to individuals who experience them. You can report a bias incident you experienced or learned about. A member of the BRT will contact you if you indicate you would like to be contacted.

Religious Accommodations

If you would like to obtain religious accommodations, such as flexibility in attending evening courses or extension on assignments, please contact your instructors. If you need additional assistance, please contact the Office of the Dean of Student Life (DOSL) by emailing askdos@pdx.edu.

Cultural Resource Centers

Cultural Resource Centers (CRCs) create a student-centered inclusive environment that enriches the university experience. They honor diversity, explore social justice issues, celebrate cultural traditions, and foster student identities, success, and leadership. They provide opportunities for student leadership, employment, and volunteering; student resources such as computer labs, event, lounge, and study spaces; and extensive programming. All are welcome!

- Multicultural Student Center
- La Casa Latina Student Center
- Native American Student and Community Center
- Pan African Commons
- Pacific Islander, Asian, and Asian American Student Center
- Middle East, North Africa, South Asia Initiative

Covid-19 Response

Classroom Requirements for All Students and Faculty Due to Covid-19

The University has established rules and policies to make the return to the classroom as safe as possible. It is required for everyone to follow all the Return to Campus rules and policies. To participate in this class, PSU requires all students to comply with the following.

Technology

Recording Technology Notice

We may use technology for virtual meetings and recordings in this course. Our use of such technology is governed by FERPA, the Acceptable Use Policy and PSU's Student Code of Conduct. A record of all meetings and recordings is kept and stored by PSU, in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy and FERPA. I will not share recordings of your class activities outside of course participants, which include your fellow students, TAs/GAs/Mentors, and any guest faculty or community-based learning partners that we may engage with. **You may not share recordings outside this course. Doing so may result in disciplinary action.**

Turnitin

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted

papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com page service is subject to the Usage Policy and Privacy Pledge posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Using ChatGPT/AI as a Learning Tool

As technology evolves, I acknowledge the potential benefits that AI-powered tools can bring to education. As such, I have decided to allow the use of ChatGPT as an optional tool to aid your learning journey. However, it is essential to understand the appropriate usage of ChatGPT and its limitations to ensure it enhances your learning rather than becoming a replacement for active engagement and critical thinking.

Encouraged Disclosure: While the use of ChatGPT is entirely optional, I strongly encourage transparency and honesty. If you choose to use ChatGPT for any academic-related activities, discussions, or assignments, I request that you disclose its use to me and your peers. Openly sharing the information fosters an environment of trust, collaboration, and responsible usage of AI technology.

Understanding its Role: ChatGPT can be a valuable supplementary tool to help you clarify concepts, brainstorm ideas, and receive assistance with complex problems. However, it is crucial to recognize that ChatGPT is not a substitute for genuine learning, critical thinking, and human interaction. Relying solely on ChatGPT for your coursework deprives you of the opportunity to develop essential skills that come with grappling with challenges on your own.

Enhancing Learning: Utilize ChatGPT as a tool to complement your learning process. It can be useful for gaining different perspectives, exploring diverse resources, and generating new ideas. However, remember that the ultimate goal is to deepen your understanding and develop independent thinking skills.

Appropriate Use of ChatGPT:

   Concept Clarification: When using ChatGPT to clarify concepts, frame your questions in a way that encourages explanations rather than simple answers. Engage with the responses to ensure you comprehend the underlying principles fully.

   Idea Generation: ChatGPT can be helpful for brainstorming and generating ideas for projects or assignments. However, always critically evaluate the suggestions and seek further insights from academic sources and your peers. Remember that the data imported into an AI has limitations (e.g. last date of uploaded materials, incorrect assessment of information)

Checking Understanding: Use ChatGPT to gauge your understanding of a topic or concept. If you are stuck, try explaining it in your own words before seeking assistance.

Editing and Proofreading: ChatGPT can be a useful tool for proofreading written work, but remember to rely on your own editing skills and the feedback from peers and instructors.

Avoiding Inappropriate Use:

Plagiarism: Under no circumstances should you use ChatGPT to plagiarize or copy content without proper citation. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will result in disciplinary actions.

Assessment Integrity: During examinations or quizzes, refrain from using ChatGPT or any AI-powered tools. Doing so compromises the integrity of the assessment process and devalues the effort put in by honest students.

I believe that incorporating ChatGPT responsibly can enhance your learning experience and equip you with valuable skills for the future. If you have any questions about the appropriate use of ChatGPT/AI or need clarification on any aspect of the course, feel free to reach out to me.

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Syllabus developed and adapted from PSU's March 2023 template. Structure, textbook selection, assignment types, and topic areas largely derived from Prof. Connie Ozawa who taught this course for many years at PSU and had a well-defined roadmap for focusing on environmental policy in her syllabus.

Technology/AI policy in fact was developed by ChatGPT with my prompt to assist in text that promoted a beneficial learning approach to using AI within the educational environment. Additional policy elements adopted from other professors (e.g. Robert Talbert) along with my own past teaching experience and materials.