

L32 2010 – Introduction to Environmental Policy

Fall 2011
10:00-11:30 Tuesday & Thursday
Seigle L006
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Robert Holahan
Office: Seigle 241
Office Hours: Tuesday 1-2 pm;
Wednesday 10-11 am

Important Dates

Midterm Exam – October 13, 2011 (In-class)

Final Exam — December 8, 2011 (In-class)

Policy Memo Due Dates—September 15, October 6, November 3, December 1

Environmental policies are among the most contentious debates in the today's 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 policy making 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.

This course provides an introduction to the key actors, institutions, and issues involved with the design and implementation of environmental policy. We will begin with a historical look at the development of environmental regulations in the American context, but will also explore environmental policies in other countries and at an international level. When possible, we will examine the policymaking process through the use of specific case studies in environmental regulation to better understand how key actors influence policy at various stages and their motivations in so doing. Topics explored include regulations on air and water, hazardous waste disposal, natural resource management, and climate change, among others.

Grading

Grading for this course will be based on performance of an in-class Midterm (October 13) and a Final exam (December 8), through the writing of four short (1-2 pages, double spaced) policy memos, and attendance checks.

Midterm: 25%
Final: 25%
Policy Papers: 40% (10% each)
Attendance: 10% (2% each)

The grading scale at the end of the course is out of 400 total points and proceeds as follows:
A+ 392-400; A 372-391; A- 360-371; B+ 348-359; B 332-347; B- 320-331; C+ 308-319;
C 292-307; C- 280-291; D 241-279; F 0-240

Midterm and Final Exams

The Midterm and Final exams will be given at the date, time, and location specified in this syllabus. Those requiring specific accommodations should contact the Instructor as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made. Each exam will be based on a 100-point scale and each exam will count for 25% of your final grade. There will be no make-up exams and you should plan accordingly.

Policy Papers

During the course of the semester, you will be required to submit 4 short policy memos on topics relating to course themes. One of the most important skills necessary for a job in public policy is the ability present a complex topic in a concisely written memo. In these jobs, memos are one of the primary sources of information for decision-makers who are often otherwise unfamiliar with the intricacies of each specific policy and need a readily accessible summary of the key facts or issues.

Two of these policy memos will require you to find and discuss a topic from current events in environmental policy. In particular, for these two papers, you should find a news article that discusses some facet of environmental policy currently being debated at a local, state, national, or international level. Read the news article carefully and then construct a short memo that first summarizes the key argument(s) being made in the article, and then write one or two paragraphs in which you reflect on how the argument(s) in the article tie into course themes.

Please include a print-out of the news article used for the analysis, by stapling it to the back of your memo. The two papers should NOT be on the same topic or article, but rather should be on two separate issues or debates that you find particularly interesting. Each memo should be 1-2 pages, double spaced, and use standard margins. The first memo is due by the *start* of class on September 15, 2011 and the second memo is due at the start of class on November 3, 2011.

Grades for these current-events memos are as follows:

40 points: Proper topic, evidence of careful reflection, no serious grammatical or logical errors.

30-39 points: Generally a proper topic, evidence of careful reflection, serious grammatical or logical errors.

20-29 points: Proper topic, but obvious that little to no effort was given to reflect on the topic.

0 points: Topic is not relevant to class themes (i.e. not on an environmental issue).

The other two policy memo topics will be assigned during class. The first of these memos is due at the start of class on October 6, 2011 and the second of these memos is due at the start of class on December 1, 2011.

Attendance

Because much of the course material will be presented in-class, your attendance is an important factor in your final grade. I will take attendance 10 times throughout the semester, at random dates. Each attendance check will count for 1% of your final grade (4 points). If you have an excusable reason not to be in class, it is your responsibility to inform the instructor PRIOR to the start of class via email.

Academic Dishonesty

Any student caught violating the rules of academic honesty as outlined in the University's Student Handbook will be failed.

Required Book: Vig, Norman and Michael Kraft. 2009. *Environmental Policy: New Directions for the Twenty-First Century*, 7th Edition. ISBN: 978-0-87289-973-5.

Articles and Other Readings: Additional articles will be assigned, as designated on the class schedule below. These will be available online via Telesis.

You are responsible for reading each of the chapters or articles listed below before the class for which each assignment is listed. Lectures will draw on the readings as a baseline for discussion, but will also go beyond the content of the specific reading.

The Instructor Reserves the Right to Change this Syllabus at Any Time

Week 1 – Introduction to the Course and Key Concepts

Aug 30: Introduction to the Course and Themes; Overview of the Syllabus

Read: This Syllabus!

Sep 1: The Tragedy of the Commons and the Social-Ecological Perspective

Read: Hardin, Garret. 1968. "The Tragedy of the Commons." Available Online.

Week 2 – History of US Environmental Policy

Sep 6: 1960s-1990s: An overview of the Rise in Environmental Regulation

Read: Vig and Kraft, Chapter 1

Sep 8: Policy processes and prescriptions: Policy Cycles and Market-Based Solutions

Read: Vig and Kraft, Chapter 9

Case Study: From Acid Rain to a Market in SO₂ to Cap-and-Trade in CO₂

Week 3 –Actors in Environmental Policymaking: The President and Congress

Sep 13: The Role of the Executive Branch—Setting the Agenda and Implementing Rules

Read: Vig and Kraft, Chapter 4

Case Study: Road-less Rule Implementation in National Forests

Sep 15: The Role of Congress—Power of the Purse & Direct Legislation

Read: Vig and Kraft, Chapter 5

Case Studies: Nixon, Congress, and the Creation of E.P.A.; Clean Water Act

Week 4 – Actors in Environmental Policymaking: The Bureaucracy

Sep 20: The Role of Agencies: Implementing Policy, Creating Rules

Read: Vig and Kraft, Chapter 7

Sep 22: Agency Design and Control over the Bureaucracy

Read: McNollGast (1987) “Administrative Procedures and Bureaucratic Control”. Online

Case Studies: Environmental Impact Statements; Drinking Water Regulations

Week 5 – Actors in Environmental Policymaking: Courts & Interest Groups

Sep 27: The Role of Courts: Interpreting Law, Regulating Behavior, and Setting Precedent

Read: Vig and Kraft, Chapter 6

Case Study: Rapanos v. United States

Sep 29: The Logic of Collective Action and Organized Interests

Read: Lubell, Mark (2002): “Environmental Activism as Collective Action.” Online.

Case-Studies: *Silent Spring* DDT Regulation; Yucca Mountain

Week 6 – Policy Innovation

Oct 4: States as Policy Innovators

Read: Vig and Kraft, Chapter 2

Case Study: Superfund and State Voluntary Clean-up Programs

Oct 6: Unintended Consequences of Policy Innovation: Tradeoffs in Air & Water Protections

Read: Charles Duhigg articles from NY Times on “Toxic Waters”. Available Online.

Week 7 – Policy Innovation

Oct 11: Recapping the Policy-Making Process: How does a regulatory idea become law?

Read: No Readings

Oct 13: **MIDTERM EXAM**

Week 8 – Natural Resource Management

Oct 18, 20: Revisiting the Tragedy of the Commons—Cooperative Management

Read: Vig and Kraft, Chapter 8;

Dietz, Ostrom, et. al. “The Struggle to Govern the Commons”. Available Online.

Case Studies: US Ocean Fisheries

The Lobster Gangs of Maine

Week 9 – Energy Policy, Transportation, and Climate Change I

Oct 25, 27: The Carbon Economy—The Political-Economy of Oil, Coal, and Natural Gas

Read: To be Assigned in-Class

Case Studies: BP Oil Spill

Natural Gas Exploration in the American West

Week 10 – Energy Policy, Transportation, and Climate Change II

Nov 1: International Negotiations on Climate Change—The Global Commons

Read: Vig and Kraft, Chapter 12

Case Study: The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM)

Nov 3: The Future of “Green” Energy

Read: Vig and Kraft, Chapter 10

Case Study: Cape Cod wind farms

Week 11 – Economic Development and Environmental Concerns

Nov 8, 10: Sustainable Development

Read: “Our Common Future, Chapter 2: Towards Sustainable Development.” UN Report, Available Online (<http://www.un-documents.net/ocf-02.htm>)

Additional Reading to be assigned in-class

Case Studies: Reducing Emissions through Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD)

Land Tenure and Conflict in Kenya

Week 12 – Normative Considerations of Environmental Policy

Nov 15: Environmental Justice

Read: Vig and Kraft, Chapter 11

Nov 17: Endangered Species

Read: Shogren et al. (1999) “Why Economics Matters for Endangered Species Protection”

Case Studies: Hazardous Waste Relocation in East St. Louis
Brownfields & Economic Redevelopment in Wisconsin

Week 13 – Federal Policymaking Boards

Nov 22: Case Study: Interest Group Influence on Regional Policy-Making Boards

Read: Okey, 2003. “Membership of the Eight Regional Fishery Management Councils in the United States: are Special Interests Over-Represented?” Available Online.

Nov 24: NO CLASS—Thanksgiving Break

Week 14 – Ongoing Debates

Nov 29: The Debates over Genetically Modified Crops—Pros and Cons

Read: Michael Pollan. “The Omnivore’s Dilemma”. Available Online.

Dec 1: Emerging Economies—China and India

Read: Vig and Kraft, Chapter 14

Week 15 – Emerging Questions and Course Conclusion

Dec 6: Course Conclusions and the Future of Environmental Policy

Read: Vig and Kraft, Chapter 16

Dec 8: **FINAL EXAM (IN-CLASS, Non-Cumulative)**