

**PSC 317 Environmental Politics**  
*Summer 2015, May 26<sup>th</sup> – July 3<sup>rd</sup>*

Instructor: Austin Mitchell  
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Class held: M-F, *Online*  
Virtual office hours by appointment

**Course description**

The purpose of this class is for students to gain knowledge in the history, laws, policies, and organizations involved in US environmental politics, and also to form the capacity to analyze environmental issues in political contexts. This course begins with an overview of the historical development of US environmentalism through the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency. Next, the main subject matter of the course is how contemporary environmental politics occurs and tools for analysis of these processes. The course concludes with an overview of international environmental issues and agreements, including climate change.

This course takes a multifaceted approach to learning. Environmental politics is a technical, normative, and highly polarizing subject. Successful analysis requires knowledge of the levels of government, the policy-making process, legal foundations, issue areas, technologies, and evaluation criteria. This introductory course utilizes multiple texts to provide the student with a broad overview of environmental politics. An individual research project of a current environmental issue also provides the student with an opportunity to apply knowledge gained from this course.

**Required texts**

Kline, Benjamin. *First Along the River: A Brief History of the U.S. Environmental Movement* (4th ed). 2011 (2007 acceptable). ISBN-10: 1442203994. ISBN-13: 978-1442203990. 208p. (free electronic version available through UB libraries).

Kraft, Michael E. *Environmental Policy and Politics* (5th ed). 2010. ISBN-10: 0205745377. ISBN-13: 978-0205745371. 320p. (Roughly \$50 new, \$20 used. Purchase online. Note this is the 5<sup>th</sup>, not 6<sup>th</sup> edition.)

Other readings will be available on UBLearn

**Grading**

Four writing assignments	20%	(5% each assignment)
Final paper	15	
Quizzes	40	
Online meetings	10	(5% each meeting)
<u>Issue postings</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>(2.5% each week)</u>
Total	100%	

<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Assessment Measures</b>
Knowledge of political, legal, and economic aspects of environmental policy	Quizzes; issue postings and comments
Ability to apply knowledge to specific environmental issues, and assess the scope of the issue across political, governmental, and policy domains.	Problem definition and scope, and History of the problem sections of the research paper; issue postings and comments
Ability to identify the actors involved in environmental issues. This includes relevant government officials and bureaucratic agencies, as well as advocates, special interests, and the regulated community.	Actors, stakeholders, and networks section of the research paper; issue postings and comments
Ability to formulate and assess tradeoffs in potential solutions to environmental issues.	Policy solutions section of the research paper; issue postings and comments

## **Requirements**

### *Readings.*

This course utilizes multiple forms of engagement to facilitate understanding about environmental politics. This subject area is highly technical, normative, and often quite partisan. We will read from multiple texts which cover history, political processes, bureaucratic policymaking, legal foundations, and issue areas. Occasionally, the instructor will post lectures which are to be reviewed just as other readings. Keeping up with the daily readings is a primary responsibility of the student. The readings are intentionally sequential to build upon the student's knowledge as the semester progresses.

### *Lectures*

In addition to readings, supplemental lectures will be posted on UBLearn. These lectures will not provide an overview of the reading material – the student is responsible for the reading – but the instructor will post notes to help guide the student to understand the important topics covered in each reading. Additionally, lectures will also serve to provide information beyond the reading, such as to provide students with access to knowledge about current environmental issues or to provide students with an understanding of journal articles which are highly technical in nature.

### *Quizzes.*

Every day which requires a reading or lecture will also require a quiz. Each quiz may cover that day's reading and any previous material we have covered. The student should read the assignment early, perhaps the day prior to the class in which it is required. Quizzes will be held on UBLearn and will be open each day that a quiz is due from 5AM to 5AM the following day. Students will have a limited amount of time (typically 10-15 minutes) to complete the quiz

once it starts, and once an answer is submitted the student cannot revise the answer. This means that the student must be well prepared *prior to taking the quiz*.

Answers to quizzes will not be given out although students will have access to their grade immediately in UBLearn. Any questions about specific problems can be emailed to the instructor or posted on the discussion board.

Please use LAN connections to take quizzes, not wireless connections. Wireless connections cause quizzes to fail more often, and can cause students to miss points. The instructor will remedy technical quiz problems if the student emails the instructor before the 5AM deadline. This means that the student must check that the quiz got recorded *before the 5AM* deadline.

#### *Four Assignments and Final paper*

The four assignments and final paper are a single research project on a local, national, or international environmental topic of the student's choosing. The project is divided into four sections each of which will be required at various times throughout the semester (see course schedule, below). Each section will be graded on a five point scale and returned to the student with comments for revision for the final paper.

The four assignments constitute the final paper though students may be required to correct or adjust sections for the final paper. The four sections are as follows: 1) Problem definition and scope 2) History of the problem 3) Actors, stakeholders, and networks 4) Policy solutions. Each writing assignment must be 2 pages double spaced with 1 inch margins, and Times New Roman Font. Writing assignments and the final paper are due by 5PM.

Final paper formatting is at least 8 pages double spaced with 1 inch margins. The final paper must have at least 20 citations. This must include at least 10 academic citations from peer reviewed journals or scholarly books. Papers regarding the science of the problem such as the consequences of the pollution or viability of solutions are especially useful. Publications regarding the economic or legal aspects of the problem or the solution, such as cost-benefit analysis, legal hurdles, or case law are also important. Because the research paper regards a contemporary issue, news sources are also welcome but count only as non-academic citations. News sources such as from newspapers or online journals are typically the best non-academic sources, unless the student conducts an interview. Blogs are typically not informative but may be included on a case-by case basis.

#### *Meetings*

Each student is required to meet with the instructor once during the first week of classes, and again during the second week of classes. The first meeting is meant to help the student select a research topic, and allows the instructor to make suggestions to the student on how to conduct the research and what sources to use. The second meeting is an opportunity for the instructor to provide feedback on the student's writing, and to provide further guidance on the research topic. Meetings occur by chatting on Skype, and last about 15 minutes.

#### *Issue postings*

For each of the six weeks of classes, each student will comment on two issue postings that the instructor posts on UBLearn. These issue postings will be from major media sources regarding environmental issues. The issue may be recent or historical, but will have some contemporary significance. The instructor will post the two weekly issues by Monday mornings.

Student's responses to the issue postings are due on Fridays by 5PM. More information about guidelines for issue postings will be provided in a separate document.

### **Course policies**

This course adheres to all University policies. To view Academic policies see the University at Buffalo SUNY [Undergraduate Catalog](#).

#### *Absences*

Students who will miss a daily quiz or meeting must make arrangements to reschedule with the instructor prior to the absence. Students that fail to notify the instructor of an absence prior to missing a quiz, meeting, or to turn in a writing assignment by the deadline risk receiving no credit for the assignment or appointment.

#### *Academic dishonesty*

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating on quizzes and plagiarizing on written work both of which are serious violations of University policy and will not be tolerated. For more information on University policy see the [Undergraduate Catalog section on Academic Integrity](#).

#### *Incomplete grades*

Requests for incomplete grades must be made prior to the end of the semester. For more information see the [Undergraduate Catalog section on incompletes](#).

#### *Disability services*

Reasonable Modification of University Policies, Practices, and Procedures (including this course) is available through the office of [Accessibility Resources](#) but students are required to register with that office in order to receive accommodation for physical and learning disabilities

#### *Grading disputes*

If a student wishes to dispute any graded material, the student must put his/her argument into writing via email. Student's disputes will not be entertained in-person, or by phone or internet calls.

## Course Schedule

\* denotes a reading posted on UBLearn.

### **Week (1) of May 26<sup>th</sup>**

*Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup> (First day of class)*

#### **Introduction to Environmental Politics**

**Read:** Kraft Ch1 Environmental Problems and Politics (about 20 pages)

*Wednesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>*

**Read:** Kraft Ch2 Judging the State of the Environment (about 25p)

*Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup>*

**Read:** Ferrey, Steven.\* Environmental Ethics, Standards, Markets, and the Common Law (38p). From *Environmental Law: Examples & Explanations*. Aspen Publishers.

*Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>*

**Read:** Plagiarism handout and links.

**Meeting 1:** discuss topic proposals

**Issue posting due by 5PM**

### **Week (2) of June 1<sup>st</sup>**

*Monday, June 1<sup>st</sup>*

**Read:** Fullerton and Stavins.\* How Economists See the Environment. (8p)

**Read:** Hardin.\* The Tragedy of the Commons (14p)

*Tuesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>*

#### **US Environmental History**

**Read:** Kline Ch2 The 1400s through the 1700s: Inhabiting a New Land (p17-28)

*Wednesday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>*

**Read:** Kline Ch3 The Early 1800's Destroying the Frontier (p29-42)

**Writing assignment 1 due by 5PM:** Problem definition and scope

*Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup>*

**Read** Kline Ch 4 The Late 1880s: Building an Industrial Nation (p43-58)

*Friday, June 5<sup>th</sup>*

**Meeting 2:** Feedback and suggestions on 1<sup>st</sup> assignment

**Issue posting due by 5PM**

### Week (3) of June 8<sup>th</sup>

*Monday, June 8<sup>th</sup>*

**Read:** Kline Ch 5 The 1900s through the 1930s: Beginnings of the Conservation Movement (p59-78)

*Tuesday, June 9<sup>th</sup>*

**Read:** Kraft Ch4 from The Evolution of Environmental Policy and Politics

*Wednesday, June 19<sup>th</sup>*

**Read:** Ruckelshaus case\*

**Writing assignment 2 due by 5PM:** History of the problem

*Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup>*

#### **Policy Process**

**Read:** Kraft Ch3 Making Environmental Policy

*Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup>*

**Lecture:** OpenSecrets.org

**Issue posting due by 5PM**

### Week (4) of June 15<sup>th</sup>

*Monday, June 15<sup>th</sup>*

**Read:** Birkland.\* Official Actors and Their Roles in Public Policy (38p)

**Read:** Birkland.\* Unofficial Actors and Their Roles in Public Policy (38p)

*Tuesday, June 16<sup>th</sup>*

**Read:** Ferrey.\* Administrative Procedure for Environmental Regulation (42p)

*Wednesday, June 17<sup>th</sup>*

**Read:** Keohane, Revesz, and Stavins.\* The Choice of Regulatory Instruments in Environmental Policy (46p – focus on certain sections)

**Writing assignment 3 due by 5PM:** Actors, Stakeholders, and Networks

*Thursday, June 18<sup>th</sup>*

**Read:** Kraft Ch 5 Environmental Protection Policy: Controlling Pollution (pp117-141)

*Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup>*

**Read:** Ferrey.\* The National Environmental Policy Act (pp81-99)

**Read:** Joseph v Adams\* (7p)

**Issue posting due by 5PM**

## Week (5) of June 22<sup>rd</sup>

*Monday, June 22<sup>rd</sup>*

**Read:** Kraft Ch 5 Environmental Protection Policy: Controlling Pollution (pp141-158)

*Tuesday, June 23<sup>th</sup>*

**Read:** Kraft Ch 6 Energy and Natural Resources Policy

*Wednesday, June 24<sup>th</sup>*

### **Policy Evaluation**

**Read:** Kraft Ch 7 Evaluating Environmental Policy

**Writing assignment 4 due by 5PM:** Policy solutions

*Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup>*

### **International Law**

**Read:** Kraft Ch 8 Environmental Policy and Politics for the Twenty-First Century

*Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup>*

**TBA**

**Issue posting due by 5PM**

## Week (6) of June 29<sup>th</sup>

*Monday, June 29<sup>th</sup>*

**Read:** Frankel.\* The Environment and Globalization (40p)

*Tuesday, July 30<sup>st</sup>*

**Read:** Ferrey.\* International Environmental Law (20p)

*Wednesday, July 1<sup>st</sup>*

**Review** the websites of these agreements:

Basel Convention <http://www.basel.int/Home/tabid/2202/Default.aspx>

CITES <http://www.cites.org/>

Convention on Biological Diversity <http://www.cbd.int/>

Desertification Convention <http://www.unccd.int/en/Pages/default.aspx>

Kyoto Protocol <http://unfccc.int>

Long Range Transboundary Pollution (Europe) <http://www.unece.org/env/lrtap/>

Montreal Protocol [http://ozone.unep.org/new\\_site/en/index.php](http://ozone.unep.org/new_site/en/index.php)

Whaling Convention <http://iwcoffice.org/>

*Thursday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>*

**Climate Change**

**Read:** Paterson, Matthew and Michael Grubb.\* 1992. The International Politics of Climate Change. *International Affairs*. 68(2): 293-310, (Apr., 1992).

**Skim:** Leiserowitz, Anthony.\* 2007: International Public Opinion, Perception, and Understanding of Global Climate Change. United Nations Human Development Programme Human Development Report, Occasional Paper (2007). Available at

**Skim:** den Elzen, M, and Lucas, P.\* The FAIR model: A tool to analyse environmental and costs implications of regimes of future commitments. *Environmental Modeling and Assessment* 10:115-134.

*Friday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>* (Last day of class)

**Watch:** Lecture on the politics of a 2016 Climate Treaty

**Writing assignment due by 5PM:** Final paper

**Issue posting due by 5PM**