

Environmental Politics

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1. What is the Course About?

Our first goal is to understand the most important environmental controversies, primarily in the United States, and ways governments have responded to environmental problems. Topics include water and air pollution, population growth, energy, global warming, solid and hazardous waste, endangered species, and international environmental cooperation. Our second goal is to build analytical and problem-solving skills. Political science is a discipline that analyzes the way that groups of people work out problems when they disagree about values and are uncertain about facts. Environmental issues offer a great way to explore the way that the United States engages in this kind of problem solving. Environmental problems involve ideological, partisan, class, ethnic, and gender conflicts. They also involve great uncertainty about causes, effects, and risk. If you understand environmental problem solving in the United States, then, you will have a better understanding of solving other kinds of problems.

By the end of the course, then, you should have (1) mastered a body of basic information about environment issues and policies, and (2) a better command of the problem-solving skills used to make public policy. To measure your achievement, the course includes extensive class discussion, three examinations, a final paper, and a journal in which you will react critically to newspaper stories, magazine articles, or television features about environmental issues.

This course does not require that you have a background in biological or other sciences.

2. Our Contract

By enrolling in this course, you and I have agreed to a contract with each other. I'll work hard to be prepared, enthusiastic, fair and respectful of every student and their opinions. I'll be accessible and try my best to return graded materials after no more than a week. By enrolling in the class, you've agreed to (1) attend every class, (2) to participate by asking questions and joining in class discussions, and (3) reading the assigned material and completing written assignments on time.

3. How to Get a Good Grade

The final grade is determined as follows:

Participation:	10% of the final grade
2 quizzes:	5% of the final grade
Journal:	20% of the final grade
Exam 1:	15% of the final grade
Exam 2:	15% of the final grade

Exam 3:	20% of the final grade
Paper:	15% of the final grade

NOTE: You are not are NOT competing with other students for a grade. There is no curve in this course. Each student can get an A, or can get a D. It's up to you.

4. Exams

There will be three exams. Each of the exams will consist of three parts: 20 true / false questions worth 2 points each, 2 identification questions worth 10 points each, and an essay worth 40 points. The final exam will include an additional essay question.

5. Books

The following books are required reading in this course:

- Zachary Sharp, ed. 2009. *Annual Editions: Environment 08/09*. 27th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Thomas Easton, ed. 2009. *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Environmental Issues*. 13th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Henrik Ibsen, *An Enemy of the People* (any edition - available in many public libraries)
- Zachary A. Smith. 2009. *The Environmental Policy Paradox*. **5th Edition**. Paperback. Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

6. Participation

You **must** participate in this course actively in order for it to work well. You must prepare for and attend class, and you must contribute thoughtfully to discussion. To ensure fairness in allocating this portion of the grade, sign-up sheets will be circulated during some of the classes. If we invite a guest speaker, you can be certain that your absence will reduce your grade.

Your reading assignments are listed on the attached class schedule. You are expected to read the material before coming to class, and you are expected to be prepared to discuss the reading material in class. You may be asked to discuss a question regarding the reading during the class for which the reading is assigned. You will be assigned responsibility for some of the specific debates in the *Taking Sides* book.

I very strongly encourage you to ask questions about environmental policy, public policy, the day's readings and lecture during class.

7. Environmental Policy Background Memo.

You will write a 12-15 page environmental policy background memo for the class. The paper requires you to provide information to U.S. Senator about an environmental policy issue of your choice. This assignment aims to encourage you to use the course concepts to analyze the environmental problem and policy response of your choice. Students are

expected to hand in a 1-2 paragraph written proposal for the paper, and a detailed paper outline with bibliography on. The proposal and the outline each are worth 5% of the paper grade. LATE PAPERS lose 1 point per day.

8. Journal

You will keep a journal during the semester. The object of this journal is to develop your critical thinking skills by practicing on environmental policy problems and issues. Each short entry (one or two paragraphs) should react to a magazine article, a newspaper story, a book, or some policy event. Relate it to broader ideas we have discussed in class or that authors discuss in the readings. You will write one or two entries a week, four entries in all for each submission, or a total of 20 entries. You will hand in the journal about every other week. Please leave room for comments after each entry. Each time you hand in the journal, please include all the previous entries and comments. The best way to include everything is in a thin folder.

The journal assignment will require you to pay closer attention to environmental policy developments this semester. You can do this by scanning the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and *Wall Street Journal* are among the newspapers available daily. The New York Times Environment website and MSNBC Environment webpage have very good coverage of environmental issues, and Yahoo Environmental News collects environmental stories from a number of sources. See also the Environmental Politics Links on the course website. Google news includes articles from many newspapers around the nation and the world. The *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* and the *National Journal* are weekly publications available in the reference area, and they are outstanding sources for national policy developments. LATE JOURNALS lose 1 point a day.

9. Plagiarism

Plagiarism means taking the written ideas of someone else and presenting them in your writing as if they were your ideas, without giving the author credit. Plagiarism (a word which comes from the Latin word for kidnapping) is deceitful and dishonest. Violations that have occurred frequently in the past include not using quotation marks for direct quotes and not giving citations when using someone else's ideas; using long strings of quotations, even when properly attributed, does not constitute a paper of your own.

Plagiarism in written work for this class is unacceptable. Depending on the severity of the plagiarism, punishment can include receiving no credit for the assignment, failing the course and referral for university disciplinary action.

10. Other Stuff

When I return your exam, please check to make sure that I have computed your grade correctly. Please be in your seat by the time class begins. Please do not hold private conversations during class. If you do not understand lecture, if you have further questions

about lecture, please don't hesitate to interrupt and ask your question. If I speak too quickly, please tell me to slow down.

COURSE SCHEDULE

1. [Introduction: What are the Stakes?](#)
2. [The Dominant Social Paradigm & its Critics](#)
READ: Smith, *The Environmental Policy Paradox*, pages 1-16
Annual Editions, Numbers 5, 7, pages 44-59, 70-73
3. http://www.umsl.edu/~poldrobe/248/3480_Outline_012307.html [How have Americans Dealt with their Environment?](#)
READ: Smith, *The Environmental Policy Paradox*, pages 16-20
Taking Sides, Number 6, pages 96-116
Annual Editions, Number 27, pages 220-237
4. [What is Environmental Protection Worth?](#)
READ: *Taking Sides*, Numbers 2 & 3, pages 22-61
5. [The Trial of Dr. Stockmann](#)
READ: Ibsen, *An Enemy of the People*
QUIZ 1
6. [Why is Regulation So Controversial?](#)
READ: Smith, *The Environmental Policy Paradox*, pages 36-48
Annual Editions 25, pages 208-214
Taking Sides, Number 1, pages 1-21
JOURNAL 1 DUE (four entries; please hand in entire journal)
7. [How does American Government Deal with the Environment?](#)
READ: Smith, *The Environmental Policy Paradox*, pages 49-69
8. [How does American Government Deal with the Environment?](#)
READ: Smith, *The Environmental Policy Paradox*, pages 69-84;
Annual Editions 26, pages 215-219
9. [How Does the United States Govern Its Land?](#)
READ: Smith, *The Environmental Policy Paradox*, pages 231-246
PAPER PROPOSAL DUE (1-2 paragraphs)
10. [How Does the United States Govern its Land?](#)
READ: Smith, *The Environmental Policy Paradox*, pages 222-231
Taking Sides, Number 7, pages 118-135

11. **EXAM 1**

12. [How Does the United States Govern Its Water?](#)

READ: Smith, *The Environmental Policy Paradox*, pages 126-144

13. [How Does the United States Govern Its Water?](#)

READ: *Annual Editions*, Numbers 20, 22-23, pages 167-172, 182-199

JOURNAL 2 DUE (four entries; please hand in entire journal)

14. [How Does the United States Govern Energy?](#)

READ: Smith, *The Environmental Policy Paradox*, pages 149-185

15. [How Does the United States Govern Energy?](#)

READ: *Taking Sides*, Number 10-11, pages 190-219

Annual Editions, Numbers 12, 18, pages 107-110, 150-153

16. [How Does the United States Govern Energy?](#)

READ: *Taking Sides*, Number 9, pages 166-189;

Annual Editions, Numbers 13-15, 17, pages 111-136, 146-149

17. [How Does the United States Govern Nuclear Power and Waste?](#)

READ: *Taking Sides*, Number 12, 19, pages 220-242, 343-361

Annual Editions, Number 16, pages 137-146

18. [How Does the United States Govern Hazardous & Solid Waste?](#)

READ: Smith, *The Environmental Policy Paradox*, pages 189-198

Taking Sides, Numbers 16-17, pages 289-327

JOURNAL 3 DUE (four entries; please hand in entire journal)

19. [How Does the United States Govern Hazardous & Solid Waste?](#)

READ: Smith, *The Environmental Policy Paradox*, pages 198-214

Taking Sides, Numbers 5, 18, pages 81-95, 328-342

PAPER OUTLINE & BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

20. **EXAM 2**

21. [How Does the United States Govern the Air?](#)

READ: Smith, *The Environmental Policy Paradox*, pages 85-113

22. [How Does the United States Govern the Air?](#)

23. [Global Warming: What Should the U.S. Do?](#)

READ: *Annual Editions*, Number 1, pages xvi-16;

Smith, *The Environmental Policy Paradox*, pages 113-118

JOURNAL 4 DUE (four entries; please hand in entire journal)

24. [How Does the World Manage Biodiversity & Global Problems?](#)

READ: Smith, *The Environmental Policy Paradox*, pages 290-291
Annual Editions, Numbers 3, 21, pages 32-36, 173-181;
Taking Sides, Number 4, pages 64-80

25. [How Does the World Deal With International Problems?](#)

READ: Smith, *The Environmental Policy Paradox*, pages
Annual Editions Numbers 4, 24, pages 37-44, 199-207

26. The Mediterranean 1

Skim the [World Wildlife Federation Mediterranean Site](#)

QUIZ 2

27. The Mediterranean 2

JOURNAL 5 DUE (four entries; please hand in entire journal)

28. [Population & Food](#)

READ: Smith, *The Environmental Policy Paradox*, pages 253-260
Taking Sides, Numbers 13-14, pages 244-269;
Annual Editions Numbers 6, 9-10, pages 60-69, 81-92

29. [The Future](#)

READ: Smith, *The Environmental Policy Paradox*, pages 296-299
Taking Sides, Number 15, pages 270-288;
Annual Editions Numbers 8, pages 74-80

PAPER DUE

30. FINAL EXAM

THE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY MEMO

You will write an environmental policy background memo for a U.S. Senator. It will be 12-15 pages (typed). Choose an environmental policy issue, and provide an analysis of the issue for a presidential campaign. You need to provide OBJECTIVE answers to the following questions:

- Why should this issue be on the Congress's agenda? How many people does it affect, and how does it affect them?
- What are the key things to know about past efforts to deal with this issue?
- What are the key alternative choices for addressing this issue, and what are their consequences? Not acting at all is an alternative.
- Who are the key participants in this issue? Be sure to address key environmental groups, businesses, and other interests. How powerful are these interests? How will they react to different alternatives?
- Describe the political costs and benefits of different alternatives.
- What is the best alternative course of action in the future? Explain and justify thoroughly.

Grading criteria include: (1) the degree to which you put effort into the paper; (2) the degree to which you use specific facts and figures in your analysis; (3) the fairness, objectivity, and recognition of all points of view demonstrated in the paper; (4) the quality of the writing and organization of the paper; (5) the quality and diversity of the sources; (6) the persuasiveness of your argument for the proposed improvement in the situation. An "A" paper will be clear, concise, and specific. It will cite at least 8 sources (of which 1 should be from class readings, 2 from outside research articles, and 2 from outside books).

Regrettably, late papers will lose 1 point a day (as indicated in the syllabus). Paper grades will be reduced if the papers do not cite their evidence in the body of the paper and at the end of the paper. Your introduction (1 paragraph maximum) should specifically summarize your argument, your evidence, and your conclusion. Your paper's introduction should be the last thing you write before you submit the paper. The conclusion also should summarize your argument and findings.

THE JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT

You will keep a journal during the semester. Each short entry (one or two paragraphs) should react to a newspaper story, a television feature, or some other event. It should summarize the most important point of the story in a paragraph, and in a second paragraph, react to the story using course concepts and information where appropriate.

You will write about one such entry each week. Two entries will be due each time you hand in your journal. The best way to keep the journal is to print up pages and place them in a flat folder.

Journals will be evaluated on their demonstration of your substantial skills in critical thinking about environmental issues. This is demonstrated by (1) stating a clear opinion about an environmental issue, (2) backing up your opinion with evidence and/or logic, (3) anticipating objections from those with other views, and (4) developing creative insights about these issues. The position you take on an issue is irrelevant; your ability to think critically and your creativity and persuasiveness in defending your opinion are central to your grade. See the attached guide to critical thinking skills; you may use these guidelines directly in assessing the articles you read (item 7 is especially important).

Each entry should at a minimum be understandable, specific, and relevant to environmental policy.

The journals with the best grades will be very creative and thoughtful. As time goes on, the journals with the best grades will refer back to previous lines of thought and explicitly to topics in the readings and in lecture. The journals with the best grades also will draw on diverse sources of environmental policy opinion beyond the obvious. Students are strongly encouraged to use such sources as the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, the Washington Post, the Chicago Tribune, the Wall Street Journal, Policy Review, National Review, the Economist, Rolling Stone, Outdoors, National Geographic, U.S.

News, and Congressional hearings, National Wildlife, Sierra, Audubon, American Spectator.

Many of my comments in the journals will be in the form of questions. I want you to consider the consequences of your arguments. Think about them (and respond in the next round if you like). Dare to think creatively.

Late Journals lose 1 point per day.

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

This course aims to improve our critical thinking skills. When you evaluate the articles you read for class or for your journal, or when you participate to discussion, read and listen actively (You can use some of the items in this list directly in assessing articles in your journals; item 7 is especially important).

When you complete the course, you should be more skilled in your ability to:

1. Distinguish Facts and Opinion.

A fact is a statement that can be proven to be true. An opinion is a statement of a person's feelings about something. When you read or listen in this course, actively distinguish fact and opinion by asking:

- What is the objective evidence that supports someone's assertion?
- How does the person differentiate between facts and her or his interpretation of the facts?

2. Recognize Bias, Rhetoric, and Manipulation.

What do you think the person wants readers or listeners to think or do? How does the person use words or phrases to accomplish this? Does the author or speaker paint word pictures that are particularly attractive for the things she likes, or that are especially awful for the things that he doesn't like? How do the authors select examples to stir your emotions?

3. Determine Cause and Effect.

Does the person assert that one fact follows as the result of another? (Examples include such statements as "Increased auto exhaust causes global warming," or "Government regulations cause unemployment"). How sweeping are these assertions? What is the evidence for it? How persuasive is this evidence?

4. Compare and contrast different points of view.

5. Determine the accuracy and completeness of the information provided. When you read more than one point of view on an issue, you should think about the following:

- What facts and cause-effect relationships does everyone agree about?

- What facts and cause-effect relationships do authors or speakers disagree about?
- What important facts do some persons raise, while others ignore?
- What sources could be used to determine the accuracy of the information you hear?

6. Recognize poor logic and faulty reasoning. When you read more than one point of view on an issue, you should think about the following logical problems. Note that the examples often include more than one form of poor logic.

- a. Incorrect cause-effect relationships ("The Clean Air Act of 1990 preceded the recent economic recession, therefore the CAA caused the recession" [Were other factors much more influential in bringing about the economic downturn? Did the Clean Air Act have any substantial independent effect on the economy in recent years?])
- b. Inaccurate or distorted use of statistics ("Environmental laws of the 1970s failed to reduce pollution;" think about whether, for example, population and economic growth offset environmental gains from policy). Think about widely different assumptions and projections of the future; for example, environmentalists may project that the protection of the Northern spotted owl may cause little net loss of jobs in the Pacific Northwest because they assume that such restrictions will benefit fishing, tourism, and other industries; the logging companies and unions may project the loss of tens of thousands of jobs.
- c. Faulty analogies or comparisons ("Congress can't balance the federal budget, so how can it clean up the environment?" or "Auto companies have lied about safety, so how can they be trusted on emissions controls?" Such assertions tend to be matters of opinion rather than demonstrable facts).
- d. Oversimplifications that ignore important information ("Tougher environmental laws can create jobs in the long run, so the economy will be better off if stricter laws are enacted;" such a statement ignores the number of persons who may be displaced in the short run with a given environmental law).
- e. Stereotyping ("all environmentalists are kooks; all conservatives are greedy crooks"). Modifiers such as "all," "never," or "always" often provide a tip off stereotyping).

7. Develop inferences and draw logical conclusions. Ask yourself:

- What are the person's conclusions?
- Do you agree or disagree with these conclusions?
- What other conclusions could you draw from this information?
- What other information is important to know before making a judgment about the value of this person's argument?