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ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS (ESPP-78)

M/W 10:30-11:45 AM

Harvard University Center for Environment (HUCE), Room number 440

Course Description

This course introduces students to the history, evolution, and dynamics of environmental politics in the United States, with a focus on events since the 1960s. Lectures, discussion sections, papers, and readings are designed with the following aims: learn about major stages in American environmental thought and their reflection in policy; gain an overview of key environmental writings, actors, institutions, processes, and events; explore important policy concepts (e.g., risk, regulation, sustainability, environmental justice); relate US environmental politics to developments in other countries and emerging global perspectives; and develop critical tools for environmental policy analysis.

The topic is timely and urgent. Climate change, coupled with relentless pressure on the earth's resources, has intensified the need for wise policy responses at local, national, and global levels. Yet, despite some recent success, the nation's political leadership is deeply divided on the aims that should guide American environmentalism, and hence policies. Even basic framing concepts, such as nature, pollution, and sustainability have been called into question. In these circumstances, the notion of rational problem-solving—through science, economics, law, and ethics—seems an unattainable goal. Instead, the challenge today is how to rebuild a meaningful environmental politics for the 21st century. What issues will speak to most Americans, what arguments will prove effective, what changes are needed in existing institutions? In approaching these questions, we will look at how science, law, economics, and ethics can be used either to resolve or to exacerbate conflict. We will ask how a progressive environmental politics can be resuscitated against a backdrop of public disenchantment. Issues that divide citizens include the reliability of scientific knowledge, the costs of conservation, the legitimacy and limits of regulation, and the place of ethics in environmental management, especially with regard to global problems. By exploring these cross-cutting concerns, students will gain critical insight into what Americans have historically valued about the environment, and how agreement might again be forged on the purposes of environmental politics.

Readings

Required readings will be posted to the course website for each class session. Please let the teaching staff know if any readings are missing or hard to access.

Optional Reference Works

1. M.E. Kraft and N.J. Vig, eds., *Environmental Policy: New Directions for the Twenty-First Century*, 10th edition (Congressional Quarterly Press, 2019).
2. S. Jasanoff and S-H Kim, eds., *Dreamscapes of Modernity: Sociotechnical Imaginaries and the Fabrication of Power* (University of Chicago Press, 2015).
3. R. Patel and J.W. Moore, *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things* (Verso, 2017).
4. R. Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Harvard University Press, 2011).

Requirements & Grading

Section attendance and response papers	20%
Midterm Exam	20%
Research paper or project	30%
Final Exam (take home)	30%

SYLLABUS (FALL 2024)

I. INTRODUCTION: What is Environmentalism?

Wednesday, September 4: Syllabus and Requirements

M.E. Kraft and N.J. Vig, *Environmental Policy*, Ch. 1 (“US Environmental Policy: Achievements and New Directions”), 2-36.

P. Krugman, [“Why Republicans Turned Against the Environment,”](#) *New York Times*, August 15, 2022.

G. Thunberg, [Speech to World Leaders at UN Climate Action Summit](#), September 23, 2020.

**[Environmental Autobiographies Due in First Section.
Section meetings begin week of 9/9]**

Monday, September 9: Environmental Goals and Values

M. Shellenberger and T. Nordhaus, [“The Death of Environmentalism: Global Warming Politics in a Post-Environmental World”](#) (2004), pp. 8-25.

P. Kingsnorth, [Confessions of a Recovering Environmentalist](#), *Paulkingsnorth.net*.

House Resolution 109, [“Recognizing the duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal,”](#) 116th Cong. (2019).

F. Paris, A. Parlapiano, M. Sanger-Katz, and E. Washington, [“A Detailed Picture of What’s in the Democrats’ Climate and Health Bill,”](#) *New York Times*, August 16, 2022.

Wednesday, September 11: Power and Knowledge

R. Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994; first published 1962), Ch. 3 (“Elixirs of Death”), 15-37.

R. Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), Introduction, 1-44.

R. Aviv, [“A Valuable Reputation,”](#) *New Yorker*, February 10, 2014.

E.A. Crunden, [“Trump admin tried to blunt EPA review of popular weedkiller,”](#) *GreenWire*, July 21, 2022.

J. McEvoy, [“‘EPA is Playing Politics’: Biden Admin Pushes New Regs On Farmers As Food Inflation Skyrockets,”](#) *Daily Caller*, July 1, 2022.

II. The Politics of Knowledge

Monday, September 16: Why Can’t We All Agree?

P. Skilling, P. Barrett, and P. Kurian, [“Evidence, interests and argumentation: an environmental policy controversy in a small New Zealand town,”](#) *International Review of Public Policy* 3, 3 (2021).

F.X. Donnelly, [“From hero to pariah, Flint water expert fights for his reputation,”](#) *Detroit News*, April 25, 2019.

P. Lurie and D. Schardt, [“Ivermectin’s Boom and Bust,”](#) Center for Science in the Public Interest, March 22, 2022.

S. Jasanoff, “Judgment under Siege: The Three-Body Problem of Expert Legitimacy,” in P. Weingart and S. Maasen, eds., *Democratization of Expertise? Exploring Novel Forms of Scientific Advice in Political Decision-Making*, Sociology of the Sciences Yearbook (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2005), pp. 209-224.

OPTIONAL: S. Jasanoff, [“Back from the Brink: Truth and Trust in the Public Sphere,”](#) *Issues in Science and Technology* XXXIII(4)(Summer 2017):25-28.

Wednesday, September 18: Managing Risk

P. Slovic, “Beyond Numbers: A Broader Perspective on Risk Perception and Risk Communication,” in D. G. Mayo and R. Hollander, eds., *Acceptable Evidence: Science and Values in Risk Management* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 48-65.

National Research Council, *Understanding Risk* (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1996), Ch. 1 (“The Idea of Risk Characterization”), 11-35.

S. Krinsky, [“The unsteady state and inertia of chemical regulation under the US Toxic Substances Control Act,”](#) *PLoS Biol* 15 (12) (2017):e2002404.

- H. Boullier, [“Regulating molecules ‘without data’: The REACH of ‘prohibition through authorization’,”](#) *Gérer & Comprendre* 2 (2017):47-54.
- S. Jasanoff, “Technologies of Humility,” *Nature* 450 (7166) (2007):33.

Monday, September 23: Risk and Governance

- M. Specter, [“Roundup and Risk Assessment,”](#) *New Yorker*, April 10, 2015.
- T.J. Pinch, [“‘Testing – One, Two, Three ... Testing!’: Toward a Sociology of Testing,”](#) *Science, Technology and Human Values* 18 (1993):25-41.
- A. Arcuri and Y.H. Hendlin, [“The Chemical Anthropocene: Glyphosate as a Case Study of Pesticide Exposures,”](#) *King’s Law Journal* 30(2) (2019):1-20.
- Anonymous, [“Bayer Beware,”](#) *The Economist* 428(9105) (2018):50-51.
- P. Cohen, [“Roundup Maker to Pay \\$10 Billion to Settle Cancer Suits,”](#) *New York Times*, June 24, 2020.
- C. Gillam and A. Uteuova, [“Popular weedkiller Roundup on trial again as cancer victims demand justice,”](#) *Guardian*, August 23, 2022.

Wednesday, September 25: Uncertainty and Precaution

- A. Jordan and T. O’Riordan, “The precautionary principle: a legal and policy history,” Ch. 3 in M. Martuzzi and J. A. Tickner, eds., [“The precautionary principle: protecting public health, the environment and the future of our children”](#) (WHO, 2004), 31-48.
- S. Jasanoff, “A Living Legacy: The Precautionary Ideal in American Law,” in J.A. Tickner, ed., *Precaution, Environmental Science, and Preventive Public Policy* (Washington: Island Press, 2003), 227-240.
- C. Sunstein, *Laws of Fear* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Ch. 2 (“Behind the Precautionary Principle”), 35-63.
- G.E. Kaebnick et al., “Precaution and Governance of Emerging Technologies,” *Science* 354(6313) (2016):710-711.
- B. Laurent, “Regulatory Precaution,” in *European Objects: The Troubled Dreams of Harmonization* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2022), 132-138.
- OPTIONAL: D. Gee and A. Stirling, “Late Lessons from Early Warnings: Improving Science and Governance under Uncertainty and Ignorance,” in Tickner, *Precaution*, 195-213.

Monday, September 30: Risk and Culture

- S. Jasanoff, “Product, Process, or Programme: Three Cultures and the Regulation of Biotechnology,” in M. Bauer, ed., *Resistance to New Technology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 311-331.
- M. Specter, [“Seeds of Doubt,”](#) *New Yorker*, August 25, 2014.
- M. Gerson, [“Are you anti-GMO? Then you’re anti-science, too.”](#) *Washington Post*, May 3, 2018.
- S. Malkan, [“Mark Lynas’ inaccurate, deceptive promotions for the agrichemical agenda,”](#) U.S. Right to Know, August 8, 2020.
- K. A. Worthy, R.C. Strohmman, P.R. Billings et al., “Agricultural Biotechnology Science Compromised: The Case of Quist and Chapela,” in D. L. Kleinman, A. J. Kinchy, and J. Handelsman, eds., *Controversies in Science and Technology* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 135-149.

III. THE POLITICS OF MARKETS

Wednesday, October 2: Valuing Nature

- W. Cronon, *Changes in the Land* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), Ch. 3 (“Seasons of Want and Plenty”), 34-53.
- G. Hardin, “The Tragedy of the Commons,” *Science* 162 (1968):1243-1248.
- E. Ostrom et al., “Revisiting the Commons: Local Lessons, Global Challenges,” *Science* 284 (1999):278-282.
- R. Patel and J.W. Moore, *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things* (Verso, 2017), Ch. 1 (“Cheap Nature”), 44-63.
- S. Jasanoff, *Can Science Make Sense of Life?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2019), Ch. 6 (“A New Biopower”), 142-168.

Monday, October 7: Are Markets Value-Neutral?

- [“Survey: The invisible green hand,”](#) *The Economist* 364 (2002):19.
- T. Anderson, [“Free Market Environmentalism,”](#) Hoover Institution, February 19, 2015.
- K. Arrow et al., “Economic Growth, Carrying Capacity and the Environment,” *Ecological Economics* 15 (1995):91-95.

M. Sagoff, "On the Value of Natural Ecosystems: The Catskills Parable," *Politics and the Life Sciences* 21(1) (2002):19-24.

C. Bonneuil and J-B. Fressoz, "Capitalocene," in *The Shock of the Anthropocene* (London: Verso, 2016), 222-252.

P. Inman, "[Food prices soaring in developing world amid Ukraine crisis, World Bank finds.](#)" *Guardian*, August 1, 2022.

R. Muggah, "[The war in Ukraine is triggering a re-evaluation of global systemic risk.](#)" June 30, 2022, World Economic Forum.

Wednesday, October 9: Dilemmas of Measurement

P.A. Diamond and J.A. Hausman, "Contingent Valuation: Is Some Number Better than No Number?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 8(4):45-64 (1994).

T. Blanus, "[How the humble hedge works hard to protect Britain's urban environment.](#)" *The Conversation*, June 4, 2021.

D. MacKenzie, "Making things the same: Gases, emission rights and the politics of carbon markets," *Accounting, Organizations and Society* 34:440-455 (2009).

M.E. Mann, "[The 'Fat Tail' of Climate Change Risk.](#)" *HuffPost*, December 6, 2017.

B. Kahn, "[10 Years on, Climate Economists Reflect on Stern Review.](#)" Climate Central, October 28, 2018.

J. Rowlett, "[Google change reduces airline emissions calculations.](#)" *BBC News*, August 24, 2022.

Monday, October 14: * No Class (INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' /Columbus Day) *****

Wednesday, October 16: Corporate Environmental Responsibility

M. E. Porter and M. R. Kramer, "Strategy and Society: The Link between Competitive Advantage and Corporate Social Responsibility," *Harvard Business Review* (December 2006), 1-16.

E. Smith, "Imaginariness of Development: The Rockefeller Foundation and Rice Research," *Science as Culture* 18(4) (2009): 461-482.

United Nations, [The Global Compact](#) [BROWSE, e.g., "About the GC", esp. "What is the Global Compact", "The Ten Principles" and "Global Compact Governance"; also Issues (esp. Environment).]

V.K. Rangan, L. Chase, and S. Karim, "[The Truth About CSR.](#)" *Harvard Business Review* (January-February 2015).

NYT Opinion (VIDEO), "[We Debunk the Latest Corporate Climate Lie.](#)" July 14, 2022.

Monday, October 21: * MIDTERM EXAM *****

IV. REGULATORY POLITICS

Wednesday, October 23: EPA Between Policy and Politics

D. Demortain, *The Science of Bureaucracy: Risk Decision-Making and the US Environmental Protection Agency* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2020), Ch. 5 ("Ruckelshaus and Risk"), 137-160.

Massachusetts v. Environmental Protection Agency, 549 U.S. 497 (2007).

C. Davenport, L. Friedman and B. Plumer, "[California to Ban the Sale of New Gasoline Cars.](#)" *New York Times*, August 24, 2022.

Monday, October 28: A Contested Climate

S. Jasanoff, "A New Climate for Society," *Theory Culture & Society* 27(2-3):233-253 (March/May 2010).

P. N. Edwards and S. H. Schneider, "Self-Governance and Peer Review in Science-for-Policy: The Case of the IPCC Second Assessment Report," in C. A. Miller and P. N. Edwards, eds., *Changing the Atmosphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 219-246.

N. Rich, "[Losing Earth: The Decade We Almost Stopped Climate Change.](#)" *New York Times*, August 1, 2018.

B. McKibben, "[On Climate Change, We've Run Out of Presidential Terms to Waste.](#)" *New Yorker*, August 26, 2020.

Wednesday, October 30: Frayed Consensus

[West Virginia v. Environmental Protection Agency](#), __ US __ (2022) [Read Roberts opinion].

B. McKibben, "The Supreme Court Tries to Overrule the Climate," *New Yorker*, June 30, 2022.

A. Simon-Lewis, "[What is the Paris climate agreement and who has signed it?](#)" WIRED UK, November 7, 2017.

OPTIONAL: E. Kolbert, "[The Supreme Court Case That Could Upend Efforts to Protect the Environment.](#)" *New Yorker*, January 10, 2022.

Monday, November 4: International Trade and GMOs

World Trade Organization, Understanding the WTO, [“The Environment: a specific concern.”](#)

D. Winickoff et al., “Adjudicating the GM Food Wars: Science, Risk, and Democracy in World Trade Law,” *Yale Journal of International Law* 30 (2005), 81-123 [LOOK especially at pp. 93-106, 111-116].

S. Jasanoff, “Constitutions of Modernity: Science, Risk, and Governable Subjects,” in M. Weimer and A. de Ruijter, eds., *Regulating Risks in the EU: The Co-production of Expert and Executive Power* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2017), pp. 19-36.

A. Vaughan, [“UK to relax law on gene-edited food in post-Brexit change from EU,”](#) *NewScientist*, May 25, 2022.

A. Swanson, [“Covid Vaccine and Fisheries Deals Close a ‘Roller Coaster’ W.T.O. Meeting,”](#) *New York Times*, June 17, 2002.

Wednesday, November 6: Environmental Democracy

M. Hanna-Attisha, *What the Eyes Don’t See: A Story of Crisis, Resistance, and Hope in an American City* (New York: One World, 2018), Ch. 3 (“The Valedictorian”) and Ch.10 (“Jenny + the Data”), pp. 75-94, 250-278.

F. Fischer, “Environmental Regulation and Risk-Benefit Analysis: From Technical to Deliberative Policy Making.” In: R. Paehlke and D. Torgerson, eds., *Managing Leviathan: Environmental Politics and the Administrative State* (Broadview Press, 2005), 59-80.

U. Felt, “Keeping Technologies Out: Sociotechnical Imaginaries and the Formation of National Technopolitical Identity,” in Jasanoff and Kim, eds., *Dreamscapes of Modernity*, 103-125.

M. Taylor, [“The evolution of Extinction Rebellion,”](#) August 4, 2020.

V. ETHICS AND THE POLITICS OF VALUES

Monday, November 11: This Land Is My Land

W. N. Espeland, *The Struggle for Water* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), Ch. 5 (“Views from the Reservation: The Politics and Perspective of the Yavapai People”), 183-222.

L. Wade, [“Native tribes have lost 99% of their land in the United States,”](#) *Science*, October 28, 2021.

C. Seaman, [“A Native American faces teargas, baton charges and rubber bullets,”](#) *Guardian*, May 4, 2022.

S. Levin, [“Rebel cowboys: how the Bundy family sparked a new battle for the American west,”](#) *Guardian*, August 29, 2016.

[Stop the Beach Renourishment, Inc. v. Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection](#), 560 U.S. 702 (2010).

OPTIONAL: A. Rice, [“A Stake in the Sand,”](#) *New York Times*, March 19, 2010.

Wednesday, November 13: Getting the Right Nature

W. Cronon. [“A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative,”](#) *Journal of American History* (March 1992):1347-76.

S. Jasanoff, [“Knowledge for a Just Climate,”](#) *Climatic Change* 169 (2021).

G. Maughan, *Second Nature* (VIDEO). With: J. Fairhead, M. Leach, D. Millimouno [in class showing/ discussion].

Monday, November 18: Ethics of Sustainability

W. Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” in Cronon, ed., *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature* (New York: Norton, 1996), 69-90.

M. Specter, [“Rewriting the Code of Life,”](#) *New Yorker*, January 2, 2017.

K. Esvelt, [“When Are We Obligated To Edit Wild Creatures?”](#) *leapsmag*, May 28, 2018.

G. Canon, [“US poised to release 2.4bn genetically modified male mosquitoes to battle deadly diseases,”](#) *Guardian*, March 26, 2022.

OPTIONAL: K. Esvelt, [Sculpting Evolution](#), Mice Against Ticks (Pioneering Community Guided Research).

Wednesday, November 20: Futures and Transitions

S. Jasanoff and S-H. Kim, “Containing the Atom: Sociotechnical Imaginaries and Nuclear Power in the United States and South Korea.” *Minerva* 47 (2009):119-146.

P. Lehner, *In Deep Water* (New York: OR Books, 2010), Ch. 6 (“Beyond Petroleum”), 149-163.

E. Dobb, [“The New Oil Landscape,”](#) *National Geographic*, March 2013.

M.A. Hajer and P. Pelzer, "2050-An Energetic Odyssey: Understanding 'Techniques of Futuring' in the transition towards renewable energy," *Energy Research and Social Science* 44 (2018):222-231 .

F. Biermann and I. Möller, "[Rich man's solution?](#) Climate engineering discourses and the marginalization of the Global South" *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics* 19(2019):151–167.

N. Lakhani and O. Milman, "[It's a deal with the devil': outrage in Appalachia over Manchin's 'vile' pipeline plan.](#)" *Guardian*, August 26, 2022.

Monday, November 25: Rights of Environmental Others

C. D. Stone, *Should Trees Have Standing?* (Los Altos, CA: William Kaufmann, 1974), 3-54.

K. Warne with M. Svold, "[A Voice for Nature.](#)" *National Geographic*, April 2019.

M. Long Martello, "Negotiating Global Nature and Local Culture: The Case of Makah Whaling," in Jasanoff and Martello, eds., *Earthly Politics*, 263-284.

S. Brand, "[The Case for De-Extinction: Should We Bring Back the Woolly Mammoth.](#)" and P. Ehrlich, "[The Case Against De-Extinction: It's a Fascinating but Dumb Idea.](#)" *Yale Environment* 360, January 13, 2014.

S. Yin, "[Scientists See Promise in Resurrecting These Rhinos That Are Nearly Extinct.](#)" *New York Times*, May 24, 2018.

G. Popkin, "[To fight climate change, a biotech firm has genetically engineered a very peppy poplar.](#)" *Science*, February 23, 2022.

BROWSE: Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature, especially "[What are the Rights of Nature?](#)".

Wednesday, November 27: * No Class (Thanksgiving Holiday) *****

Monday, December 2: Environmental Justice

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Not in My Backyard: Executive Order 12898 and Title VI as Tools for Achieving Environmental Justice*, October 2003; read especially Ch. 2. ("What Is Environmental Justice?") and Ch. 3 ("Title VI and Environmental Justice"), 29-49.

J. xx`, *Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2020), Introduction, 1-24 and Conclusion, 99-102.

[Juliana v. United States.](#)

S. Kaplan, "[A melting glacier, an imperiled city and one farmer's fight for climate justice.](#)" *Washington Post*, August 28, 2022.

Pope Francis, Encyclical, [Laudato Si'](#), May 24, 2015.

OPTIONAL: Time Magazine Documentary (VIDEO), "[Generation Now: The Fight For Climate Justice.](#)" November 5, 2021.

PAPERS and PROJECTS due by 11:59 pm 12/6 To DROPBOX on Course Website

*** Final Take-Home Exam December 13 ***