
GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
School of Public Policy
PUBP 3315; Environmental Policy and Politics
Fall 2007

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Office hours: TBD
Class Days/Time/Place: TBD

COURSE MATERIALS

Kraft, Michael E. 2004. Environmental Policy and Politics. 3rd Edition. Pearson Education, Inc.
Cohen, Steven. 2006. Understanding Environmental Policy. Columbia University Press.
Supplemental internet materials and class handouts

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course will analyze the factors that influence the processes and outcomes of environmental policy and politics in the United States. Throughout the semester we will analyze how the open and fragmented U.S. government provides ample opportunities for political action. We will keep an eye on how government officials, scientists, interest group leaders, citizens, and the media bring issues to the public agenda, frame problems, and design policies. We will develop an understanding of the extent that geographical, institutional, and organizational factors influence policy designs, implementation, and political choices.

Specifically, the course objectives are to:

- Provide students with an overview of the major institutions, organizations, and official/unofficial actors in environmental policy and politics. After this course students should be able to better approach – and possibly influence – environmental processes as a policy activist, research policy analyst, and/or informed citizen.
- Teach student to view the world as social scientists. This includes using theoretical lenses to perceive and interpret events, to generate research designs and hypotheses about environmental issues, and to develop a healthy skepticism concerning the limitations of most data sources.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Media content analysis**
Students will conduct a systematic content analysis of the coverage by two major newspapers on an environmental issue. (25%)
2. **Environmental Research Paper: A Multidisciplinary Approach**
Students will apply Cohen's multidisciplinary framework to analyze an environmental policy issue. (25%)
3. **Four Quizzes**
Students will complete four quizzes approximately every three to four weeks. The quizzes will be based on the readings and in-class content. (10% each/40% total)
4. **Class Participation**
This class is based on an "active learning" teaching philosophy. Students will collectively reconstruct an understanding of the course content through discussions, small-group discussions, presentations, and activities in and out of class. This course will have presentations but no lectures. Active participation is expected. (10%)

GRADING

Grading for this course is consisted of four components:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Media Content Analysis | 25% |
| 2. Environmental Research Paper | 25% |
| 3. Four Quizzes (10% each) | 40% |
| 4. Class Participation | 10% |

Students will receive one of the following grades for their performance:

- A Outstanding work
- B Commendable performance
- C Meets every course requirement in an acceptable manner
- D Below standard
- F Failure

PREREQUISITES

This course is designed for upper level undergraduates and those beginning their graduate education with no background in environmental policy. Students are expected to have taken or taken the equivalent of:

- POL 1101 or INTA 1200; junior standing or higher; or permission of instructor.

TOPICAL OUTLINE

1. Environmental policy and politics in transition [weeks 1 & 2]
 - History of environmental policy
 - Trends in decentralization and collaborative management
 - The political landscape
 - Environmental values
2. Environmental policy processes [week 3]
 - Agenda setting, policy formulation, policy adoption, implementation, and evaluation.
3. State of the environment [week 4]
 - Air & water quality
 - Toxic chemicals and hazardous waste
 - Solid waste and consumer waste
 - Energy use and climate change
 - Biodiversity and habitat loss
 - Human population growth
4. Actors and Institutions [weeks 5 -8, media content analysis paper]
 - Policy elites and the general public
 - The Media
 - Presidents, Congress, and Courts in environmental policy
 - Environmental agencies and regulatory processes
 - Political parties, interest groups, and coalitions
5. A Framework for understanding environmental policy and politics [weeks 9-11, environmental research paper]
 - Learning and applying the framework
6. Evaluating Environmental Policy [weeks 12-15]
 - Approaches to environmental policy evaluation
 - Costs, benefits, and risks
 - Environmental justice
 - Scientific and technical information