# Land, Power, and the Politics of the Climate Crisis

## **Instructor Information**

* **Instructor:** [Your Name]
* **Email:** [Your Email Address]
* **Office Hours:** Thursdays, 11:00 AM–2:00 PM, Thompson Hall 636
* **Class Schedule:** Tuesdays, 2:30–5:00 PM
* **Location:** [Building/Room]

## **Course Overview**

**How can policymakers design effective solutions to complex environmental challenges in an era of climate urgency and political polarization?**

This course equips students with cutting-edge methods to systematically analyze and resolve policy conflicts, focusing on renewable energy, climate change, and land use as critical areas of application. Students will gain skills in comparative policy analysis and qualitative data coding that prepare them to navigate and influence the rapidly evolving landscape of environmental governance.

## **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Analyze Governance Systems and Stakeholders**: Critically examine the roles of key actors, institutions, and decision-making processes in shaping energy, climate, and land use policies in the United States.
2. **Evaluate Policy Tools and Governance Strategies**: Assess the impact of diverse governance approaches and policy instruments on renewable energy siting and climate policy outcomes, using evidence-based analysis.
3. **Compare Environmental Policy Frameworks**: Contrast major theoretical and practical frameworks for understanding the implementation, challenges, and effectiveness of environmental policies in different contexts.
4. **Apply Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)**: Employ QCA to systematically evaluate and draw insights from complex policy cases, identifying conditions that contribute to policy success or failure.
5. **Design and Execute Qualitative Policy Analyses**: Develop and apply rigorous coding frameworks to analyze qualitative data related to policy conflicts, decisions, and outcomes.
6. **Formulate Research Protocols**: Create comprehensive research designs for conducting comparative policy analysis, including case selection, data collection, and ethical considerations.

## **Course Policies and Expectations**

### **Class Participation**

* Active participation in class discussions and activities is essential. Be prepared to engage with the readings and contribute thoughtful insights.
* Respectful dialogue and collaboration are expected at all times.

### **Attendance Policy**

Attendance is required for all scheduled class sessions. Absences for valid reasons (illness, emergencies) should be communicated in advance.

### **Late Work Policy**

Assignments submitted after the deadline will incur a penalty of 0.5 points per 24-hour period unless prior arrangements are made.

## **Course Schedule**

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| **Date and Week** | **Topic** | **Readings** | **Activities** | **Assignments** |
| Tuesday, September 2 (Week 1) | What Shapes Environmental Governance? | Excerpts from *Politics in Time*; Frontline episode: *Climate of Doubt* | Syllabus review, discussion on political forces shaping U.S. climate policy | N/A |
| Tuesday, September 9 (Week 2) | How Do Governance Approaches Vary Across Contexts? | Selected chapters from *Short-Circuiting Policy* by Leah Stokes | Case analysis of state renewable energy policies; compare governance models | N/A |
| Tuesday, September 16 (Week 3) | What Practical Tools Help Us Understand Environmental Policy? | *Neighborhood Defenders* by Katherine Einstein et al.; *The Green’s Dilemma* by J.B. Ruhl | Stakeholder mapping exercise; case study analysis of governance structures | Memo 1 due September 18 |
| Tuesday, September 23 (Week 4) | What Are the Tools for Analyzing Policy Effectiveness? | Chapters from *Short-Circuiting Policy* | Policy tools workshop; metrics design exercise | Quiz 1 in class |
| Tuesday, September 30 (Week 5) | How Can We Systematically Analyze Policy Conflicts? | Supplementary article on QCA applications | QCA workshop; case comparison exercise | N/A |
| Tuesday, October 7 (Week 6) | What Skills Are Needed to Analyze Qualitative Policy Data? | Research excerpts/tutorials on qualitative coding techniques | Coding workshop using datasets; class discussion on emergent themes | Memo 2 due October 9 |
| Tuesday, October 14 (Week 7) | How Do Power Dynamics Shape Environmental Outcomes? | Selected chapters from *Neighborhood Defenders* | Power mapping exercise; discussion on stakeholder dynamics in land-use conflicts | N/A |
| Tuesday, October 21 (Week 8) | What Role Does Equity Play in Climate Policy? | Reports on environmental justice; Harvard Case Study: *Environmental Injustice in Cancer Alley* | Environmental justice analysis; guest speaker on equity in climate governance | Quiz 2 in class |
| Tuesday, October 28 (Week 9) | How Do Political Polarization and Public Opinion Affect Policy Outcomes? | Chapters from *Short-Circuiting Policy* | Media analysis workshop; structured debate on misinformation in climate policy | N/A |
| Tuesday, November 18 (Week 12) | What Are the Barriers to Renewable Energy Siting? | Chapters from *Short-Circuiting Policy* | Stakeholder negotiation simulation; reflection on common barriers and solutions | Memo 3 due November 20 |
| Tuesday, December 9 (Week 15) | How Can We Design Equitable and Effective Climate Policies? | N/A | Policy design workshop: develop and pitch policy proposals; peer feedback and revisions | Final Exam (Take-home) due December 15 |

## **Grading and Evaluation**

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| **Assessment** | **Weight** | **Description** |
| Class Participation | 20% | Includes active discussion and in-class exercises. |
| Quizzes and Exams | 40% | Three in-class quizzes spaced across the semester, testing foundational knowledge from readings. |
| Policy Analysis Assignments | 30% | Two shorter assignments focusing on stakeholder analysis and equity implications. |
| Final Exam | 10% | Synthesis of course concepts through short-answer and essay questions. |

## **Grading Scale**

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| **Letter Grade** | **Percentage Range** |
| A | 94-100% |
| A- | 90-93.9% |
| B+ | 87-89.9% |
| B | 84-86.9% |
| B- | 80-83.9% |
| C+ | 77-79.9% |
| C | 74-76.9% |
| C- | 70-73.9% |
| D | 60-69.9% |
| F | Below 60% |

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Honesty**

Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department Head or Chair. Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent. For details, visit: [UMass Academic Honesty Policy](http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/).

Academic integrity is the foundation of our academic community. Any form of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) will result in disciplinary action in accordance with university policies. For more details, visit: [UMass Academic Honesty Policy](http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/).

### **Title IX Compliance**

In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 that prohibits gender-based discrimination in educational settings that receive federal funds, the University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students, free from all forms of discrimination, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and retaliation. This includes interactions in person or online through digital platforms and social media. Title IX also protects against discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion, or related conditions, including recovery.

There are resources here on campus to support you. A summary of the available Title IX resources (confidential and non-confidential) can be found at the following link: [UMass Title IX Resources](https://www.umass.edu/titleix/resources). You do not need to make a formal report to access them. If you need immediate support, you are not alone. Free and confidential support is available 24 hours a day / 7 days a week / 365 days a year at the SASA Hotline: 413-545-0800.

UMass Amherst is committed to creating a learning environment free from gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence. Resources are available at [UMass Title IX Resources](https://www.umass.edu/titleix/resources). Confidential support is available through the SASA Hotline: 413-545-0800.

### **Accommodation Statement**

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements. For further information, please visit: [Disability Services](https://www.umass.edu/disability/).

Students with documented disabilities who require accommodations should contact Disability Services as soon as possible to ensure appropriate arrangements are made. For more information, visit: [Disability Services](https://www.umass.edu/disability/).

## **Contact Information and Support**

* **Writing Assistance:** [UMass Writing Center](https://www.umass.edu/writingcenter)
* **Technical Support:** [IT Help Center](https://www.umass.edu/it/support)
* **Library Resources:** [UMass Libraries](https://www.library.umass.edu)

**Let’s build a vibrant learning environment together. See you in class!**