

# ECON 850 Environmental Economics - Fall 2022

## Papers and Presentations

In addition to the Econ 550 assignments, masters students must complete a 10-15 page (single-spaced, **not including front and back matter**) written paper on topic agreed upon with instructor, plus a 20-minute oral presentation at the end of the semester to the class. The oral presentation should be about 8-10 slides. The oral and written reports are 15% of your grade, of which 80% is the paper and 20% is the oral presentation. See syllabus for other adjustments to grading weights.

### *Grading rubric*

See the written and oral communications rubric on your grad student folder on iLearn. In addition, think about the following in your written and oral products:

- Get to the point: what was your topic, question and/or objective?
- Convince us of importance of problem
- Describe briefly how you went about approaching the objective
- Find connection to class concepts
- Communicate clearly what you found out.
- Provide enough details but not too much to follow your reasoning
- Incorporate information, data and source material
- For slides: include some good visuals like photos or graphs; not too much text on one slide.
- Quality of source material: Sources: well-chosen; deployed in a range of ways (to motivate the argument, provide key terms, and so on); quoted and cited correctly. Includes scholastic material like books, journals, peer-reviewed articles; newspapers and magazines articles allowed with clear references; websites/blogs from specialized organizations need cross-checked for reliability and credibility. Give credit to any sources integral in supporting your work. Should be mainly from 2010 and later.

### SUGGESTED TOPICS

**Inflation Reduction Act:** Pick an aspect of the recently signed IRA and explain how it relates to a course concept. Consider what are tradeoffs involved, pros and cons of the proposal, and costs v. benefits.

**Common or open access forest resources:** Pick one or more countries that have large tracts of forest held as common property or managed by indigenous communities. Examples are Mexico, Guatemala, Panama, Zimbabwe, Papua New Guinea. Describe the management system and relationship to local and national government through rules or usage. Explore whether you think a free rider problem exist? What are attempts to control the tragedy of the commons outcome? Comment on whether you think privatization or government control, like a national park system, be any better at managing these resources, giving rationale and evidence to support your position.

**Payment for environmental services:** Some governments have instituted “payment for environmental services” programs which pay people or communities in environmentally sensitive areas to avoid exploiting resources, such as forests. Find a specific program somewhere in the world that has been in place 5 years or

more and briefly explain how the program works, how it relates to concepts in our class, and results, commenting on whether the program has achieved any of its objectives.

**SFSU and sustainability:** Pick an aspect of SFSU's climate change and sustainability agendas and report: <https://news.sfsu.edu/sf-state-among-leading-us-universities-sustainability>, <https://sustain.sfsu.edu/>, Climate Action Plan: <https://sustain.sfsu.edu/climate-change>. How is sustainability envisioned, defined, measured? How does it compare with approaches we studied?

**Marine plastics:** Describe how and to what extent marine plastics pose negative externalities on society. Identify 2-3 specific policy efforts somewhere in world to reduce plastics in the marine environment. What standards are they using, what is having the most impact?

**Compare California's cap-and-trade program with EU ETS cap and trade program:** Present the basic background on California's cap-and-trade program. Critique, with evidence, how the market has worked since inception and successes/weaknesses. Make sure to include resources from CARB. Explain how the EU ETS cap and trade program differs from California's in terms of coverage, mandatory v. voluntary participation, allowance of offsets, goals and rules and the success or challenges it has encountered.

**Carbon tax in the US:** Describe proposed legislation on carbon pricing in US and latest status report, pros and cons, who for and against. Be sure to include any arguments around tax incidence and competitiveness. (1 folder article to help you get started.)

**Climate change lawsuits against oil companies in California:** summarize the arguments on both sides, give latest status report.

**Valuation techniques:** Report on a study that has used one of the valuation methods we covered in class. Go to <https://www.evri.ca/en>. The first page allows a broad search. I am open to any of those categories. Once you are past the first search page, you will have options for more refined searches:

- Refine the search down to "Journals" only.
- Then choose one of following paths:
  - Valuation technique
    - Stated preference:
      - Choice experiments
      - Contingent valuation: dichotomous choice or open-ended.
    - Revealed preference: travel cost or hedonic
  - Secondary/benefits transfer

**BP oil spill in Gulf:** research how contingent valuation methods were used to estimate natural resource damages from the BP Gulf oil spill.

**Find an article:** find an article from an environmental economics journal and explain and summarize the results so that everyone in class can understand. Article must be related to a core course concept.