

## **GVPT 273: Introduction to Environmental Politics**

**Spring 2019**

**TuTh 12:30-1:20 in TYD 2109**

Syllabus v.1.0



### **Professor**

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### **Teaching Assistant**

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### **Course Description:**

This course provides an introduction to the study of environmental politics. We will examine the political character of current environmental problems, attempt to comprehend their causes and discuss how governments, organizations, movements, communities and individuals are responding to our ecological predicament. To that end, we will take a thematic approach to the study of environmental policymaking, identifying the guiding principles that inform policy choices and the different tools available to policymakers to address these challenges. Particular attention is paid to policymaking in the United States, with a focused examination of public opinion, federalism and the roles of the three branches of the federal government. Although the course takes a thematic approach to the study of environmental politics, students will learn about significant pieces of legislation, country experiences, and environmental issues through examples presented in the readings, lecture and discussions. Upon completion of the course, students should have a better understanding of environmental policymaking at every level, from the local to national to global, as well as a better understanding of the political and economic interests that compete for power in the policymaking process.

### **Course Reading (Required):**

- Dryzek, John S. *The Politics of The Earth*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Oxford UP: 2013.
- Additional scholarly articles as noted in the syllabus that can be accessed online or on the course website.
- You are encouraged to read a major daily newspaper such as the *Washington Post* or the *New York Times*. Staying informed on world news will help you apply the course material to current events.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to:

- Identify the competing ontological approaches to environmental problems and how they should be addressed;
- Understand the challenges posed by scientific uncertainty, risk and valuation in the policy process;
- Articulate the major environmental policymaking approaches and the strengths weaknesses of each strategy;
- Understand the role of US governmental institutions in forming environmental policy;
- Recognize the alternative environmental needs, priorities and values of other states in the global system.

### **Course Evaluation Criteria:**

1. Quiz #1: 10%
2. Quiz #2: 15%
3. Writing Assignment 1: 10%
4. Writing Assignment 2: 20%
5. Final Exam: 30%
6. Attendance and Participation: 15%

**Quizzes:** There will be two quizzes throughout the semester to assess your understanding and retention of the course material. Both quizzes will consist of multiple-choice and short answer (e.g., fill-in-the-blank) questions, and several short response questions that can be answered in approximately 1-2 paragraphs. These quizzes are designed to help you gauge your progress in the course and should help prepare you well for the final exam.

**Writing Assignments:** You have two short writing assignments due throughout the course. The general topics of the papers are included below. More detailed instructions including formatting, evaluation, and citation instructions will be provided separately.

#### **Paper Topic #1**

Write a three-page opinion-editorial that argues: (1) We are overestimating environmental threats or (2) We are underestimating environmental threats. Your goal is to establish a general frame of reference for how the public and policy makers should think about environmental policy in this decade.

#### **Paper Topic #2**

You work as a policy analyst for the Green Party of the United States. The Green Party plans to run a candidate in the next presidential election and wants you to help prepare the Party's environmental platform agenda. Your task is to write a 1250 word [5 pages double spaced] essay that addresses the following questions:

- What do you believe are the two most pressing environmental problems we face today? Describe the causes and consequences of these problems and explain why you chose them over other possible candidates.
- What are the most serious impediments to devising and implementing more effective environmental policies for coping with the problems you described? Present an action plan for overcoming these impediments.

**Final Exam:** The final exam will be cumulative and will cover the material covered in class lectures, readings, and discussions. The exam will consist of three essays. The exam questions will require you to synthesize and analyze the body of knowledge covered over the course period, but a study guide will be provided ahead of time so that the topics will not catch you off guard. The key to success is keeping up with the readings and discussions throughout the course.

**Attendance and Participation:** Your participation will be measured by your attendance AND your involvement in classroom discussions. You must come to discussion section each week prepared to discuss the material. The breakdown of the 15 points will be 10 points for attendance and 5 points for participation in discussion section. If students have questions about their performance in section, it is their responsibility to proactively communicate with their teaching assistant for feedback. For students who find class participation challenging, please reach out early in the course to talk about your concerns so that we can work with you on developing strategies to overcome this.

Participation grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

5 = highly effective participant; insightful questions/comments; obviously prepared for class each day.

4-3 = consistent participant; thoughtful questions/comments; normally prepared for class.

3-2 = occasional participant; regularly attends class, sporadic involvement in discussions, often based more on personal opinion than careful reading and analysis of the material.

2-1 = observer; regularly attends class but usually does not get involved in class discussions.

1-0 = occasional visitor to the class; sporadic attendance, no participation.

### **Grading Scale**

A = 93-100

C = 73-76

A- = 90-92

C- = 70-72

B+ = 87-89

D+ = 67-69

B = 83-86

D = 63-66

B- = 80-82

D- = 60-62

C+ = 77-79

F = < 60

### **Course Policies and Expectations**

1. Attendance is required for all lecture and discussion sessions. The quizzes and final exam will include material from the reading, lecture and sections, and students who do not attend all parts of the class are unlikely to be successful in the course. Students who miss a lecture should make arrangements to obtain the notes from a classmate and see the professor during office hours for any follow-up questions. Students who miss discussion section should communicate with their TA **in advance** of the class and bring any documentation necessary to excuse the absence on the day you return
2. Use of laptops is permitted in lecture, but only for the purpose of notetaking. Inappropriate or unauthorized use as observed by the professor or teaching assistants will count against your participation grade for the course. I reserve the right to prohibit laptops if their use becomes problematic or distracting to others.
3. Assignments that are turned in past the due date will be penalized **one letter grade per day** for each day or a fraction thereof that the assignment is late.
4. It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:
  - Academic integrity
  - Student and instructor conduct
  - Accessibility and accommodations
  - Attendance and excused absences
  - Grades and appeals
  - Copyright and intellectual property
5. Please visit <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html> for the Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

## **Course Structure:**

*The reading/homework noted in italics should be completed \*before\* coming to class that day.*

## **Module 1: The Environmental Problem**

### **Week 1: Overview – What is the Environment?**

- Jan 29 Course Introduction and Syllabus Review  
- *No Reading Assigned*
- Jan 31 What is the Environment? Why do We Have Environmental Problems?  
- *“The Year That Humans First Began Radically Altering the Planet,” Vox*  
<https://www.vox.com/2015/4/2/8335915/anthropocene-debate>
- Section: *The State of the Environment*  
- *UNEP. “Global Environmental Outlook,” Please read the summary for Policy Makers,”* <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/global-environment-outlook-5> *This is a shorter version of the full report, which you can also obtain on this page if interested. Please jot down a few observations that you find interesting. As you read, consider: Why do we have these problems? What causes them? Is the problem human nature, economic incentives, culture, political institutions, some/all of these things or something else?*

*\*Section topics are subject to change based on the evolving needs of the course*

## **Module 2: Environmental Policy-Making: Guiding Principles**

### **Week 2: Values and Valuation: Environmental Ethics**

- Feb 5 Introduction to Environmental Ethics  
- *“Environmental Ethics,” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Available at:* <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-environmental/> *Read sections 1-5.*
- Feb 7 Placing a Value on the Environment  
- *Dryzek, Ch.2 and 3*
- Section: *Are the resources of the world limited? Evaluating the Promethean vs. Survivalist Approaches*

### **Week 3: Risk, Uncertainty and Technical Complexity**

- Feb 12 Measuring Risk  
- *Funtowicz, Silvio and Jerome R. Ravetz “Uncertainty, Complexity and Post-Normal Science,” Annual Review: Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry, Vol 13, No. 12.*
- Feb 14 The Limits of our Data: Analysis of the Toxics Release Inventory  
- *Explore this website and learn about the TRI:* <https://www.epa.gov/toxics-release-inventory-tri-program>

- Please also review “Factors to Consider When Using TRI Data,” [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-06/documents/factors\\_to\\_consider\\_6.15.15\\_final.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-06/documents/factors_to_consider_6.15.15_final.pdf) Come to class with some thoughts on the following: How much faith do you have in the TRI data? What are some of its limitations?

Section: What are the implications of Funtowicz and Ravetz’s arguments? If “truth” is elusive, when can/should policy makers and the public mobilize resources?

#### **Week 4: Distributive Justice, Fairness and the Political Economy of the Environment**

- Feb 19 The Environmental Justice Movement
- *Global Justice and the Environment*. “What is Environmental Justice?” [https://www.staff.ncl.ac.uk/g.m.long/environmental\\_justice.html](https://www.staff.ncl.ac.uk/g.m.long/environmental_justice.html)
  - Claudio, Luz. “Standing on Principle: The Global Push for Environmental Justice,” *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 115(10) A500-503.
- Feb 21 Case Study: Food Justice
- Holt-Gimenez, Eric. “Food Security, Food Justice, or Food Sovereignty: Crisis, Food Movements, and Regime Change,” in *Cultivating Food Justice, Race, Class and Sustainability*.
  - Thompson, Paul B. “Food Security and Food Sovereignty,” excerpted in *Food, Ethics and Society*.
  - Declaration of Nyéléni

Section: Quiz #1

### **Module 3: Environmental Policy-Making: Approaches**

#### **Week 5: Command and Control Regulation**

- Feb 26 Administrative Rationalism
- Dryzek, Ch. 4, begin reading Rosenbaum
- Feb 28 Air and Water Pollution Regulation
- Rosenbaum, Walter A. “More Choice: The Battle Over Regulatory Economics.” *Environmental Politics and Policy*. Washington: CQ Press, p. 153-193 and “Command and Control in Action,” up to page 201.

Section: *Toxic Water: Can Regulators Solve the Problem?*

- Duhigg, Chris. “Toxic Water Series,” *New York Times* <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/toxic-waters/index.html>

#### **Week 6: Market-Based Solutions**

- March 5 Economic Rationalism
- Dryzek, Ch. 6
  - Robbins, et. al “Markets and Commodities,” in *Environment and Society: A Critical Introduction*
- March 7 Cost-Benefit Analysis

- Olmstead, Sheila M. "Applying Market Principles to Environmental Policy," in *Environmental Policy: New Directions for the Twenty-First Century*

Section: *The Ethics and Effectiveness of Carbon Pricing*

- Reading TBD

\*\*\*Paper 1 Due: Please upload to ELMS by midnight

### **Week 7: Community-Based Solutions**

March 12 Democratic Pragmatism

- Dryzek, Ch. 5
- *Analysis of the West Oakland Sustainability Indicators Project:*  
[http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/ceda/documents/report/oa\\_k030542.pdf](http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/ceda/documents/report/oa_k030542.pdf) You do not need to read this entire report, but please review its content and organization. Write down your thoughts on: What did this project achieve? What obstacles did this project overcome? How might we measure future success?

March 14 Reviewing the Approaches: Blended Approaches to Governance?

- Bakker, Karen. "The 'Commons' Versus the 'Commodity': Alter-Globalization, Anti-Privatization and the Human Right to Water in the Global South."
- Sabel et al. "Beyond Backyard Environmentalism: How Communities are Quietly Refashioning Environmental Regulation," *Boston Review*.

Section: *Reviewing the Approaches: Limits to Democracy?*

- Beeson, Mark. "The Coming of Environmental Authoritarianism," *Environmental Politics*, 19(2).

### **Week 8: Spring Break**

## **Module 4: Environmental Policy-Making in the US: History and Institutions**

### **Week 9: Environmental Policy-Making in the US (1): Social Movements and Public Opinion**

March 26 The Emergence of Environmentalism in the US

- Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. "A Fable for Tomorrow," and "The Obligation to Endure"
- Montrie, Chad. (2018) *The Myth of Silent Spring: Rethinking the Origins of American Environmentalism*. "Introduction"

March 28 Public Opinion in the US

- Brulle et al., "Shifting Public Opinion on Climate Change: An Empirical Assessment of Factors Influencing Concern over Climate Change in the U.S., 2002-2010."
- Kahan, "Why We are Poles Apart on Climate Change"

Section: *What factors seem to influence political decision-making around the environment in the United States? Think back to earlier themes around environmental justice, valuation and risk. How do these play out?*

- Davis, Mike. "The Case for Letting Malibu Burn," *Environmental History Review*. Vol. 10, No. 2, pp.1-36.

### **Week 10: Environmental Policy-Making in the US (2): State and Federal Governance**

- April 2                      The EPA and the Executive Branch
- Kraft, Michael and Normal J. Vig, "U.S. Environmental Policy: Achievements and New Directions," in *Environmental Policy: New Directions for the Twenty-First Century*
  - Bartlett, Robert V. "Rationality and the Logic of the National Environmental Policy Act," *Environmental Professional* 8: 105-111.
- April 4                      Federalism and Environmental Protection
- Rabe, Barry G. "Racing to the Top, The Bottom, or the Middle of the Pack?: The Evolving State Government Role in Environmental Protection" in *Environmental Policy: New Directions for the Twenty-First Century*
- Section:                      What are the strengths and weaknesses of the US political system when it comes to environmental protection?

### **Week 11: Politics of Environmental Policy in the US (3): Legislation, Influences, and Legal Challenges**

- April 9                      Congress and Congressional Influence
- Kraft, Michael "Environmental Policy in Congress," in *Environmental Policy: New Directions for the Twenty-First Century*
  - Mayer, Jane. "Covert Operations," *New Yorker*
- April 11                      Defining Policy through Litigation
- O'Leary, Rosemary. "Environmental Policy in the Courts," and in *Environmental Policy: New Directions for the Twenty-First Century*
  - "Taking Trump to Court" (excerpt) "Environmental Advocacy at the Dawn of the Trump Era" in *Environmental Policy: New Directions for the Twenty-First Century*
- Section:                      Quiz #2

## **Module 5: Global Environmental Politics**

### **Week 12: Global Environmental Governance**

- April 16                      Sustainable Development and the SDGs
- Conca, Ken and Geoffrey Dabelko. 2015. "Introduction: From Stockholm to Sustainability?" in *Green Planet Blues, 5<sup>th</sup> edition*
  - Lele, Sharachandra. "Sustainable Development: A Critical Review," in *Green Planet Blues, 5<sup>th</sup> edition*
  - United Nations, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*
- April 18                      Global Climate Change: Successes and Setbacks
- UNFCC Timeline: <http://unfccc.int/timeline/>



- Clemencon, Raymond "The Two Sides of the Paris Climate Agreement: Dismal Failure or Historic Breakthrough?" *Journal of Environment and Development*, 25:1.

Section: *The Promise of the "Green Economy," Discussion of Contemporary US Politics*

**Week 13: North-South Issues**

- April 23                      Pollution Havens and the Trade in Waste
- Drezner, Daniel. "Bottom Feeders," *Foreign Policy*.
  - Robbins et al. "E-Waste" in *Environment and Society*

- April 25                      *Do Richer Countries Place a Greater Value on Environmental Protection? Rethinking the Environmental Kuznet's Curve*
- Guham Ramachandra "The Paradox of Global Environmentalism," *Current History*.
  - Inglehart, Ronald. 1995. "Public Support for Environmental Protection: Objective Problems and Subjective Values in 43 Societies." *PS, Vol. 28, No. 1*: p. 57-71.

*Review the following websites:*

- Website of the World Values Survey: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>
- Pew Research Global Attitudes Project: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/10/16/greatest-dangers-in-the-world/>
- Gallup Polling on Climate Change: <http://www.gallup.com/poll/168236/americans-show-low-levels-concern-global-warming.aspx>

Section: *Follow-up Discussion on Values, Priorities and Development*

**\*\*\*Paper #2 Due**

**Module 6: Environmental Politics in Comparative Perspective**

**Week 14: Asia and Africa: Selected Cases and Topics**

- April 30                      Case Study: China
- Guest lecture, Readings TBD

- May 2                              Case Study: Malawi
- African Center for Biodiversity: *Running to Stand Still: Small-Scale Farmers and the Green Revolution in Malawi*.

- Section: *Analysis of Small Island States*
- Briguglio, Lino. "Small Island States and Their Economic Vulnerabilities," *World Development*. 23:9.

### **Week 15: South American and Europe: Selected Cases and Topics**

May 7

Case Study: Brazil

- COICA. "Two Agendas on Amazon Development," in *Green Planet Blues*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition
- WGDEA. "Globalization and the Environment: Lessons from the Americas," in *Green Planet Blues*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition.

May 9

Case Study: European Union

- Dryzek, Ch. 8
- Muller-Rommel, Ferdinand. "The Lifespan and the Political Performance of Green Parties in Western Europe," in *Green Parties in National Governments*.

Section:

*Discussion of Comparative Systems: What are the commonalities and differences in environmental needs, priorities and values?*

### **Week 16: The Future of Environmentalism**

May 14

The "Promise" of a Green Economy

- McMichael, Philip. "Contemporary Contradictions of the Global Development Project: Geopolitics, Global Ecology and the 'Development Climate,'" *Third World Quarterly* 30:1.

**Final Exam: Tuesday May 21, 1:30-3:30pm**