

Introduction to Environmental Politics
GVPT 273
CRN: (3 credit hours)
Tuesdays and Thursday 12:30-1:20p
Spring 2022

Instructor: Dr. Conny S. Kazungu
Department of Government and Politics
Email: ckazungu@umd.edu
Office Hours: Zoom by appointment
Office Location: TYD 1127D

Class Meeting Location: SQH 1120
Teaching Assistant (TA): Kathleen Cioffi
E-mail: kcioffi@terpmail.umd.edu
Teaching Assistant (TA): Paul Rapuzzi
E-mail: paulrapuzzi@gmail.com

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to environmental politics. We will examine current environmental issues, attempt to understand the role of governments, organizations and individuals take in responding to the environmental dilemma. We will look at environmental policymaking including the guiding principles that inform environmental policies, and, the different tools available to policymakers to address these challenges. Special emphasis on political representation, environmental justice domestically and internationally. We will also explore case studies on various countries, and how historical and contemporary political institutions, and natural resource wealth shape environmental concerns.

Upon completion of this course, students will have a better understanding of approaches to managing the environment, the socio-political and economic actors and other interests that compete for power in the policymaking process.

Course Text:

- There is no required textbook for this course. Assigned readings will be noted in the syllabus and can accessed online.
- You are encouraged to be in touch with current events as this will help you apply the course material to real time environmental issues facing our country and world today. Furthermore, discussion sessions will often times include current events. A list of reliable newspaper sources include (but are not limited to):

The Washington Post
The Wall Street Journal
The New York Times
Al Jazeera News
NPR
BBC News

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to :

- Identify the competing theoretical approaches to environmental problems and how they should be addressed.
- Understand the origins of environmentalism and how they should be addressed
- Identify major environmental policymaking approaches including the strengths and weaknesses of each strategy
- Understand the challenges of equity and representation in environmental politics at both the domestic and international arena

Course Evaluation:

Test # 1: 10%

Test #2: 10%

Test # 3: 10%

Writing Assignment I: 10%

Writing Assignment II: 20%

Final Exam: 25%

Weekly Discussion Session, Attendance and Participation: 15%

Tests: We will have three tests throughout the semester. The main goal of these tests are to gauge your progress in the course and help you prepare well for the final exam. These tests will assess your understanding and retention of the course material. The tests will consist of multiple-choice and true/false questions. Each test will also have one short essay question which can be answered in approximately 1-2 paragraphs. Tests will be taken online during the scheduled class time.

Writing Assignments : You will have two writing assignments on this class. One memo which is addressed to your local or state representative. The memo will be 2-3 pages.

The second paper will be a 5-page writing assignment due in this course. You will also receive a separate detailed instruction sheet which will include formatting, evaluation, and citation instructions for both papers.

- **Option #1:** The purpose of this assignment is to critically interrogate the role of non-governmental organizations in the environment field through one specific case study. Focusing on one NGO from a list provided, answer the following central question: ***How is your non-governmental organization influencing action on crucial environmental issues?*** Your analysis will address the organization's history, strategic approach, and impact on policy and awareness.

OR

- **Option #2:** Select a case of environmental (in)justice from a list of cases provided to you. (You may also suggest your own example with approval from the instructor/TA.) Research this topic and formulate an argument about how principles of environmental justice apply to this case. Explain the background, actors involved, and whether the outcome fits within your definition of "justice."

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 multiple-choice, true/false and two short essay questions. The final exam will be in person during finals week.

Attendance and Participation : Your participation will be graded based on attendance and participation in discussion sessions. Discussion sessions are held weekly on course material covered. **You must attend your assigned 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.

Course Expectations:

1. *Attendance:* Attendance is required for *all* lectures and discussion sessions. You are allowed TWO excused or unexcused absences in the semester. Beyond this, a written note or evidence supporting why you are absent from class/discussion section will be expected.

- Timely attendance to lectures and discussion section is expected and students who are more than **15 minutes late** will be marked as absent for that class period/ discussion section.
- Students who miss lectures should make arrangements to obtain notes from a classmate and see the TA/professor who any follow-up questions.
- Students who miss discussion sections should communicate with their TA in advance of the class and provide any documentation necessary to excuse the absence on the day they return.

2. *Late Assignments:* Assignments that are turned in past the due date will be penalized one-half letter grade per day for each day or fraction thereof that the assignment is late. Students are expected to **submit all assignments in ELMS**.
3. *Email Communication:* Please feel free to email the professor/TA with any personal concerns or small points of clarification that you may have. We are happy to meet with you to discuss the course material and assignments, but due to the large class size, detailed explanations may not be able to be provided over email.
4. *Grading:* Students will need to meet with the TA first regarding any additional feedback or concerns on assignments. Requests for re-grading must be made to the TA first in writing, clearly specifying why the request is being made. The TA will then review the request and, if it is determined that the assignment needs revision , can proceed to update the grade received. If this doesn't not result in a satisfactory outcome, students may meet with Dr. Kazungu for additional feedback and request a second re-grade in writing. Please note that if a second re-grade is requested, Dr. Kazungu's evaluation will be final grade submitted for the student and maybe lower or higher than the initial TA grade.
5. *COVID-19.* We are living in unprecedented times. The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on each of us in unique ways. If you are struggling in any way during this time, please reach out to us. We do not need to know every detail of what you may experience but we do want to ensure you have a high-quality academic experience during this period. Please do not wait until you have fallen behind to reach out to us rather do so soon as you can.
6. Please visit the Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies available [here](#) and follow up with me if you have questions. The University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses include topics like:

-Academic integrity

-Accessibility and accommodations

- Grades and appeals
- Student and instructor conduct

Grading Scale

A -90-100

B -80-90

C -70-80

D-60-70

F-BELOW 60

Schedule (Subject to change as I see Fit)

Week 1: The Environmental Problem

January 25th : An overview of the Syllabus and course expectations.

No assigned readings

January 27th : Why Do We Have Environmental Problems? The State of the Environment

What you can read:

"The Year That Humans First Began Radically Altering the Planet,"

<https://www.vox.com/2015/4/2/8335915/anthropocene-debate>

<https://www.unep.org/resources/global-environment-outlook-6>

What you need to do: -List down a few observations that you find interesting

-Consider WHY we have these problems

-What causes these problems?

-Are these problems caused by human nature, economic incentives, cultural or political?

****No discussion session this week**

Week 2: Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations

February 1st : Introduction to Environmental Ethics

What you need to read: *"Environmental Ethics," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Available at:*

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-environmental/> Read sections 1-5.

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February 3rd: Sustainable Development in Theory and in Practice

What you need to read: *United Nations, Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

Week 3: Complex Environmental Problems, Policy-Making & Uncertainty

February 8th : Discourses in Environmental Politics : Survivalism & Prometheanism

What you can read: Dryzek, John S. "Chapter 1: Making Sense of Earth's Politics: A Discourse Approach" in *The Politics of The Earth*. 3rd edition, Oxford UP: 2013.

February 10th : Risk and Complexity and TRI Case Study

To learn about the TRI: <https://www.epa.gov/toxics-release-inventory-tri-program>

Please Review "Factors to Consider When Using TRI Data"

Available here: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-06/documents/factors_to_consider_6.15.15_final.pdf

Discussion Section: Come to Class Prepared to Discuss the following :

- How much faith do you have in the TRI data?
- What are some of its limitations?
- If "truth" or precise data is elusive, when can/should policy makers and the public mobilize resources?

Discussion Section: Key Topics: *Are the resources of the world limited? Evaluating the Promethean vs. Survivalist Approaches*

**Select current event article*

Week 4: Market Based Approaches: Exploring Carbon Projects, Carbon Labelling

February 15th : Carbon Projects: Revisiting the Promise of Carbon Labelling

What you need to read: Revisiting the Promise of Carbon Labelling

<https://www-nature-com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/articles/s41558-021-01271-8.pdf>

February 17th : Carbon Projects : Carbon projects Focus (Southeast Asia)

What you need to read: Co-benefits of forest carbon projects in Southeast Asia

<https://www-nature-com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/articles/s41893-022-00849-0.pdf>

****Discussion Session ****

Week 5: Policy-Making Approaches

February 22nd : Market -Based Approaches. “Leave it to the Market”

What you need to read: Why Carbon Pricing Isn't Working: Good Idea in Theory, Failing in Practice

- Ball, J. (2018). Why Carbon Pricing Isn't Working: Good Idea in Theory, Failing in Practice. *Foreign Affairs*, 97(4), 134–146. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44822220>

February 24th : Test # 1 ONLINE (covers material until Feb. 17th)

Week 6: Environmental Management.

March 1st : Bottom-Up Approaches to Environmental Management.

The Role of Civic Environmentalism in the Pursuit of Sustainable Communities

-What you need to read:

Agyeman, J., & Angus, B. (2003). The role of civic environmentalism in the pursuit of sustainable communities. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 46(3), 345–363.

March 3rd: Case Study: Analysis of the West Oakland Sustainability Indicators Project.

-What you need to know: You don't need to read the entire report but review the organization and its content.

<http://www2.oaklandnet.com/oakca1/groups/ceda/documents/report/oak030542.pdf>

Discussion Section: Be prepared with the following points:

- What was the purpose of this project?
 - What did it achieve?
 - What obstacles did this project overcome?
- How might we measure future success?

**Select current event article*

Week 7: Environmental Politics in the United States

March 8th: Public Opinion and the Media

What you can read: *Slimak, Michael W. and Thomas Dietz "Personal Values, Beliefs, and Ecological Risk Perception" Risk Analysis, Vol 26, no. 6, 2006.*

March 10th: Science and Denialism

What you can read: *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."*

Mayer, Jane. "Covert Operations," The New Yorker, August 23, 2010.

Kahan, "Why We Are Poles Apart on Climate Change"

Discussion Section: *Discussion Final Analysis Paper (Due April 28th)*

**Select current event article*

Week 8: Environmental Justice

March 15th: Environmental Justice : Theories and Principles

What you need to read:

Global Justice and the Environment. "What is Environmental Justice?"
https://www.staff.ncl.ac.uk/g.m.long/environmental_justice.html

March 17th : Environmental Justice: Movements and Cases

What you need to read:

Claudio, Luz. "Standing on Principle: The Global Push for Environmental Justice," Environmental Health Perspectives, 115(10) A500-503.

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

***Duhigg, Chris. "Toxic Water Series," *New York Times* -- scan several articles of interest to you:
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/toxic-waters/index.html>

Discussion Section: *How does power and privilege affect access to environmental protection in the United States? Discussion of the Times article*

Week 9

Spring Break March 20th- 27th No Class

Week 10 International Environmental Justice

March 29th : Pollution Havens, Exploitation and the Trade of Waste

What you can read:

Robbins et al. "E-Waste" in Environment and Society

March 31st : Test # 2 (Covers material until March 17th)

**** No discussion session this week**

****Memorandum Assignment is Due on ELMS by midnight *****

Week 11

April 5th: Environmental Protection and International Law

What you can read:

Texaco/Chevron lawsuits (re Ecuador): <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/texacochevron-lawsuits-re-ecuador>

April 12th : Intergenerational Equity and Climate Change

Keefe, Patrick Radden. "Reversal of Fortune," The New Yorker, January 9, 2012.

*******Discussion Session:**

Intergenerational Justice

**Select current event article*

Week 13 Global Environmental Politics

April 19th: Wealth and Environmentalism: Rethinking the EKC

- Guha, R. (2000). *The paradox of global environmentalism. Current History*, 99(640), 367–370..
- Inglehart, Ronald. 1995. “Public Support for Environmental Protection: Objective Problems and Subjective Values in 43 Societies.” *PS, Vol. 28, No. 1: p. 57-71.*

April 21st : Global Environmental Governance

What you can read:

Environmental Regimes: Successes and Setbacks on Climate and Ozone

UNFCCC 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.

Discussion Session:

**Select current event article*

Week 14 : Global Environmental Politics: The Environmental & the Politics of Development

April 26th: Transboundary Environmental Politics

Case Study: Malawi

- *African Center for Biodiversity: Running to Stand Still: Small-Scale Farmers and the Green Revolution in Malawi, Executive Summary.*

-Unintended consequences of climate change mitigation for African river basins

What you need to Read: <https://www-nature-com.proxy-um.researchport.umd.edu/articles/s41558-021-01262-9.pdf>

April 28th: Test # 3 (covers material until April 21st)

**** No discussion session this week**

*******Final Paper Due: Please upload to ELMS by 11:59pm*****

Week 15: Global Environmental Politics: Environmental Politics in Comparative Perspective

May 3rd: Case Study of the European Union vs. the United States Approaches to Environmental Issues

Case study: Analysis of Small Island States

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

May 5th:The Future of the Environment

What you can read: The Challenge of Achieving Justice and Ecological Health

Arias-Maldonado, M. (2020). "Sustainability in the Anthropocene: Between Extinction and Populism," *Sustainability*, 12, 2538.

Discussion Session:

****Select current event article***

Final Exam : Available on Tuesday, May 17th @1:30-3:30p

