ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY  
(Environmental Studies/Political Science 357)  
FALL 2019 – 3 CREDIT HOURS

University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh

Fall Semester 2019

Class Meets: TR 1:20pm – 2:50pm Sage 3224

Professor George Waller

Department of Political Science

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: “This course examines the process in which environmental policy is made. The course will introduce students to interdisciplinary approaches used to analyze environmental problems. The role of political actors, scientific experts and the citizenry in identifying problems and developing solutions is considered. Emphasis is also placed on the use of scientific information and values in the decision-making process. Topics to be covered include major US and international legislation protecting air and water quality, climate change, natural resource extraction, agricultural production, and land management.”  

Prerequisite: Political Science 105 or Environmental Studies 261 or consent of instructor.  

Cross-listed: Political Science 357/Environmental Studies 357. Students may receive credit for only one of the two cross-listed courses.

COURSE OVERVIEW: We will review a variety of substantive environmental public policy issues and consider current government policies that address those issues. In order to do that intelligently we begin with an overview of the political and economic theories that underlie policy formation, adoption, and implementation. We will identify major institutional and political actors that shape U.S. domestic policies, and explore the interplay between politics, economics, and the underlying values of policy decisions designed by government to serve the wants and needs of citizens. We will also discuss the criteria for evaluating the performance of both the processes and the outcomes of public policies. Our course will include an analysis of the challenges that are part of the emerging politics of global environmentalism.

COURSE READINGS: The following texts are required of all students:


Furthermore, select readings from journals or book chapters are in the course schedule and will be made available to students. Also, current event information may be introduced throughout the semester both electronically and via class lecture. It is important that students read the material throughout the semester as the grading structure places emphasis on participation and interaction.
TECHNOLOGY PROHIBITION: Technology use is prohibited in the classroom as it is detrimental to learning and skill development. Cell phones should be silenced and located in bags or pockets. Earpieces are also likewise banned. Class will stop when technology is in use during lecture, discussions, and presentations, with students losing participation points for the day. Students who continuously slow down class by utilizing technology will be asked to leave.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The learning objectives for this class are divided into three categories: knowledge, analysis & communication. Students will be pushed to advance themselves in all three categories over the next 14 weeks.

Knowledge: “Any fool can know. The point is to understand.” – Albert Einstein

1) Describe and understand the political process, and how institutions create policies.
2) Understand the role of scientists in the policy process, and how information is politicized.
3) Understand the specifics of policies enacted by governments with some degree of depth.

Analysis: “The number of those who undergo the fatigue of judging for themselves is very small indeed.” – Richard Brinsley Sheridan

4) Identify and analyze environmental problems and identify potential solutions.
5) Identify and analyze the trade-offs related to government action/inaction.

Communication: “The art of writing is the art of discovering what you believe.” – Gustave Flaubert

6) Effectively communicate, both orally and in writing, high-quality arguments that support your beliefs, being careful to ensure that they can withstand outside scrutiny.
7) Engage in difficult, yet respectful, conversations with those who either share or do not share your beliefs.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

TAKE-HOME “ESSAYS”: On three occasions, students will receive a take-home essay that requires them to utilize content from the class and readings to fact check prompts presented by the instructor. The essays are weighted so that more emphasis is placed on the latter essays (40% of final grade at 8%, 14%, and 18%, respectively)
Learning Objectives: The essays are intended to assess factual knowledge about environmental policy (Objectives 1-3).

GROUP PAPER: Students will be assigned into groups to complete an assigned task. The project tasks students with an exploration of state environmental policy, drafting a report on an assigned state’s activity plus presenting that information to the class. More information on this assignment will be made available and discussed in class. (15% of final grade)

Learning Objectives: The group paper assesses communication skills and reflects the ability of students to work cooperatively on projects (Objectives 6 & 7) while also learning about environmental policies (Objectives 1-3).

ANALYTICAL PAPER: Every student will individually write an analytical paper (roughly 2,500 – 3,000 words) that explores a particular environmental problem. The topic is of the student’s choice, although instructor approval is required. The task is to discuss a problem, describe government’s existing response to the problem, develop three solutions to the problem, and analyze both policies according to criteria from class.

Students will take turns formally presenting components of their paper before the due date, obtaining feedback from the class and instructor. Students are expected to participate and engage in critical discussions with their peers when not presenting. This is called your advocacy pitch in the course schedule below and constitutes 10% of the analytical paper grade.

Additional details on the assignment will be provided in class, including a template and grading rubric. Students must use the template for the assignment to be graded. (25% of final grade)

Learning Objectives: In the process of drafting the paper, students are demonstrating critical thinking skills (Objective 4 & 5) and practicing communicating ideas through written and oral presentations (Objective 6 & 7).

PRESENTATIONS: On two occasions, students be required to offer the class a presentation. One will be a solo presentation of environmental policies in other countries (no paper required, just a PPT). The second presentation will be of a research article from a policy journal (called research presentation in the course schedule). More details will be offered in class. (5% each)

Learning Objectives: By connecting new material to the readings, students are developing analytical skills (Objectives 4 & 5) while also developing communication skills during the presentation (Objective 6).

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION:
Students are expected to attend and participate in class. Expectations for participation vary depending on class-style and will be communicated to the class at the start of each day. Simply coming to class but not participating is usually not sufficient to obtain participation points. The lowest three participation scores will be dropped. (10% of final grade)

Learning Objectives: The assignment requires students to gain familiarity with government policies (Objectives 1 - 3). Group interaction allows for civil debate and communication of knowledge (Objectives 6 and 7).
ADDITIONAL CLASS POLICIES

GRADING FORMAT
All assignments are scored according to a 0--100% scale and weighted accordingly to the distribution outlined above. The grading scale follows the standard 93/90/87 format (e.g., 8082% = B- … 83% to 87% = B … 87 – 89% = B+ … and so forth). For purposes of the final grade, fraction scores are rounded accordingly. That is, a final score of 91.7% is rounded to 92% while 91.3% is rounded to 91%. The rounded score is final and not negotiable.

DUE DATES & MAKE-UP POLICY
This syllabus establishes timelines for the class and provides notice that assignments are due at specified dates and times. Timely completion of the assignments is expected. There will be a 15% penalty if an assignment is late. No work will be accepted after two days of the original due date without a detailed, documented explanation. Waivers: Extreme circumstances do occur, such as a family crisis and personal hospitalization. The instructor will work with students on a case-by-case basis to determine whether a waiver of the make-up policy above is warranted. Under all circumstances, students are expected to show progress toward their assignment in order to receive a waiver.

CITATION METHOD
The citation method is at the discretion of the student (APA, MLA, or other), although the student is expected to be consistent in the citation method throughout the paper. The Purdue Online Writing Lab has extensive information on how to properly cite references.

EARLY ALERT
The instructor will utilize “Early Alert” to notify students of their class grade approximately one month into the course. The purpose of the alert is to notify students of their progress early in the semester. There will be ample opportunity for students to make adjustments and receive a satisfactory grade even if Early Alert suggests a low score.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS
The Dean of Students Office coordinates accommodations for students with disabilities. If students feel they require accommodations, please make sure to coordinate with their office.

CLASS COURTESY
With the class discussions, there is ample opportunity for students to interact with others. Under all circumstances, students are expected to respect the ideas of their colleagues. Friendly debate is encouraged, but personal attacks and other forms of incivility will not be tolerated.

EXCESSIVE QUOTING
Quoting a source directly is acceptable if proper citation is provided. However, quotations are used to provide emphasis or to help an author strengthen the argument. As such, quotes should be used sparingly. Papers are allowed only two quotations of no more than two sentences each.

REMINDER FOR PS MAJORS
You should take Political Methodology (245) in either the sophomore or 1st semester junior year. PS245 is a prerequisite for the senior capstone, Political Analysis (PS 401) and can’t be taken concurrently.
DISCLOSURE STATEMENT
“Students are advised to see the following URL for disclosures about essential consumer protection items required by the Students Right to Know Act of 1990:
https://uwosh.edu/financialaid/consumer-information/.”

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All work submitted for this class is expected to be original and in your own voice. This policy is in accordance with the student code of conduct within the University of Wisconsin system: “Academic Honesty is fundamental to the University, and academic misconduct is taken very seriously. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others’ academic endeavors” (UWS, 14.01). Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, the failure to follow instructions, and plagiarism.

Of special emphasis is plagiarism, which consists of using the ideas, phrases, theories, and/or arguments of others without proper citation. Plagiarism may include failing to reference a source when paraphrasing the work of another, or it may include copying and pasting information straight from a source without quotations or a reference. Without proper quotations and citations, writers are claiming the work of others as their own. This behavior is unethical, possibly criminal in some contexts, and has real-world consequences. The library offers further information to help students identify plagiarism.

All papers for this course will be submitted electronically. The papers will undergo a plagiarism check via Turnitin. The penalty for plagiarism varies by the severity of the violation. If the offense is minor, the instructor will work with the student to correct the oversight. However, moderate to severe violations will be reported to the university. For these latter offenses, the first assignment found in violation will receive a zero. If there is a repeat offense, the student will receive a zero for the class.

CLASS SCHEDULE

The course will proceed as follows. Adjustments will be made pending how the class progresses, current events, and the extent of class discussion.

| Week of Sept 2 | Introduction: A quick introduction to public policy, an overview of the syllabus, additional expectations for the course, and a framework for understanding why governments take action. Key terminology will also be introduced. | Read: “Are Your Political Opponents Crazy?” | Read: Rosenbaum, Chapter One |
| Week of Sept 9 | **The Actors I**: Review the powers of the “Three Big” actors in more depth. What can they do to solve environmental problems?  
➢ **Read**: Rosenbaum, Chapters 2 & 3 |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week of Sept 16 | **The Actors II**: A focus on the states, which are sovereign in our system of government and capable of making their own policies.  
| Week of Sept 23 | **Policy Theory**: An overview of how policy and laws are created in the United States, with an emphasis on the constitutional basis for taking government action.  
| Week of Sept 30 | **Social Movements & Public Opinion**: In a democracy, decision-makers want to get re-elected. Review the process in which the public mobilizes to get the attention of decision-makers.  

*** First take-home essay distributed Tuesday, due Saturday by midnight |
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<th>Week of Oct 7</th>
<th><strong>Global Movements</strong>: Consideration is given to how other countries and global organizations move to shape policy in the United States.</th>
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<td>***** Short presentations on international activities ***</td>
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Week of Oct 14 | **Policy Tools & Decision Making:** Review the types of policy tools available to decision-makers. What strategies are available for creating policy? Is science important?
Read: Rosenbaum, Chapter 4  
Read: Rosenbaum, Chapter 5

*** Group Writing Assignment Due Wednesday by 11:59 PM  
*** Group Presentations of Writing Assignment begin on Thursday

Week of Oct 21 | **Air and Water Policy:** An overview of the Clean Air Act and Safe Drinking Water Act – the two key pieces of US legislation.
Read: Rosenbaum, Chapter 6  
Read: Clean Air Act (Bearden et al., p. 3 – 17)  
Read: Safe Drinking Water Act (Bearden et al., p. 39 – 49)

*** Research presentations and advocacy pitches each day

Week of Oct 28 | **Energy Policy:** An overview of how energy resources are harvested, with some emphasis on hydraulic fracturing. Emphasis placed on political battles over how to use public lands, as well as the arguments from resource extractors, ranchers, and environmentalists.
➢ Read: Rosenbaum, Chapter 8

*** Research presentations and advocacy pitches continue  
*** Second take-home essay distributed Tuesday, due Saturday by midnight

Week of Nov 4 | **Land & Agriculture:** Review the rules and regulations placed on the agriculture industry in order to ensure public health. Also, consider the role of genetically modified crops in agriculture.
Read: Rosenbaum, Chapter 9  
Read: CERCLA (Bearden et al., p. 67 – 88)

*** Research presentations and advocacy pitches continue

Week of Nov 11 | **Climate Change I:** Review what is known about climate change and how governments are reacting to the information, including various international agreements.
➢ Read: Rosenbaum, Chapter 10

*** Research presentations and advocacy pitches continue
| Week of Nov 18 | Climate Change II: Continue climate change discussions.  
|               | *** Advocacy pitches & research presentations continue  
|               | *** Third take-home essay distributed Tuesday, due Saturday by midnight |
| Week of Nov 25 | Climate Change II: Continue climate change discussion.  
|               | *** Advocacy pitches & research presentations continue |
| Week of Dec 2  | Miscellaneous Policy: Cover miscellaneous policy areas that might not have been touched on above, including fishing and population growth.  
|               | ➢ Read: Trade versus the Environment (handout)  
|               | ➢ Read: Ocean Dumping Act (Bearden et al., p. 34 – 39)  
|               | *** Advocacy pitches & research presentations |
| Week of Dec 9  | Wrap Up & Finish Papers  
|               | *** Final analytical paper due Thursday by 5:00 PM |