Course description

Public policies to protect natural resources and the environment are among the most important and controversial issues in local, state, and national government. Social science theories and methods help explain why and how American governments regulate the environment. After introducing basic frameworks for understanding environmental policy problems, the course examines public opinion on environmental issues and environmentalism as a social movement. We also explore the ways that major institutions of American government—executives, bureaucracies, courts, legislatures, and federalism—shape environmental policy. Students will learn about the classic models of environmental governance, emerging research on environmental politics, and important analytical methods for evaluating environmental governance.

It is worth noting what this course is not. This is not a course on environmental law, economics, policy analysis, or normative theory, though we will deal with all of these topics. Comparative and international environmental politics are important and worthy of study, but this course is principally about the United States. While the course engages current and ongoing environmental issues, it is not an advocacy course. Finally, this is not a course on the biology, ecology, geology, physics, or chemistry of environmental protection. The severity of various environmental problems will be largely left aside—we won’t debate whether anthropogenic global warming is real and how much it matters, for example—except inasmuch as controversy over environmental science bear on the political issues at hand.

Course learning outcomes

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Understand how political behavior and political institutions shape American environmental policy.
- Identify the governance regimes that regulate air pollution, water quality, hazardous waste, endangered species, and greenhouse gases in the United States.
- Advocate effectively for sound governance of environmental quality.
Credit hours
This course counts for three credits.

**How credit hours are met by the course.** One hour (i.e. 50 minutes) of classroom or direct faculty/instructor instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week over approximately 15 weeks, or an equivalent amount of engagement over a different number of weeks.

Requisites
Sophomore standing. The course assumes basic knowledge about the structure of American government at the national, state, and local levels. No specific knowledge of economics is required, but students with no background in economics may struggle with some concepts and are urged to pick up optional texts on microeconomics.

Instructional modality
This course is conducted in-person, with two 75-minute meetings each week.

**Regular & substantive student-instructor interaction.** This course meets the regular and substantive student-instructor interaction requirement through direct instruction, answering questions about the course content, facilitating discussion, and providing feedback on student work.

Most class meetings will include a significant lecture with discussion or other interactive component. Students are expected to have completed all assigned reading before class lectures; those who do will get more out of the lectures. While some lectures will review assigned readings most will not. Discussions will focus on assigned readings and students will be expected to contribute to the conversation based on reading materials.

Texts & website
The Canvas website for this course is: [https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/295911](https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/295911)

All course readings are available online via the library’s website. A few may be made available on canvas.

Grading structure
This course employs the typical UW-Madison grading scale. The maximum score is 100 points, with grades assigned:

- 100-93 = A
- 87-83 = B
- 70-77 = C
- <60 = F
- 92-88 = AB
- 82-78 = BC
- 60-69 = D
**Assignments & examinations**
Grades are based on completion of a student information questionnaire (1%), class participation (14%), response papers (35%), and analytical projects (50%). No extra credit will be awarded.

**Class participation.** Active, intelligent discussion is important to the success of this course. Discussion demonstrates engagement with material, allows for a synthetic process of learning, and builds an intellectual community. Students must come to class prepared to discuss the readings assigned for each session. Course participation marks will depend heavily on students’ participation in discussion throughout the term. A good rule-of-thumb is to arrive prepared to make at least two valuable contributions to each conversation. I may “cold call” on students occasionally, but cold-calls will always be related to discussion prompts distributed in advance of class meetings. The following rubric will guide participating grades for each day of class that includes discussion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9-10</td>
<td>Active discussion participation that connects with readings, critically evaluates ideas logically and empirically, and directly engages with other students’ ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>Active participation that demonstrates engagement with readings and lecture materials (e.g., answering a question from the professor), but without responding to or engaging with other students’ comments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Moderate commentary without demonstrating serious engagement with readings and lecture materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Minimal commentary that does not demonstrate engagement with readings and lecture materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Physical presence in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Absent</td>
</tr>
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Students who never offer valuable comments in class are effectively free-riding on others’ efforts, and so will receive minimal (effectively failing) credit for participation. “I’m shy” and “I’m not comfortable talking in a group” are not valid excuses for poor participation, just as “I’m not comfortable writing my ideas” is not a valid excuse for poor written work and “math makes me anxious” is not a valid excuse for poor quantitative work. Think of it this way: if you get a perfect score on every other assignment in the course but never participate in discussion, the maximum grade you can receive is a B.

**Response papers.** Each week each student will write a paper responding to the coming week’s readings. Papers should comment on the readings’ ideas, evidence, methods, and/or normative arguments. These papers are meant to facilitate and generate ideas for discussion—take them seriously. Unlike the memes—which are meant to communicate the readings’ arguments—response papers are meant to comment on them. Do not summarize readings in response papers. They will be graded for clarity of ideas, engagement with readings’ theoretical merits, empirical validity, and implications for policy. High-quality (i.e., well-organized, stylistically
appropriate, and mechanically flawless) writing is expected. Each Friday I will post to Canvas one or more prompts for discussion papers, though papers may be on other topics, too. These prompts are not so much questions to be answered—this isn’t a take-home exam—so much as they are points of departure for your thoughts. See the FAQ and the course Canvas site for examples of response papers from other courses to get a sense of what a good response paper might look like.

The response paper schedule will be posted to Canvas on Friday of the first week of the semester.

- **Due dates.** Response papers are due to Canvas before the start of class on Tuesday each week. Response papers should be 1-2 pages (less than 700 words) in length, double-spaced. Do not email me your response papers.

- **Response paper grades.** Half of the response papers will be graded on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis; the other half will be marked on a 0-10 scale. The papers to be graded 0-10 will be selected at random. In the thirteenth (final) week of the semester students may submit one optional response paper for a grade to replace the lowest grade on any paper submitted earlier. *A missed response paper cannot be replaced.* The semester response paper grade is the average of all response paper grades multiplied by 100 and then rounded to the nearest tenth. *A missed response paper counts as zero and may not be replaced.*

**Projects.** Three analytical projects will be assigned throughout the course. These assignments will require analysis of environmental governance using the frameworks and methods learned in the course. Be sure to follow formatting guidelines for these projects carefully.

Project reports are due to Canvas on the dates and times specified in each project assignment. Project reports submitted after the deadline are subject to the following penalties:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>If submitted...</th>
<th>Penalty</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late on the due date:</td>
<td>10% (i.e., one letter grade)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The day after due date:</td>
<td>20% (i.e., two letter grades)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two to seven days late:</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than seven days late:</td>
<td>100% (not accepted)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exams.** There are no midterm or final exams in this course.

**Attendance & Classroom Behavior**

Attendance is critical for success in the course—you should not miss any scheduled class meetings. However, attendance is not mandatory in the sense that it will not directly affect your course grade. I do not keep attendance records beyond participation marks. *It is not necessary to inform me of absences.*

**Discussion protocol.** Discussions sometimes may touch on sensitive and controversial topics. Don’t be afraid to clash over ideas—that is the point of class discussions, and it will be a very
boring class if we spend our meetings agreeing with each other 100% of the time. However, open, spirited and fruitful conversation requires that we treat each other with respect. Advance and defend your points with logic and evidence. When disagreeing, attack ideas, not people, and save side conversations for after class.

In pursuit of free and open exchange of ideas, class discussions will operate according to the Chatham House Rule: participants are free to share what emerges in conversation with the outside world, but the identities of speakers or participants may not be revealed to the outside world.

**Audio/Video Recording.** No audio or video recording of classes is allowed without explicit, advance permission. Unauthorized audio or video recording endangers the environment of openness and trust that are necessary for intellectual risk-taking and learning.

Lecture materials also are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students may take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record lectures without permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation (see Regent Policy Document 4-1). Students may not copy or share lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor’s express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university’s policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and non-academic misconduct.

The first violation of this rule will result in a 10% reduction in the course grade; the second violation will result in failure of the course.

**Laptops and other electronics.** Students may not use phones in class for any purpose unless expressly authorized by the McBurney Disability Resource Center. I strongly discourage the use of laptop computers in class for note-taking, communications, or any purpose other than reading documents. This policy follows from your instructor’s experience, as well as a growing body of research finds that the use of laptops and phones in classrooms is detrimental to learning. Tablet-style computers are preferable if they are used for solely for reading.

Mobile telephones of any type must remain powered off and stored away during class—do not text, tweet, post or otherwise communicate with electronic devices during class meetings.

There will be exceptions for a few class meetings in which computers will be used. Otherwise, electronics should remain turned off during classes.

**Office Hours and Email**

Office hours are a good chance to discuss exams and assignments, the course, or public policy in general. You may stop by in person without an appointment during scheduled office hours. If you cannot make my office hours I will make every reasonable effort to meet you by appointment. Please do not contact me on my mobile phone unless personally and explicitly advised to do so.
You may also email me with questions or concerns. When communicating via email, please observe the following:

- **Send email from your @wisc.edu account.** The university account identifies you as a student and ensures that your message won’t end up in a spam filter. There’s a good chance that I won’t answer email unless it comes from your university account.

- **Put “PA 366” and your name in the subject line of your message.**

- **Treat email with your professor as formal business communications, with appropriate style, spelling, grammatical, and punctuation.**

- **A great majority of the questions that students ask via email are addressed in this syllabus or on the course website (especially the FAQ).** Search for the answer to your question before asking by email. Students may not receive replies to inquiries that are answered on the syllabus and/or FAQ.

- **I do my best to respond to all valid email received Sunday-Thursday within 24 hours.** Messages received on Friday or Saturday may have to wait until Monday for replies.

- **I will not summarize lectures, readings, or missed classes via email or in office hours.**

- **Please check your university email account and the course website regularly to stay up to date on course-related matters.**

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**University of Wisconsin-Madison Policies**

**Diversity & inclusion.** Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

**Academic integrity.** By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

**Accommodations for students with disabilities.** The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility.
Students are expected to inform instructors of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. I will work either directly with you or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student’s educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: McBurney Disability Resource Center)

**Religious observances.** Students should notify me within the first two weeks of class if there are specific dates for which they will require accommodation for religious observance. See: [https://secfac.wisc.edu/academic-calendar/#religious-observances](https://secfac.wisc.edu/academic-calendar/#religious-observances)

**Other Rules & Guidelines**

- **Grade appeals.** Questions about grading are welcome during office hours. If you wish to appeal of grades on assignments, please follow these procedures:
  
  1) Wait 24 hours after receiving a grade to contact me;
  
  2) Send an email to me notifying me that you would like to appeal the grade and justify your appeal with specific evidence of an error in grading; and then
  
  3) Make an appointment to meet with me.
  
  Evidence supporting a grade appeal must be drawn from readings or lectures.

- **Group work.** I encourage you to work with classmates as you prepare for class meetings, write response papers, and execute analytical projects. In-person cooperation is by far the most effective; contributing to a common Google doc or other online medium is less effective. All work submitted must be your own.

- **Lecture slides.** Selected lecture slides may be posted to Canvas, but full slide decks and lecture notes will not.

- **Questions.** Students are encouraged to ask questions by raising a hand or submitting a question via email before class. The only dumb questions are “will this be on the exam?” and “can I get extra credit?” The answers to these questions are, respectively, “what exam?” and “no.”

- **Online fora.** Please do not post lecture notes, exams, or other course-related materials on Internet sites that are publicly accessible. You are welcome to share materials with classmates.

- **One more thing.** Have fun! It’s a privilege to be a Badger study alongside other Badgers in one of the world’s great universities. You’ll look back on this time fondly someday. Really! I promise!
Course Outline & Schedule

Jan. 25  Course introduction

PART I: FUNDAMENTALS

Jan. 27  What is environmental governance?

Feb. 1-3  Markets, market failures, and environmental policy

Costs and benefits, part 1

Feb. 8-10 Costs and benefits, part 2

Science & politics, part 1

Feb. 15 Science & politics, part 2
PART II: OPINION & ACTION

Feb. 17  *American environmentalism*


Feb. 22-24  *Organizing & acting*


Mar. 1-3  *Origins of environmental public opinion*


Public opinion on the environment: causes & consequences.


Mar. 8  *Environmental Issues in Elections*


PART III: INSTITUTIONS & OUTCOMES

A.  *Congress*

Mar. 10  *Policy Development in Congress*


Mar. 22-24  *Interest group politics in Congress.*


and Representation,” *Environmental Politics* 20(4): 547-565.

Mar. 29-31  
**Congressional organization & distributive politics**


*Environmental sub-governments*

*Readings*: Milazzo, Chapters 7-8, conclusion.

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**B. Bureaucracy**

Apr. 5-7  
*Environmental Bureaucracy.*


Apr. 12-14  
*Principals, principles & technocracy*


*Regulated government*


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**C. Federalism**

Apr. 19-21  
*Environmental federalism*


*State & local environmental policy*


D. Courts & Environmental Law

Apr. 26-28  Common law

Courts as environmental guardians

E. Environmental Justice

May 3-5  Origins & process


Enforcement & outcomes