

Environmental Politics and Policy

ENVI 215/POLS 215

Macalester College, Fall 2009

MWF 10:50-11:50, Olin Rice 170

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Access Moodle page as ENVI-215-01

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the practice of environmental politics and the policy that has emerged to deal with environmental problems, both in the United States and on the global stage. The course has five main parts. We begin with an examination of the discourses which inform environmental policy making, thinking through how different conceptual approaches lead to very different definitions of what environmental problems are, and hence, what their solutions might be. Next, we turn to American environmental policy, examining the history and evolution of policy formation in the US and a variety of key moments in the production of policy. We think about the ways that the environment has become an issue of concern and what regulatory frameworks have emerged to manage it. Part III briefly moves into possible alternatives to the traditional American policy process, examining efforts like community-based activism for political change. Part IV of the course deals with America's role in global environmental politics. We consider how the US has been active (or not) in various international policy regimes that address issues like climate change, trade and the environment and genetic engineering. Finally, we conclude the course by turning to some local environmental issues in the Twin Cities.

Throughout the course, we must keep in mind the way the power works through the establishment of policy and the practice of politics. These are not neutral processes but define how we come to understand both the environment and its crisis in some ways -- and not others. As such, we must always be thinking of the following question: ***by whom and for whom is environmental policy made?***

Objectives

This course has a variety of objectives:

Content:

- To learn the fundamental principles and theories of environmental politics and policy;
- To think through how different discourses present very different ways of conceptualizing environmental politics;
- To develop an understanding of how environmental policy is made on the local, national and international levels;
- To understand the possibilities and limitations of the American approach to environmental issues.

Learning:

- To build on our analytical skills by engaging in a critical reading of all texts;
- To further our collaborative learning skills in group work and larger discussion to achieve mutual understanding;
- To continue to formulate our research skills through independent projects.

Course Materials

There is one required texts for this course, which will be available at the campus bookstore:

Layzer, Judith A. (2006) *The environmental case: Translating values into policy*. Washington D.C.: CQ Press.

All other materials will be available on e-reserves.

Evaluation

The grade for this course will be based on the following percentages:

1. Attendance and participation (15%)
2. Analysis of the Obama's Administration's environmental position (10%)
3. Policy Paper (20%)
4. Group Presentation (15%)
5. Mid-term test and final exam (15% and 25% respectively)

1. Attendance and participation (15%)

A substantial proportion of your mark for will be based on your interaction with your peers as well as your instructor. One of the goals of this course is to encourage a collaborative and creative working and learning environment—your **engaged** participation is therefore a vital component to its success. Evaluating participation is always a subjective process; however, the following elements will be taken into account when determining the participation mark:

- *Attendance*—evaluating your performance is difficult if you are not present. As well, repeated late arrivals and early departures from class will be noted and form part of the evaluation of participation. Please communicate directly and immediately with me if you think you will miss or be late to a class.
- *Familiarity with the Readings*—participating in discussions will be difficult if the readings are not done ahead of time. They are integral to each class. You will be expected to demonstrate your knowledge and critical assessment of class readings, thoughtfulness regarding issues raised in readings, and to draw connections between theoretical ideas and specific.
- *Active Participation*—this means actively engaging in various activities including class discussions, asking questions during presentations/lectures, and taking part in small group and individual in-class exercises.

- *Contribution to the Learning of Your Peers*—participating fairly in group work (one element of the group assignment will be peer evaluations), being courteous and respectful of others, not dominating conversations and discussions, allowing others to speak and be heard.

2. Analysis of the Obama Administration’s Environmental Position (10%)

This year, with the inauguration of a new president, we have a unique opportunity to examine the operation of environmental discourse and a shift in environmental policy. The two-term Bush administration offered a lesson in pro-business environmental policy and a general atmosphere of deregulation. Will Obama’s presidency be different? How so?

For this assignment, read Barack Obama’s “New Energy for America Plan”, the various policy initiatives put forward to date, and various news accounts of Obama’s environmental positions. In a four-page (1,000 word) paper, answer the following prompt:

Given what we have covered thus far in the course, what discourse(s) inform this policy approach? Does it represent a departure from the discourse of previous administrations?

DUE DATE: September 28th

3. Policy Paper (20%)

Put yourself in the position of a senior policy analyst for a major political party. As the key policy analyst, the candidate asks you to produce a platform that addresses the **most important** environmental issue of today.

Drawing on the course materials as well as at least 5 outside sources, write a 10-12 page (2,500-3,500 words) paper that addresses the following questions:

- i. What do you believe is the most pressing environmental issue of today?
- ii. How is this issue caused and what are its effects?
- iii. What policy action would you implement to address this issue?

DUE DATE: November 16

4. Group Presentation (15%)

In small groups (3 to 4 students), you will consider a local environmental issue that affects either the Twin Cities or Minnesota more broadly. You can choose any issue which interests you or in which you are involved: from a toxic environmental area to wildlife preservation, from climate change legislation to green initiatives at Macalester. Review the official documents, media accounts, and any NGO reports on this issue. Develop an analysis based on the policy and politics of this issue that considers the following questions:

- i. What is identified as the root cause of this issue?
- ii. Who are the actors involved? Who has been left out?
- iii. What political action has been undertaken to deal with the issue?

This assignment should represent a culmination of what we have learned this term. As such, be prepared to apply insights, concepts, or theories from at least three of the course readings. Prepare a 15-minute presentation around this issue for the class and be prepared for a 5-minute Q&A after the presentation. There will be a peer evaluation component to the presentation grade.

Presentation Dates: December 7th, 9th and 11th.

5. Mid-term test and Final Exams (worth 15% and 25% respectively)

The mid-term test will be held in class on October 9th and will cover the material up to and including October 7th. The test will include short answer questions and one essay answer.

The final exam will be held during the exam period on Saturday, December 19. It will cover all the material in the course and you will be expected to integrate readings, lectures, and class discussions. The exam format will include short-answer questions and essay questions.

If you submit any of the above assignments late, you WILL be graded down one full step for each day past the deadline. For example, an assignment handed in one day late will begin with a B+; two days late a C+.

Final Grade Scale: A (95-100); A- (90-94); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82)

Similar ranges for C grades (70-79) and D grades (60-69); Below 60 is a failing grade.

Grading standards for papers

Below is an outline of how the papers in this course will be graded. This should give you a fairly good idea of what I am looking for in your assignments.

An Excellent Paper (A – 95-100)

- Offers an insightful, independent and original thesis, presenting new ways to think about the subject
- Arguments are clear, logical and well-supported by primary and secondary material as well as course themes
- Moves up and down the ladder of abstraction with a high degree of sophistication
- Addresses and refutes counter-arguments
- Extremely persuasive in argumentation and conclusions
- Transitions between concepts are superb
- Thoroughly and appropriately referenced
- Strong writing style (not overly wordy), no grammar and spelling mistakes, fluid and interesting to read – offers the reader a narrative which is engaging

A Very Good Paper (A- to B+ 87-94)

- Offers an insightful, independent and original thesis, presenting new ways to think about the subject
- Arguments are clear, logical and supported by examples from primary and secondary material
- Moves up and down the ladder of abstraction well
- Acknowledges counter-arguments
- Persuasive in argumentation and conclusions

- Citations are correct and appropriate
- Your writing style is clear and concise (not overly wordy), with few grammar and spelling mistakes – you make an effort to engage the reader

A Good Paper (B to B- 80-86)

- There is an identifiable thesis but it is not necessarily original or overly clear
- Arguments are generally solid, but may occasionally wander off course and demonstrate gaps in logic
- The paper does not utilize the ladder of abstraction, remaining either at the level of too much detail or too much theory
- The paper's conclusions may be somewhat weak
- Counter-arguments are not appropriately addressed
- Writing style is clear with few spelling and grammar errors, but is not necessarily engaging.

A Borderline Paper (C+ to C 73-79)

- A thesis is hard to identify and its development is generally unclear
- The paper is supported by some primary and secondary literature, but the examples provided are incomplete or insufficient
- The paper lacks logic and coherence
- Citation and referencing are poorly done or incorrect
- Does not address counter-arguments
- Has no real conclusion
- Writing style is generally unclear and uninteresting and there are repeated problems with grammar and spelling

A Needs Improvement Paper (C- to D- 60-72)

- An identifiable thesis is not present
- The structure of the paper lacks coherence and its argumentation is weak
- The paper does not synthesize course themes, let alone outside materials
- Citations and references to other works are used inappropriately, if at all
- Writing style is problematic in terms of spelling and grammar, leading to confusion about the paper's arguments

A Failing Paper (F below 60)

- No discernable thesis or attempt at a coherent and logical argument
- Little or no reference to course or outside material
- Clear that little effort was given to the preparation of the paper
- Writing style makes the paper difficult to understand

Academic Integrity: It is assumed that all members of the class will act with academic integrity and will not engage in behavior such as plagiarism, academic dishonesty, misrepresentation, or cheating. Please refer to the college's policy on academic honesty.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: I am committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please meet with the Associate Dean of Students, Lisa Landreman, who will serve as the

coordinator for services for students with disabilities. It is important to meet with her at the beginning of the semester to ensure that your accommodations are approved and in place to begin the semester successfully. The Associate Dean can be reached in the Office of Student Affairs, 119 Weyerhaeuser, by phone at 651-696-6220, or email llandrem@macalester.edu.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Part I: Discourses of the Environment

September 9th — Defining our terms: politics, environment, policy

No readings

Recommended reading: Layzer, Chapter 1, pp.1-25

September 11th — A discourse approach to environmental policy and politics

Dryzek, John, S. (2005) "Making sense of earth politics: A discourse approach." In *Politics of the earth*, pp. 3-23. E-Reserve

September 14th — Discourse 1: Carrying capacity and the limits of the earth

Hardin, Garrett. (1998). "The tragedy of the commons." pp. 25-36. E-Reserve

September 16th — Discourse 2: What environmental crisis? The Promethean Approach

Lomborg, Bjørn. (2001). "The litany" In *The skeptical environmentalist*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 3-33. E-Reserve

September 18th — Administrative Rationality

Doyle, T and McEachern, D. (1998). "Chapter 7: Institutional politics and policy making" in *Environment and Politics*. New York: Routledge, pp. 153-168.

September 21st — Eco-radicalism

Kovel, J. & Lowy, M. "An ecosocialist manifesto"

<http://members.optushome.com.au/spainter/Ecosocialist.html>

Naess, A. & Sessions, G. "Deep ecology platform" <http://www.deepecology.org/platform.htm>

September 23rd — Sustainability and sustainable development

Jamieson, D. (1998) Sustainability and beyond. *Ecological Economics*, 24: 181-192

Sachs, Wolfgang. (1999). "Sustainable development: On the political anatomy of an oxymoron." In *Planet dialectics: Explorations in environment and development*. London: Zed, pp. 71-89.

September 25th — Ecological Modernization – Greening the economy

Dryzek, J. (2005). "Industrial society and beyond: ecological modernization." In *Politics of the earth*, pp.

Part II: Case Studies in American Environmental Politics and Policy

September 28th — Historical perspectives on US environmental policy

Kraft, Michael E. & Vig, Norman, J. (2009). "Environmental policy over four decades." In *Environmental policy: new directions for the 21st century*, pp. 1-26.

-----ANALYSIS OF OBAMA'S ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY DUE-----

September 30th — National Environmental Protection Act of 1969

Broussard, S. & Whitaker, B. (2009). The Magna Charta of environmental legislation: A historical look at 30 years of NEPA-Forest Service Litigation. *Forest Policy and Economics*, 11: 134-140. E-Reserve

October 2nd – Clean Air and Clean Water

Layzer, Chapter 2: The nation tackles pollution: The EPA and the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, pp, 26-53.

October 5th — Love Canal

Layzer, Chapter 3: Love Canal: Hazardous wastes and the politics of fear, pp. 54-80.

October 7th – Rocky Flats

Layzer, Chapter 4: Government secrets at Rocky Flats, pp. 81-104.

October 9th – The Endangered Species Act

Scott, Michael J. et al (2005). Recovery of imperiled species under the Endangered Species Act: The need for a new approach. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, 3 (7): 383-389.

October 12th – Wolves in Yellowstone

Coleman, Jon T. (2006). "Reintroduction." In *Vicious*, pp. 225-235.

October 14th - Negotiating nature and culture: Native American rights - Debate

October 16th -----MID-TERM TEST-----

October 19th — Federal Grazing Policy and the Wise Use Movement

Layzer, Chapter 7: Federal grazing policy: Some things never change, pp. 159-190.

October 21st – Wise Use and the anti-environmental movement

Layzer, Chapter 13: Wise use, property rights and the anti-environmental movement, pp. 238-263.

October 23rd — The Farm Bill

Izaak Walton League. (2007). "The 2007 Farm Bill: Stewardship, prosperity, and fairness." Pp. 1-5.

Grunwald, Michael. (2007). "Down on the farm." *Time*, 170(20): 28-36.

October 26th - King Corn

No reading

October 28th – Familiarize yourself with the current state of climate policy in the US, then read:

Barnes, Peter. (2008). *Climate solutions: What works, what doesn't and why*. Available on Moodle or at <http://www.capanddividend.org/files/Climate%20Solutions.pdf>

October 30th-----No Class, Fall Break-----

Part III: Alternative Approaches

November 2nd – Smart Growth

Layzer, Chapter 17: Making tradeoffs: Urban sprawl and the evolving system of growth management in Portland, Oregon, pp. 466-490.

November 4th – Collaborative Problem Solving

Layzer, Chapter 16: Local, collaborative problem solving, pp. 436-465.

November 6th – Community Activism

Layzer, Chapter 5: Community activism and environmental justice: The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, pp.105-129.

November 9th - Market-based approaches: Individualizing responsibility

Maniates, M. (2002). "Individualization: plant a tree, buy a bike, save the world?" *Global Environmental Politics*, 1(3): pp. 31-52. E-Reserve

Part IV: America on the Global Stage

November 11th – Imagining the globe: Discourse of a planetary crisis

Jasanoff, S. (2004). "Heaven and earth: the politics of environmental images." pp. 31-52. E-reserve

November 13th – The quagmire of international environmental politics

Speth, J.G. (2004). "Chapter 5: Anatomy of failure." In *Red sky at morning*. pp. 98-116. E-reserve

November 16th – The Montreal Protocol

Litfin, K. (1994). "Chapter 3: Historical and scientific background on human causes of stratospheric ozone depletion." In *Ozone discourses*, pp. 52-77. E-reserve

-----POLICY PAPER DUE-----

November 18th – Trade and the environment

Layzer, Chapter 12: Trade versus the environment: Dolphins, turtles, and global economic expansion, pp. 313-345.

November 20th – Genetic Engineering and the Biosafety Protocol

Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. (2000). *An Introduction to the Cartagena Protocol*. Montreal: Secretariat of the Conventional of Biodiversity, pp. 1-20. E-reserve

November 23rd – E-waste and global environmental injustice

Grossman, E. (2006). "Not in our backyard." In *High tech trash*, pp. 182-210.

November 25th – Global climate change negotiation

Hohne, Niklas et al (2008). "The history and status of the international negotiations on a future climate agreement". In *Beyond Bali*, pp. 13-35. E-reserve

November 27th -----Thanksgiving Break No Class-----

Part V: Environmental policies in Minnesota and the Twin Cities

November 30th – The Hwy 55 Reroute

Take a look at the website which profiles some of the activists involved in this struggle:
<http://mendotadakota.com/mn/tag/highway-55/>

December 2nd – Rondo redux? The Central Corridor

Days of Rondo

Greene, David & Stevensen, David (2009, June 15). "Central Corridor complaint seeks a two-way conversation." *Star Tribune* E-reserve

-- (2009, June 12) "Editorial: Central Corridor is not Rondo redux." *Star Tribune* E-reserve

December 4th – No class - Time to work on student presentations

December 7th – Student Presentations

December 9th – Student Presentations

December 11th – Student Presentations

December 14th – Final Class, Exam Review

December 19th – Final exam