

U.S. Environmental Politics and Policy
POLS 361
Spring, 2017

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This course deals with the formulation and implementation of environmental policy in the United States. Key learning objectives include:

- Understanding the historical and economic contexts of natural resource and environmental protection policies, paying particular attention to the contributions made by a few individuals who appreciated the difficulty of superimposing political arrangements upon complex ecosystems.
- Understanding key roles played by the public, interest groups and political institutions in shaping environmental policies.
- Understanding how policymakers deal with policy problems such as energy, natural resources and pollution control within the context of competing values.
- Understanding how environmental policies can be evaluated.

There are three contact hours per week and it is expected that each student will be responsible for six hours of outside work for the same period of time. The format of this course is lecture/discussion. Generally speaking, the first half of each class session will be devoted to lecture, although a number of topics may require the entire period to cover the assigned materials. Ideally, this will be a participatory course -- you will be prepared to discuss the readings and raise questions about its content. This format may be occasionally adjusted to include a guest lecture or video.

Grades will be assigned on the basis of your performance on two exams and a term paper (33% each). Exams consist of essay questions and reflect a balance between lectures and the assigned readings. Class attendance is required. Three absences are allowed – thereafter, 2 points are deducted for each day gone. Please note that I do not give incompletes barring a medical emergency.

The term paper should be 15-20 pages typed and double spaced and should ideally address a particular policy issue such as water resource policy, endangered species, clean air, etc. Each paper should also contain a *minimum* of 8-10 sources (books/journals/internet sources or government documents). A good starting point is the use of various indices contained in the electronic databases in the library such as the Web of Science, Lexis Nexis, Article First or JSTOR. Also, chapter notes from your assigned texts identify a number of sources worth checking, including internet cites.

Your term project should follow one of the following formats:

1. **Group influence on environmental issues.** Here the focus of the paper would be group conflict over legislative proposals or administrative decisions. An example of the former would be the enactment of a Colorado law in 2010 that expanded renewable energy requirements for utilities. Another would be the analysis of various group activities and strategies used in supporting or opposing ballot initiatives dealing with an environmental or energy issue. An example of group politics in the administrative process would be the extent to which comments by the public, environmental or resource groups have been incorporated into forest management plans used by the U.S. Forest Service. In any of these cases, *you need to present the nature of the policy question under consideration, the groups with an interest or stake in the issue, how the issue was resolved, the extent to which the final product reflects multiple or single group policy concerns.*

2. **Regulation of natural resources or pollution.** Choose a particular issue such as clean air, mining reclamation, hazardous waste etc. and focus on the regulatory approach in use (e.g., permits, performance standards, negotiation). Be sure to identify *which agency* is responsible and indicate *how* the agency has attempted to work with regulated companies or individuals and whether the policy or regulatory program appears to be working. This can be examined by focusing on decisions made by regulated parties to comply with or evade the regulations. For example, one might look at decisions made by Xcel (an investor owned utility) to increase the amount of electricity generated from renewable energy sources in Colorado over the past five years. Objective indicators of performance might also be cited such as declining levels of water pollution (in evaluating the Clean Water Act in Colorado) or an increase in the number of threatened or endangered species counted such as sage grouse or lynx (in evaluating the implementation of the Endangered Species Act).

3. **Collaborative approaches to the resolution of environmental problems.** Disputes involving pollution control or natural resources are often characterized by considerable complexity and in some cases are not easily confined within the boundaries of a discreet government jurisdiction. Examples include collaborative planning activities in the national forests of Colorado to ensure that environmental protection or wildlife concerns could co-exist with wildfire prevention and timbering activities as well as efforts to reduce policy disagreements between state regulators and local officials over regulatory control. Decision-making techniques such as collaborative planning can aid in clarifying the options available to policymakers *before* decisions have been set in stone while other techniques such as mediation provides an alternative to litigation for seemingly intractable problems involving groups with divergent interests. You should begin by identifying the main issues and stakeholders (e.g., interest groups) linked to a particular case and discuss how the parties reconcile differences to achieve a workable solution to the problem at hand.

Please note: Papers should be appropriately organized. They **must** contain an introduction which briefly describes the problem and what it is that you plan to analyze in the rest of the paper, an analytical section, a set of conclusions, and references. The projects **should not** espouse a point of view - the focus is on analysis rather than one's sensitivity to the environment or to private property rights. It should also focus **more on political analysis than history** – you should not spend more than a page on historical context in your paper. **Credit will be deducted for poor organization (such as the failure to use subheadings or the failure to use paragraphs).** A half grade is deducted for each day late past the due date.

This course adheres to the Academic Integrity Policy of the Colorado State University General Catalog and the Student Conduct Code. Colorado State University has long upheld values of academic and scholastic integrity. The General Catalog's "Policies and Guiding Principles" asserts that CSU "expects students to maintain standards of personal integrity that are in harmony with the educational goals of the institution" citing "principles of academic honesty" as the first example. (1.6 Page 1).

You need to choose a topic by **February 14**. On that date, **a one-page description of your policy concern and a list of 3-4 sources is due. Be sure to indicate which of the three approaches (group conflict, regulatory politics, or collaborative decision-making) will be used in writing your paper.** The final project is due on Monday, **March 30**. Want early feedback? I'd be willing to look at a first draft or a detailed outline if you get it to me by Thursday, **March 23**.

The following texts are required:

Judith Layzer, *The Environmental Case*, 4th ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2015.

Zachary Smith and John Freemuth, eds., *Environmental Politics & Policy in the West*, 3rd ed., Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2016.

Norman Vig & Michael Kraft, eds., *Environmental Politics & Policy*, 9th ed., Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2016.

In addition, three additional sources are assigned. They are:

Robert Duffy, "Deja vu All Over Again: Climate Change and the Prospects for a Nuclear Power Renaissance," *Environmental Politics* (September, 2011).

Konisky, David M., and Neal D. Woods. "Environmental Policy, Federalism, and the Obama Presidency." *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* (Summer, 2016).

Thomas Koontz, et al. Chapter on collaboration and Animas River cleanup from *Collaborative Environmental Management*. Washington, DC: RFF, 2004.

COURSE OUTLINE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings</u>
1/17	Introduction	_____
1/19	Evolution of Environmental Policy	VK, Ch 1; Layzer, pp 31-41
1/24	Environmental Policy Problems & Processes	L, Ch 1; SF, Ch 2
1/26	Interest Groups & Environmental Policy	VK, Ch 3

1/31	Congress & Presidency	VK, Ch 4, Ch 5
2/2	Bureaucracies	VK, Ch 7; SF, Ch 2
2/7	Courts	VK, Ch 6
2/9	Federalism and Environmental Policy*	Konisky and Woods
2/16	State Environmental Policy	VK, Ch 2
2/21	Local Environmental Policy	L, Ch 15; VK, Ch 12; SF, Ch 4
2/23	Environmental Regulation	L, Ch 5; VK, Ch 10
2/28	Exam	_____
3/2	Business & the Environment	VK, Ch 11
3/7	Stakeholders (collaboration & NEPA)	Koontz
3/9	Clean Water	L, Ch 4 plus video
3/14	Spring Break	_____
3/21	Water Resources	SF, Ch 6 & 7
3/23	National Forests & Wildfires	L, Ch 8
3/28	Wilderness	L, Ch 6
3/30	Hardrock Mining**	_____
4/4	Livestock Grazing	L, Ch 7; SF, Ch 3
4/6	Agriculture & Pesticides	VK, Ch 9
4/11	Toxic Wastes	L, Ch 3
4/13	Clean Air	L, Ch 5
4/18	Coal	_____
4/20	Nuclear power	Duffy

*Paper proposal is due

**Final paper is due

4/25	Natural gas & oil	L, Ch 14; VK, pp 180-82
4/27	Renewable energy	L, Ch 13; SF, Ch 5
5/2	Climate Change	L, Ch 12
5/4	Evaluating Environmental Progress*	VK, Ch 16

*Take home final. It is due Tuesday, May 9 at noon.

Extra Credit Option: An opportunity exists to gain from 4 to 10 points (depending on the quality of your effort) to be added to your grade for an evaluation of the article on strategies for controlling air pollution in Houston written by Bruhl, Linder, and Sexton. Carefully read the article and prepare a 3-5 page (double-spaced) review that includes the following: A brief factual summary of the article that includes a description of who the major policy players were, the main policy issues that were dealt with, and how policy goals were achieved. What type of approach did the authors use – legal, historical, statistical, argumentative, normative or some combination of the above? Did you think that the evidence used by the authors to bolster their arguments was compelling? Indicate why or why not. If you are interested in pursuing this extra credit assignment, send me an email by 8 PM on Thursday, April 6. I will respond with a copy of the article via email attachment. Your review is due no later than 5 PM on Tuesday, April 11.

Tips for Getting a Good Term Paper Grade

1. Be sure to use one of the three approaches (group conflict, regulatory politics, or collaborative decision-making) in organizing your paper. Each is briefly discussed on p. 2 of the syllabus.
2. Focus on factors or trends that help us understand why certain policies (or regulations) are adopted or not adopted. For example, compliance with an energy conservation program may be enhanced by a high degree of public support or because of the belief that the program saves money as well as improves environmental quality. Avoid placing too much emphasis on the historical context or the mere chronological listing of events.
3. Avoid editorializing or the injection of your personal feelings or opinions into this paper. The emphasis is on how & why policy decisions are made rather than whether they are good or bad.
4. Make sure your paper is thematically consistent, grammatically correct, and well organized. Make sure your paper has an introduction, an analytical section, conclusions, and a list of references.
5. Questions of scope and scale are important. It would be hard to write a focused paper on very broad regulatory policy issues such as the ESA. However, a paper dealing with a section of this law (such as the decision to list the prairie chicken) would be more manageable. Other concerns include the geographic scope of your topic (e.g., managing pesticide use in Fort Collins parks) and the time frame of your paper (e.g., state oil and gas regulation since the beginning of the Ritter Administration).
6. Make sure that you cite not only references within the text of your paper but generalizations offered about topics (e.g., the public is strongly supportive of nuclear power), direct quotes and any use of numbers/statistics.