

# Political Science 403Z

## Introduction to Environmental Policy (Fall 2008)

Lecture: Mon. Wed.  
1:00 – 2:15

Professor: Dennis Pirages  
Office Hours: Mon., Wed. 2:15 – 3:30;  
Tues. 2:00 – 3:30; and by appointment

### Required Books (paperbacks):

Conca et al., Green Planet Blues

Rosenbaum, Environmental Politics and Policy

Kassiola, Explorations in Environmental Political theory

Course Requirements: Participants are expected to attend lectures regularly, complete assigned readings in a timely manner, and to participate in class discussion. Final grades will be determined as follows:

Mid-term Examination        35%  
Final Examination            45%  
Attendance and Participation 20%

Aug. 25:        Course overview - Procedures and expectations – Environmental policy as an interdisciplinary undertaking – Homo sapiens and two kinds of evolutionary processes – Natural selection - Sociocultural evolution.

Aug. 27:        The context for environmental policy I. – Human beings and the environment - Historical patterns of population growth - Environmental impact of three sociocultural revolutions - Exclusionist and inclusionist perspectives - Technology and environmental quality.

Assignment: Conca, Introduction, Chapters 1, 5.

Sept. 3:        The context for environmental policy II. - Basic ecological concepts - Components of the physical environment - Natural resources - The biosphere - The hydrosphere - The atmosphere - Environmental services - Qualitative and quantitative pollution - Interdependence in a global ecosystem.

Assignment: Rosenbaum, Chapter 1.

Sept. 8:        The context for environmental policy III. - Environmental politics and policy - The origins of political systems - Politics as an authoritative allocation of values - Politics and markets - Policy-making and enforcement in the United States - The policy cycle - Agenda setting.

Assignment: Rosenbaum, Chapter 2.

Sept. 10: The origins of U.S. environmental policy - Early attempts at government regulation - The environmental revolution - The politics of environmental policy - Impact of federalism - Separation and division of powers - The institutional setting - Administrative law - EPA - Power of the courts – Complexities of environmental policy-making.

Assignment: Rosenbaum, Chapter 3.

Sept. 15: Early environmental legislation - The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) - Environmental impact statements - NEPA litigation - Council on Environmental Quality.

Sept. 17: Air pollution – Causes of air pollution – Smog and temperature inversions - Criterion pollutants - Current controversies over air quality – The debate over curbing greenhouse gas emissions.

Assignment: Rosenbaum, 174 - 195.

Sept. 22: Air quality legislation - Air quality standards - Issues in pollution abatement - The problem of particulate matter - Non-attainment areas - Hummers, trucks, and air pollution.

Sept. 24: Water scarcity and pollution - Causes and consequences - Water as a renewable resource - Major pollutants - Point and non-point sources - Problem of scarce and polluted ground water.

Assignment: Rosenbaum, 196- 213.

Sept. 29: Water quality legislation - Rivers and Harbors Act - Clean Water Act - BPT and BAT - Permitting discharges - The future agenda.

Oct. 1: Less visible pollution threats - Living better (or not) through chemistry - Chemical pollutants - Pesticides and herbicides – Risk assessment - TOSCA - Federal regulation of toxic substances - PMNs.

Assignment: Rosenbaum, 217 - 228.

Oct. 6: Handling the nation's waste - Hazardous and non-hazardous waste - The management and treatment of hazardous waste - The NIMBY syndrome - Post-industrial waste.

Assignment: Rosenbaum, 228 - 249.

Oct. 8: The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) - Cradle-to-grave controls - The manifest system - Small quantity generators - New kinds of hazardous waste - CERCLA and the Superfunds – Toxic torts.

Oct. 13: **Mid-term Examination.**

- Oct. 15: New issues in environmental policy – The precautionary principle - Sick buildings - Radon - Endocrine disruptors - Persistent Organic Pollutants - Perchlorate – EMFs - Cell phones.
- Oct. 20: Energy and the environment - Energy sources for the industrial revolution - Fossil fuels - Quantity and quality - The political economy of petroleum reserves- Controversy over offshore drilling - Energy use in the U.S. – New vehicle mileage standards.
- Oct. 22: Environmental problems associated with obtaining and using energy - Energy consumption and pollution – Alternative fossil fuels - Soft path and hard path choices – Renewable energy sources.
- Assignment: Rosenbaum, Chapter 8.
- Oct. 27: Nuclear power - Promise and peril - Nuclear waste storage issues - Power grids and blackouts - The politics of energy non-policy - Comparative energy policies.
- Oct. 29: Comparative and global environmental issues - Tragedies of the global commons – Strategies for managing the commons - The consensual nature of international law - Regional and international agreements.
- Assignment: Conca, Chapters. 3, 4, 12.
- Nov. 3: The atmospheric commons – Trace gases - The disappearing ozone layer - Causes and consequences of ozone depletion - The Montreal Protocol - Ozone diplomacy.
- Assignment: Rosenbaum, 341 - 349.
- Nov. 5: Causes and consequences of global warming – Carbon dioxide, methane and the greenhouse effect - Rising sea levels – Changing polar regions - warming and disease - warming and agriculture.
- Assignment: Rosenbaum, Chapter 10.
- Nov.10: The international politics of global warming - Winners and losers- North-South politics – U.S. voluntary approaches -The Kyoto Protocol - More Kyotos needed? - Other international environmental agreements.
- Nov. 12: Comparative environmental policy - Global development and the environment - Progress and sustainability - The Chindia problem – Environmental constraints on industrial growth – A new planetary bargain.
- Assignment: Conca, Chapters 2, 8; Kassiola, Chapter 1.

Nov. 17: Issues of sustainable development – Ecological footprints - Ecodevelopment and authentic development - Dilemmas of development – Search for a new social paradigm – Leapfrogging development.

Assignment: Conca, Chapters 22-24.

Nov. 19: Globalization, trade, and the environment – Establishing minimum standards - Free trade or environmental protection? - The “shadow” ecologies - Harmonizing environmental policies - Who protects the global ecosystem?

Assignment: Conca, Chapters 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

Nov. 24: New ways of measuring social progress - What should be sustained? - Quantity versus quality - The vagaries of G.D.P. - Toward indicators of genuine progress – Measuring ecological footprints.

Assignment: Kassiola, Chapter 8.

Dec. 1: Deeper ecological issues – sustainability as process - Changing the dominant social paradigm - Different agendas for different societies - Confronting consumption - New kinds of efficiency – Ecological politics.

Assignment: Conca, Chapters 25, 26; Kassiola, Chapters 2, 3, 6, 7, 9.

Dec. 3: Recap and review for final examination.