FOR 465: Forest and Natural Resource Policy

Syllabus and Schedule – Fall 2006

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Class Time and Location: 8:00 – 9:20 Tuesdays and Thursdays in 139 Baker Hall.

Office Hours: 9:30 – 11:00 Tuesdays and Thursdays and by appointment.

Introduction: Understanding natural resource and environmental policy is a critical part of becoming a natural resource or environmental professional. Almost all natural resource and environmental professionals are either employed by government agencies or work for private firms that are regulated by the government. Whether your specialty is water quality, waste management, forestry, or wildlife ecology, governments make decisions that affect what you do and how you do it. This course will give you the tools to understand how governments interact with the environment.

For many students this will be the first policy or government course since high school. Other students take this course after successfully completing a college environmental policy course. Because of the differences in student experience, the course is designed to review the basics as well as focus on more advanced topics in policy implementation and analysis.

Much of our focus in this class will be on developing your writing and critical thinking skills. The details of names and dates are less important than learning the framework and principles that will allow you to understand the complex interactions among governments, people, and the environment.

Course Objectives: Upon completion, students will be able to:
1. Describe the roles of the four branches and three levels of government in natural resources and environmental policy;
2. Describe and apply interest group theory to natural resource and environmental policy issues;
3. Apply the policy process model to natural resources and environmental policy problems; and
4. Demonstrate their mastery of the subject through writing.

Prerequisites: This course has no prerequisites. If students have questions about their ability to successfully complete the course, they should see Dr. Malmsheimer.

Textbooks, Readings, and Resources: This course uses three textbooks and five supplemental readings. Although not assigned as reading for specific topics, I highly recommend student familiarize themselves with the suggested web resources.

Required Textbooks: All books are available at the Orange Bookstore in Marshall Square Mall. I have put copies of all three required textbooks on reserve at Moon Library.
1. Cubbage, Fredrick W., Jay O’Lauglin and Charles S. Bullock, III. 1993. Forest Resource Policy. New York: Wiley and Sons (approximately $92.00 new). Note: This course has used this text for several years; there should be used copies available.
3. Patterson, Thomas E. 2006. *We the People.* 6th edition. Boston: McGraw Hill Higher Education (approximately $70.00 new). **Note:** This is a required textbook for this course, however, we only read about one-third of the book so students may want to purchase the book with a classmate or use the copy on reserve at Moon Library.

**Required Supplemental Readings.** Copies of these readings will be handed out in class:
3. Leopold, Aldo. 1949. The Land Ethic from *A Sand County Almanac.*

**Additional Web Resources:** Students will find the following resources useful for their policy memorandum and field report assignments.
1. Congressional Research Service (CRS). This site provides links to natural resources and environmental CRS reports: [http://ncseonline.org/NLE/CRs/](http://ncseonline.org/NLE/CRs/)
2. Resources for the Future (RFF). This site provides links to RFF reports on natural resources and the environment: [www.rff.org](http://www.rff.org)

**E-Mail Requirement:** All students are required to have an .syr.edu e-mail account and to check that e-mail account regularly for class announcements.

**Grades:** We will calculate grades on the following basis:
1. Three hour-long examinations (100 points each). There is no final exam.
2. Two policy memorandums (50 points each);
3. One field report or book review (50 points);
4. Attendance (25 points); and
5. Occasional quizzes (up to 100 points).

Students receive a letter grade based on their percentage of the total possible points:

- A = 93% or greater
- B+ = 89.9% – 87.0%
- C+ = 79.9% – 77.0%
- D = 69.9% – 65.0%
- A- = 92.9% – 90.0%
- B = 86.9% – 83.0%
- C = 76.9% – 73.0%
- F = 64.9% or less
- B- = 82.9% – 80.0%
- C- = 72.9% – 70.0%

I will not adjust grades; students will receive the grade they earn based on the course requirements set out above. I also will not provide students with “additional” assignments (so that they can raise their grades).

**The Examinations:** There are three examinations during the course of the semester. They are mostly objective, but also will include short and medium length essay questions. The old exams are an excellent study guide. There is no final examination. Students with unexcused absences from examinations (see below) will **not** be allowed to make-up an examination. If you have questions about how your examination was graded please make an appointment with Ms. Littleboy. If you are dissatisfied with her decision, please come and see me.

**The Policy Memoranda:** You must complete two policy analysis memorandum in which you will apply the analytical techniques you have learned in class to a policy issue. Appendix A of this Syllabus contains more information on the memorandum (including issue topics) and Appendix B contains a sample memorandum. The memoranda will be evaluated on four equally weighted criteria:
- Clarity,
• Concision,
• Critical Analysis, and
• Use of the literature and research.

The Field Report: Each student will submit a report based on personal observation of an official public meeting related to natural resources or environmental policy. Examples include a city council or town board meeting where an environmental issue is addressed. Other examples included planning and zoning board meetings or a DEC hearing. The meeting must be before an official public body that has the power to make public policy.

The report should 1) summarize the proceeding (one page), 2) relate the proceeding and the interactions of the parties to the theories, models, or literature covered in class (two pages), and 3) describe your feelings while you were at the hearing (i.e., how did you feel, what surprised you, what were you expecting, etc.) (one page). The report should be four (4) pages (double spaced 12 point Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins) and clearly identify the proceeding and the individuals participating. Reports will be evaluated based on five criteria:
• Clarity (15%),
• Concision (15%),
• Critical Analysis (25%),
• Use of the theories, models, and literature (25%), and
• Originality of observations (20%).

Students submitting reports less than four pages in length should not expect to receive high marks for the assignment. Ms. Littleboy will not read and review this assignment before it is due. The report is due the last day of classes. However, I strongly advise you not to wait until late in the semester to complete this assignment. Do it early and get it off of your “to do” list before the end of semester rush begins.

Readings, Class Attendance, and Quizzes. This course relies on class discussions to advance your knowledge. The discussions are an important part of what we will learn in the course. The readings form a basis for the discussion and provide a common frame of understanding among the students. It is essential that you complete the readings before you come to class and that you attend class. I will be calling on students to answer questions about the readings.

Attendance: Students who miss class because of illness, conference attendance, or family death are excused from class and must email Ms. Littleboy (nylittle@syr.edu) the reason for their excused absence within two (2) days of missing class. Attendance will be evaluated as follows:
• Students who miss zero (0) or one (1) classes will receive twenty-five (25) attendance points;
• Students who miss two (2) or three (3) classes will receive twenty (20) attendance points;
• Students who miss four (4) classes will receive fifteen (15) attendance points;
• Students who miss five (5) classes will receive ten (10) attendance points;
• Students who miss six (6) classes receive five (5) attendance points;
• Students who miss seven (7), eight (8), or nine (9) classes will receive zero (0) attendance points; and
• Students who miss ten (10) or more classes will receive no (0) attendance points AND lose twenty-five (25) points from their total course grades.

Note: College policy requires students who miss more than two classes in a row to call (470-6660) or meet (110 Bray Hall) with Tom Slocum (Director of Career and Counseling Services).

Readings and Quizzes: I use the quizzes as an additional incentive for on time attendance and
completing the readings. Since class starts at 8:00, quizzes, when they occur, will usually be over by 8:10. Missed quizzes cannot be made up.

**Standards for Assignments:** Unless otherwise noted, all assignments must be double-spaced with one (1) inch margins and use twelve (12) point Times or Times New Roman fonts. All assignments must meet minimum standards for advanced undergraduate assignments: 1) be clear, concise and appropriate for an advanced undergraduate course, 2) use headings and subheadings, 3) use standardized citations for all cited literature (see *The Chicago Manuel of Style*), and 4) include page numbers. Student’s names should appear on the first page of all assignments; do not put cover sheets on assignments. Unless noted, all page number requirements in this syllabus do not include the literature cited section of the assignment (if needed).

**Late Assignments:** All assignments must be turned in on time. I and Ms. Littleboy will not accept late assignments. Note: Students must turn assignments in on time even if they miss the class the assignment is due – students missing class should email their assignment to Ms. Littleboy before class or have another student turn in the assignment in class. We will make no exceptions to this policy.

**Academic Misconduct:** I assume that as seniors, you understand what plagiarism is and that it will not be an issue. Students must complete assignments without any assistance from classmates or others. In other words, students are strictly prohibited from substantively discussing assignments with classmates. Students may discuss the assignment’s procedural aspects (e.g., due dates, assignment requirements, etc.) with classmates. Any students found to be interacting with classmates on assignments or plagiarizing will automatically receive an “F” for the final course grade and be reported to ESF student affairs. If you have questions please ask, but be aware that the student code of conduct will be strictly enforced.

**Classroom Learning Environment:** To maintain the best possible environment for learning, all students in this class will:

- Be on time for class and not leave early,
- Not have conversations among themselves during class that distract other students or the instructor,
- Not read the newspaper or other non-classroom materials during class,
- Turn off all cell phones and pagers before entering the class, and
- Not taunt or belittle other students or use vulgarity or profanity in class.

Students who violate these standards will be given one warning. Another violation of these rules will result in the student being dropped from the class and being reported to the ESF Office of Student Affairs for disciplinary action.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** If you have an identified disability and will need accommodations, you should first contact Mr. Slocum in the Office of Student Life in 110 Bray Hall. He will discuss the ESF’s disability policy with you and work with you to access supportive services. If you have a learning disability, the College will require you to provide supportive documentation and will develop an approved accommodation sheet for you. I can not provide accommodations until you provide me with the accommodation sheet and we meet to discuss its applicability to this course. I will not provide accommodations retroactively. If you have any questions about disabilities, please contact me and/or Mr. Slocum as soon as possible. All conversations will be confidential.

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1Plagiarism will not be tolerated. All papers must contain original thoughts or contain complete and correct citations to other’s work. Note: If you quote someone’s work, you must provide the page number for the quotation.
## Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Number and Topic</th>
<th>Readings (in suggested order)</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>August 29: Introduction and Syllabus Review</td>
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<td>August 31: Forest Wars</td>
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<td>September 5: Economics and Policy</td>
<td>Hardin; Cubbage 3</td>
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<td>September 7: Interest Groups</td>
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<td>September 12: Congress</td>
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<td>September 14: The Presidency</td>
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<td>September 19: Administrative Agencies</td>
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<td>September 21: The Judiciary</td>
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<td>September 26: Examination One Review</td>
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<td>September 28: Examination One</td>
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<td>October 3: Approaches to Policy Analysis</td>
<td>Cubbage 2; Anderson;</td>
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<td>October 5: Private Lands I: Regulation of Forests</td>
<td>Cubbage 14 &amp; 16</td>
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<td>October 10: Private Lands II - Easements &amp; Land Use</td>
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<td>October 12: Public Lands I: Parks, Refuges, and Preserves</td>
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<td>October 17: Public Lands II: Multiple Use</td>
<td>Cubbage 12 &amp; 13</td>
<td>Policy Memorandum I</td>
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<td>October 19: NEPA &amp; SEQRA</td>
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<td>October 24: No Class – Eid Ul-Fitr Break</td>
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<td>October 26: No Class – SAF Meeting - Pittsburgh</td>
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<td>October 31: Examination Two Review</td>
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<td>November 2: Examination Two</td>
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<td>November 7: Wildlife Policy</td>
<td>Cubbage 15</td>
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<td>November 9: Endangered Species</td>
<td>Cubbage 15</td>
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<td>November 14: Water Resources</td>
<td>Cubbage 14</td>
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<td>November 16: Sustainability</td>
<td>Floyd</td>
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<td>November 21: International Forest Policy</td>
<td>Criteria &amp; Indicators</td>
<td>Policy Memorandum II</td>
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<td>November 23: No Class – Thanksgiving Break</td>
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<td>November 28: Forest Certification</td>
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<td>November 30: Ethics</td>
<td>Leopold</td>
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<td>December 5: Examination Three Review</td>
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<td>The Field Report</td>
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<td>December 7: Examination Three</td>
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Appendix A: Policy Memoranda Assignments

Each student will complete two policy memorandum over the course of the semester. Each memorandum should be concise, clearly written with a clear recommendation based on your analysis of the facts. Ideal memorandum are two (2) single-spaced pages, organized with sub-headings, and usually containing tables. They should be written using 12 point Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins and page numbers. Since this is an academic exercise, you must include a third page with a list of the references you consulted as part of your analysis.

Here are two references for you to consult in writing your memo. I think Professor Wilcoxen’s structure is particularly useful. Note that I am not suggesting you follow these criteria explicitly, but they are good advice.

- Tips on Writing a Policy Memo by Peter J. Wilcoxen: http://wilcoxen.cp.maxwell.syr.edu/pages/275.html
- Writing Criteria for Policy Memos attributed to Steve Frank: http://www.pubpol.duke.edu/centers/dewitt/course/memoguide.html

In addition, one of our former graduate students, Denise Keele, has agreed to allow our class to use one of her memos as an example. It follows these instructions in Appendix B.

Ms. Littleboy has kindly consented to read and review your drafts, but you should plan to get them to her at least 10 days before the due date. She will not review drafts handed in less than 10 before they are due.

You must select two of the following topics. You may also select a different topic for the second memo with the instructor’s permission.

Assume that you are the environmental and natural resources policy staff assistant for the appropriate elected or appointed official. Write a memorandum to your boss to address:

1. Why New York State should regulate diameter limit cutting on private lands;
2. Why New York State should fully compensate local governments for property tax revenue under the 480/480A forestry program;
3. Why the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should use exotic biological controls to manage purple loosestrife on the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge; or
4. Why the EPA should implement a tradeable permit system for Hg emissions.
MEMORANDUM

To: Pete White, Mayor of Syracuse, NY
From: Denise Keele
RE: Contracting Out Services
Date: November 13, 2002

Strengths

Contracting out services has several strengths. The number one reason governments pursue contracting out services is to save money. The basic philosophy reasons that marketplace competition, relying on cheap labor and not subject to public laws, can replace the tendency of government monopolies to be inefficient and unresponsive. A second strength of contracting out is the flexibility private firms can offer in how they provide the service. For example, it is often easier for a contractor to start a new program than it is for an entrenched bureaucracy to ‘retool’ its rules and procedures to create the best working environment for an effective new program. A third strength of contracting out is that contracts can be a mechanism to further social and economic objectives. For example, contracts can be awarded to nurture small business or promote minority businesses and contracts can specify the use of recycled materials.

Finally, contracting out, as your own campaign proved, can be a way to garner political support. However, I must caution you to more fully define the reasons for your support of contracting out. Political support is often gained on the basis that contracts help curb big government. It can be argued that contracting out allows government to grow and provide more programs and influence more socioeconomic goals than government programs given their constraints could do alone. Thus, privatization of government can be recast as governmentalization of the private sector. If your support for contracting out stems from the need to make government programs more efficient and accountable then we may first want to look at improving the performance measures within government programs to remedy these problems instead of leaping headlong into privatization. Also, even though you were elected on your resolve to contract out city services, our office must ascertain the degree of political support for contracting out at other governmental levels that we are responsible to.

Weaknesses

Contracting out has many weaknesses. The first question we should ask is if contracting out will really save the government any money. The profit motive in the private sector is not a panacea for efficiently run programs. Contractors have little incentive to control expenses if adequate safeguards for measuring accountability and performance are not imposed within the contract. A competitive number of providers must exist for the marketplace to produce its virtues of efficiency. If there is no existing market for the goods the government wants then it is usually not worthwhile for the government to contract out for the good. Monitoring the contractors is costly and resource intensive and these expenses must also be included in the cost – benefit analysis of contracting out.

With contracting out there is serious potential for collusion and abuse. For each contract we must ask if there is an arm’s length relationship between the private contractor and the government. Even the appearance of impropriety in choosing contractors, such as picking your old friends, will be devastating to your administration. The biggest potential for abuse lies in the indirect relationship between taxpayer money and government service. Contractors and any subcontractors they might use share discretion over the use of public authority and spending public funds. To minimize abuse of contracts our office must do its homework on any potential contractors. It is important to remember that government is still accountable for contractors’ work and improper discretion by contractors will reflect on you and any lawsuits will land in our office. Also, if the contractor makes mistakes our office will have to go back in and pay to fix it.

Another set of questions we should ask before contracting out involves the quality of the service. Will the
contractor be able to meet citizens needs and provide continuity in services or could the government program provide higher quality and continuous service? For example, private companies can file for bankruptcy and their workers may strike – how will we provide service in the interim and what may be the potential government costs of filling in for such disruptions in service? Of course our office could always switch to a new contractor but there will still be a gap in service while we follow the bidding process and research the reputations of new potential contractors – which all cost our office money.

**Decision Criteria**

In deciding whether to contract out programs we must look at the impact on our government and on other organizations that currently help us provide services. To assess the strengths and weakness of contracting out services in Syracuse we first need to know all the programs the city offers, where needs still exist, and the costs and performance associated with each city program. This process should involve a complete scan of the Syracuse City environment including: what do we do now (technology), legal authority for programs, political support for contracting out, the economics of our own programs and feasibility of providing services any cheaper, the demographics of the population we serve, the ecological consequences of contracting out, and the cultural factors supporting or against contracting out. Contracting out has become a norm for government and our government can learn from other experiments. I suggest our office find a city comparable to Syracuse that has experienced success in contracting out programs so that we may use their experience as a model.

In general contracting out works best when the program has clearly defined goals and objectives that are relatively easy to measure. Government programs are well known for their vague and ambiguous objectives and unquantifiable results – so, many programs may not be appropriate to contract. Contracting out is inappropriate for many human services since contractors are likely to avoid difficult or expensive clients. Keep in mind that programs do not need to be profitable to be worthwhile, and running necessary but unprofitable programs has historically been the role of government. There are many forms of partnerships between existing government entities and the non-profit sector that we may want to look into before contracting out. Also, the performance and accountability of our services could be improved in house through non-traditional means such as cost shares programs, user fees, use of volunteers or internships, donations, and/or vouchers. In general, with any new initiative we need to get our legal staff in on this to make sure of the rules we need to follow in preparing and committing to contracts, and we need to keep the media informed of our every move.

**Recommendation**

I recommend that you do not follow through on your promise to contract out all city programs. Some services will lend themselves to contracts and others will not. Our office will need to weigh the strengths and weaknesses of contracting out described above for each program the city offers. To contract out all programs would fundamentally change government from an entity of doing to one of arranging and this organizational change requires employees who can manage contracts, not manage programs. We must ask ourselves how we will stay accountable for our services when our government is but a shell that actually does nothing while overseeing everything. This accountability challenge increases with more interdependence/contracting as does the legitimacy challenge of providing public services with public dollars through private actors. In a democracy the public expects more of a relationship with its government and elected officials than extensive contracting out allows.