Course Outline

EST 612

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND
GOVERNANCE

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SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Spring 2009, Th 9:30 am – 12:20 pm

*** Note: this course will commence on Thursday, January 22, 2009 ***

DESCRIPTION

Overview

This graduate-level course examines environmental politics and policymaking at various geopolitical scales. It considers the roles of governmental, private sector, non-governmental, community, consumer, and other actors in environmental governance. The course begins with a survey of the interrelated fields of environmental philosophy, politics and policy, respectively; and continues with case studies of environmental policymaking in domestic (community-based and multi-level), international, and global arenas, respectively. Each week, students write short, critical commentaries on the required readings; these essays serve, as well, as the starting point for class discussion. In addition, students engage in a semester-long research project, applying course concepts to a related topic of their own choosing. In the concluding weeks of the semester, students give an oral presentation and submit a medium-length paper communicating their research findings and analysis.

Objectives

By the completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Distinguish the importance of geopolitical, economic, cultural, and ecological factors on appropriate and effective levels and forms of environmental policymaking and governance;
- Demonstrate familiarity with the philosophies, roles, and contributions of political parties, governmental, private sector, non-governmental, community, consumer, and other actors in environmental policymaking and governance;
- Distinguish between regulatory, voluntary, market-based, and participatory approaches to environmental policymaking and governance;
- Comfortably, clearly, and persuasively master the art of the short, critical essay;
• Demonstrate oral and written proficiency in applying basic course concepts, or analytical frameworks, and/or theoretical perspectives to a research topic of their choosing.

Procedures
The course meets each Thursday morning during the semester. The course is designed in the first instance as a reading seminar, with required weekly readings, and short (2 pp.), formal essays on that week's assigned reading. Commentaries are due by e-mail to the instructor and all course participants no later than 8:00 am, Wednesday, the day before class. (Guidelines for these commentaries will be handed out separately.) All participants are expected to read each others' commentaries, as well as the required texts, prior to class. Each Thursday morning, we will begin our discussion of the assigned text(s) with the commentaries.

Secondly, students explore the relevance and application of course concepts to a research topic/area of interest of their own. Weekly commentaries may explore possible applications of or interrelations between course materials and your research topic. By the end of the course, students will have developed a seminar paper utilizing concepts and approaches examined in the course. Seminar papers are shared with course participants in the form of a short talk, multi-media or poster presentation.

Requirements
• Attend all class sessions;
• Read all required texts;
• Submit 10 weekly commentaries (@ 2 pp. max.) on the required readings;
• Prepare, orally present, and submit a medium length (~15 pp.) seminar paper applying course concepts to a relevant research topic.

Grading
Weekly commentaries (10), 40%
Semester-long research project, 40%
  -- Oral presentation, 20%
  -- Written paper, 80%
Attendance and participation, 20%

Communication
Office:  106 Marshall
Hrs.:    TBD
Tel.     315.470.4931/ 6636, fax 315.470.6915
E-mail:  <dsonn@esf.edu>, and <DASonnenfeld@gmail.com>
URL:    http://www.esf.edu/es/sonnenfeld
**TEXTS**

**Required**


**Bookstore**

Follett's Orange Bookstore, Marshall Square Mall, 720 University Ave., tel. 478.6821

**SEMINAR PAPER**

*Topic.* By **Week 4**, submit a written proposal outlining an environmental issue or topic you would like to develop into a seminar paper for this course, and from what perspective you propose to examine that topic. You may expand on a topic addressed in one of the course texts, or develop another topic of your choice. Proposal should be 1-2 pp., typed, double-spaced. (Feb. 5)

*Abstract, Outline, and Bibliography.* By **Week 9**, submit a working abstract, outline and bibliography for your seminar paper (two cc; Mar. 19)

*Buddy Comments.* In **Week 10**, submit comments on your seminar partner's working abstract, outline and bibliography (two cc; Mar. 26)

*Oral Presentation.* Present your seminar paper in class, 10-15 min., including questions and discussion. **Week 14**. (Apr. 23, 20% of Seminar Paper grade)

*Seminar Paper.* ~15 pp. typed, double-spaced, plus cover page & references. Due at the beginning of the regularly scheduled **Final Exam** period for this course. (80% of Seminar Paper grade)

**SCHEDULE**

1. **Politics of the Environment: A Theoretical and Analytical Framework**

   **Week 1 – No Class**

   **Week 2 – Course Introduction**

   Course Introduction

   Theory: Thinking about the Environment
REQUIRED:

**Week 3 – Parties and Movements**
Green Political Parties
The 'Greening' of Established Parties
Environmental Groups

REQUIRED:

*** Commentary #1 due ***

**Week 4 – Environmental Policy**
The Environment as a Policy Problem
Greening Government
Policy Instruments and Implementation

REQUIRED:

*** Commentary #2 due ***
*** Paper Topic Due ***

**Week 5 – Globalization and the Environment**
Sustainable Development and Ecological Modernization
Global Environmental Politics
Globalization, Trade, and the Environment

REQUIRED:

*** Commentary #3 due ***

**II. Case Study I: The River Runs Black**

**Week 6 – China's Environmental Problems**
The Death of the Huai River
A Legacy of Exploitation
The Economic Explosion and Its Environmental Cost

REQUIRED:
Economy, *River Runs Black*, ch's 1-3, pp. 1-90

*** Commentary #4 due ***

**Week 7 – Challenges and Opportunities**
The Challenge of Greening China
The New Politics of the Environment
REQUIRED:
Economy, *River Runs Black*, ch's 4-5, pp. 91-176
*** Commentary #5 due ***

**Week 8 – China's Future**

The Devil at the Doorstep; Lessons from Abroad;
Averting the Crisis
REQUIRED:
Economy, *River Runs Black*, ch's 6-8, pp. 177-274
*** Commentary #6 due ***

**SPRING BREAK**

Research Workshop

**Week 9 – Mid-Semester Check-in: Seminar Papers**

Abstract, Outlines, Preliminary Bibliography
Two copies – one for your seminar paper 'buddy'
*** Abstract, Outline and Bibliography due (2cc) ***

**III. Case Study II: Chronicles from the Environmental Justice Frontline**

**Week 10 – Environmental Justice in Louisiana**

Environmental Justice Struggles in Perspective
Roots of Environmental Injustice in Louisiana
Role of the Judiciary
REQUIRED:
Roberts and Toffolon-Weiss, *Chronicles*, Preface, ch's 1-3, pp. vii-100
*** Commentary #7 due ***
*** Buddy Comments due (2cc) ***

**Week 11 – The Experience of Local Struggles**

Shintech PVC Plant
Grand Bois Oilfield Waste Dump
Municipal Landfill
REQUIRED:
Roberts and Toffolon-Weiss, *Chronicles*, ch's 4-7, pp. 101-222
*** Commentary #8 due ***
IV. Case Study III: Challenging the Chip (Global)

Week 12 – **Labor Rights and Environmental Justice**
- The Quest for Sustainability and Justice
- The Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition
- Worker Health in Scotland
- Community-Based Organizing on the U.S.-Mexico Border
- Taiwan's Hsinchu Science Park
- New Perspectives for Organized Labor

REQUIRED:
Smith, et al., *Challenging the Chip*, Foreword, Introduction, Part I Section Introduction, pp. ix-16; Part II, ch's 9-17, pp. 107-200

*** Commentary #9 due ***

Week 13 – **Electronic Waste and Extended Producer Responsibility**
- Environmental Politics and Lifecycle Analysis
- High-tech Pollution in Japan
- High-tech's Dirty Little Secret
- International Environmental Agreements and the IT Sector
- Private Sector Politics: The Dell Corporate Campaign

REQUIRED:
Smith, et al., *Challenging the Chip*, Part III, ch's 18-25, Appendices, pp. 201-310

*** Commentary #10 due ***

V. Applying the Framework in Your Own Research

Week 14 – **Oral Presentations**

*Note*: Course session may be longer than usual this week

*Final Exam Period – Seminar Paper Due*