Course Outline

EST 612

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

David A. Sonnenfeld
Department of Environmental Studies

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Spring 2014, Th 9:30 am – 12:20 pm, Bray 324

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 required readings; these essays serve 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 choosing. At the end 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 various geopolitical levels 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 proficiency in applying basic course concepts, analytical frameworks, and/or theoretical perspectives to a research topic of their choosing.
Procedures

The course meets each Thursday morning during the semester; it is organized, in the first instance, as a reading and writing seminar, with weekly readings and related short, formal essays. Commentaries are due to the instructor and all course participants via the course Blackboard site, no later than **8:00 am, Wednesday**, the day before the class. (Guidelines for these commentaries will be handed out separately.) Students are expected to read all 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.

Even while we are reading, writing and discussing key readings, students will apply course concepts to a related research topic/area of their choice. The weekly commentaries may explore interrelationships between course materials and the research topic. By the end of the course, students will have completed a seminar paper utilizing concepts and approaches examined in the course. In the final session(s), the research projects are shared with course participants in the form of a short presentation.

Requirements

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

Grading

Weekly commentaries (10), 50%
Semester-long research project, 40%, of which:
  -- Seminar paper, 80%
  -- Oral presentation, 20%
Attendance and participation, 10%

Communication

Office: 211B Marshall
Hrs.: M 12:30-1:50pm, Tu 4:00-5:20pm & by appointment
Tel. 315.470.4931/6636, fax 315.470.6915
E-mail: <dsonn@esf.edu>, and <DASonnenfeld@gmail.com>
Web: [http://www.esf.edu/es/sonnenfeld](http://www.esf.edu/es/sonnenfeld)

TEXTS

Required


**Recommended**


**Bookstore**

*ESF Virtual Bookstore* (in cooperation with Follett Virtual Bookstores), tel. 800-621-4088, e-mail: customerservice@fvb.follett.com. Available via *myESF* and at:

http://www.bkstr.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/StoreCatalogDisplay?catalogId=10001&langId=-1&storeId=305905&demoKey=d

For further information, see:

http://www.esf.edu/students/books.htm

**LIBRARY GUIDE**

http://libguides.esf.edu/est612

**SEMINAR PAPER**

*Topic.* By **Week 3**, 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. (Jan. 31)

*Abstract, Outline, and Bibliography.* By **Week 7**, submit a working abstract, outline and bibliography for your seminar paper (two cc; Feb. 28)

*Buddy Comments.* In **Week 8**, submit comments on your seminar partner's working abstract, outline and bibliography (two cc; Mar. 7)

*Oral Presentation.* Brief presentation of your research project in class, ~10 min., including questions and discussion. **Weeks 13-14**. (Apr. 18 & 25, 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

I. Politics of the Environment: A Theoretical and Analytical Framework

   **Week 1 – Course Introduction**
   Course Introduction
   Theory: Thinking about the Environment
   REQUIRED:

   **Week 2 – Parties and Movements**
   Green Political Parties
   The 'Greening' of Established Parties
   Environmental Groups
   REQUIRED:
   Carter, Politics of the Environment, Part II, ch's 4-6, pp. 83-170
   *** Commentary #1 due ***

   **Week 3 – Environmental Policy and Governance**
   The Environment as a Policy Problem
   Greening Government
   Policy Instruments and Implementation
   Environmental Governance
   REQUIRED:
   RECOMMENDED:
   Young, On Environmental Governance
   ADDITIONAL:
   *** Paper Topic Due ***
   *** Commentary #2 due ***

   **Week 4 – Globalization and the Environment**
   Sustainable Development and Ecological Modernization
   Global Environmental Politics
   Globalization, Trade, and the Environment
   REQUIRED:
   Carter, Politics of the Environment, ch's 8-10, Conclusion, pp. 207-290, 353-362
   RECOMMENDED:
   Axelrod, et al., The Global Environment: Institutions, Law, and Policy
   Mol, et al., The Ecological Modernisation Reader
II. Case Studies I: Environmental Governance in China

Week 5 – *China's Environmental Challenges*

**REQUIRED:**
Shapiro, *China's Environmental Challenges*, ch's 1-2

**RECOMMENDED:**
Economy, *The River Runs Black*

*** Commentary #3 due ***

Week 6 – *Environmental Policy and Governance in China*

**REQUIRED:**
Shapiro, *China's Environmental Challenges*, ch's 3-5

**RECOMMENDED:**
Carter & Mol, *Environmental Governance in China*

*** Commentary #4 due ***

Week 7 – *Mid-Semester Check-in: Seminar Papers*

Abstract, Outlines, Preliminary Bibliography
Two copies – one for your seminar paper 'buddy'

*** Abstract, Outline and Bibliography due (2cc) ***

Week 8 – *China's Future*

**REQUIRED:**
Shapiro, *China's Environmental Challenges*, ch's 6-7

**RECOMMENDED:**

*** Commentary #6 due ***

*** Buddy Comments due (2 cc) ***

**SPRING BREAK**

III. Case Studies II: *Environmental Justice in the United States*

Week 9 – *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
Week 10 – 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 Studies III: Governing Global Environmental Flows

Week 11 – 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 12 – 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 Course Concepts to Your Research

Weeks 13 & 14 – Oral Presentations

Final Exam Period – Seminar Paper Due