

UPDATED 08 January 2019

Winter 2019 POL329 / EPC390: US Environmental Politics

Northwestern University

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00 pm – 3:20 pm, University Hall 122

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Office Hours: Fridays 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm (sign up for an appointment at <http://calendly.com/kimberly-marion>); other times available by appointment only

Teaching Assistant:

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:00 am – 11:00 am, Scott Hall 213

1. Course Description and Philosophy

This course explores the ongoing socio-political challenges of addressing environmental problems. Drawing primarily on research in political science and political ecology, we will analyze the diverse types of social dilemmas that produce environmental problems and the social effects of environmental politics. We focus on contemporary environmental politics to consider emerging political frontiers in US environmental politics. We will examine the nature of environmental problems through different theoretical frameworks, including collective action, distributive, and ideational explanations of environmental problems. We will explore core debates in environmental politics that interrogate the role of science, ethics, and economics in shaping environmental policy. We will also consider different approaches and institutions for addressing environmental problems. Throughout the course, we will pay particular attention to the values conflicts that constitute environmental politics, with a particular emphasis on indigenous and underrepresented communities. This course is designed to give students an understanding of important conceptual issues in environmental politics.

The course is comprised of interactive lectures and discussion sections. The lectures will provide an opportunity for students to contemplate different approaches to explaining and addressing environmental challenges. Discussion sections will challenge students to delve more deeply into a particular topic by applying concepts introduced in readings and lectures to specific US-based cases, as well as seek to understand the critical variables that explain how a case is evolving.

Note that this course is not an environmental law class. As such, you should not expect a full survey of environmental policies in the US. Instead, our treatment of US environmental policies is designed to assist students in understanding and applying concepts so that they may independently understand and evaluate a variety of environmental problems and solutions. Please check the resources folder on Canvas for background material on US environmental laws and policies.

2. Learning Objectives

The overarching objective of this interactive lecture-based course is to cultivate critical thinking and reading skills to generate a nuanced, analytical approach for understanding the socio-political dynamics of environmental issues. By the end of this course students will be able to:

- (1) Prepare appropriately to participate effectively in class discussion, including challenging and offering substantive replies to others' arguments, comments, and questions, while remaining sensitive to the original speaker/writer and the classroom audience.
- (2) Identify and analyze how key debates in environmental politics shape our understanding of various environmental challenges
- (3) Evaluate environmental challenges to understand how problem structures shape the politics around environmental issues

- (4) Produce a political analysis that evaluates an environmental problem, analyzes the conflicts, institutions, and actors that shape the problem, and offers a well-reasoned assessment of politically possible pathways forward
- (5) Effectively communicate their ideas, opinions, and arguments on different environmental policy topics

3. Our Contract

By enrolling in this course, you and I are entering into a contract with each other. I will work hard to be prepared, enthusiastic, fair, and respectful of every student and their opinions. I will be accessible and try my best to return graded materials after no more than 1-2 weeks. By enrolling in the class, you have agreed to (1) attend and prepare for class, (2) participate by asking questions and joining in class discussions, (3) read the assigned material and complete assignments on time, (4) comply with class policies established in this syllabus, and (5) uphold Northwestern University's commitment to academic integrity (see <http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/>).

4. Course Materials

The following materials are required for this course. Student Enrichment Services offers advice on how to find and afford our course materials. Please visit <http://www.northwestern.edu/enrichment/> for more information on their services.

- (1) Andrew Dobson. 2016. *Environmental Politics: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780199665570
 - a. The readings from this book are noted as **Dobson** in the reading assignments.
- (2) Additional materials available through Canvas and Library Reserves (through Canvas).
- (3) Library Guide for Environmental Studies:
<http://libguides.northwestern.edu/environmentalstudies>

5. Course Format and Requirements

The course includes two lectures and one discussion section each week. The lectures are designed to introduce students to core concepts, debates, and histories that help us understand environmental politics and policy. The discussion section provides an opportunity to more closely examine and interrogate the concepts and theories through in-depth case studies. Even though this is a large class, the material we cover demands active participation and interaction to fully grasp the concepts, complexities, and challenges of environmental policy. Thus, our regular class meetings will include interactive class activities, discussion, and lectures. **Please come to each class prepared by completing the required readings and assignments.** There will be many different ways to actively participate in our class and I encourage you to engage using a variety of different approaches.

Communication—both written and verbal—is critical for understanding and affecting environmental policy change. Assignments include in-class quizzes and activities, discussion section participation, short papers, one midterm, and a final paper. Specific guidelines for each assignment will be made available on Canvas well in advance of the due date. All assignments should be submitted through Canvas unless otherwise noted. **All students are responsible for visiting the course website regularly to check for the most current schedule, readings, assignment prompts, course policies, and web links for facilitating class discussion.**

Note: Missed exams cannot be made up for any reason not properly documented or approved in advance. Weinberg rules prevent scheduling the final exam before the final exam period.

Due Date	Assignment	Points (%)	Learning Objectives
Ongoing	Research Study Participation	See below	
Ongoing	Participation in Section and Lecture	75 (15%)	1, 5
Jan 22	Short Paper #1 at 2:00 pm	50 (10%)	2, 3, 5
Feb 5	Short Paper #2 at 2:00 pm	50 (10%)	2, 3, 5
Feb 19	Cumulative Midterm Exam (in-class) - <i>Submit midterm review questions by Feb. 14 at 8:00 am</i>	100 (20%)	2, 3
Mar 8	Final Paper Option A (<i>must sign up by Feb. 12 at 4:00 pm</i>)	225 (45%)	4, 5
Mar 12	(1) Full Draft of Political Analysis at 12:00 pm	85	
Mar 18	(2) Written Peer Evaluation at 2:00 pm	25	
Mar 18	(3) Final Paper at 5:00 pm (note the final grade will be the draft grade plus an additional 30 possible points, for a total of 115 possible points)	115	
Mar 18	Final Paper Option B at 5:00 pm	225 (45%)	4, 5
	TOTAL:	500 (100%)	

Research Study Participation Requirement

Students enrolled in this course are required to complete a research assignment that can include up to 4 hours of research study participation. These studies require that students set up an appointment to complete participation at a laboratory on campus (or via an on-line survey). Students will learn how studies are conducted and will receive a synopsis at the conclusion of the quarter describing the study's goal, result, and relevance to the class. Students who prefer not to participate in the research may opt for an alternative that entails reading any one chapter about political science research and writing a five-page reaction paper. The typical chapter is about 20 pages and thus reading it and writing a five-page paper should take approximately four hours.

Near the start of the quarter, students will receive an e-mail asking them whether they prefer study participation or the alternative assignment. The e-mail will also include details on how to complete either requirement. Failure to complete the requirement during the quarter will result in an incomplete. Failure to complete the requirement during the following quarter will result in a failing grade for the class. Note that if you are enrolled in multiple classes that require participation, you only need to satisfy the requirement one time. Also, if you already completed the requirement in another course in a previous quarter, you are excused from the requirement.

6. Policies

While technology in the classroom has its advantages, it is often distracting to your fellow classmates. During class meetings, all laptops, tablets, phones, and recording devices must be turned off and put away, EXCEPT when the instructors request your input for a class poll or quiz. Please talk with me if you have questions or concerns about this policy or require accommodations. No recording of any kind (audio, video) is permitted without my permission.

Grading:

All grades will eventually be scaled to a 100-point system: A (94-100); A- (90-93); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76); C- (70-72); D (60-69); F (<60).

In calculating course grades, **any missing assignment, quiz, or paper will be counted as a zero—something that will seriously affect your course grade.** If you have questions or concerns about your grades, please come to my office hours or schedule an appointment to see me. If you have read this far in the syllabus, please email me and our TA an image of a dusky gopher frog using the subject line "POL329 Winter 2019". Please **do not wait** until the end of the quarter to ask how you can improve your grade. Also, please note that I retain the right to determine final course grades.

Citation and Plagiarism:

Please refer to Northwestern's resources on academic integrity for guidance on how to properly use and credit research in your work. <http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/>.

Suspected violations of academic integrity will be reported to the Dean's Office.

For more information on Northwestern's academic integrity policies, see <http://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/handbook/integrity/index.html>.

Attendance:

One unexcused absence is allowed for any reason; each unexcused absence thereafter will lower your **final participation grade** by one partial letter (e.g., A- to B+, B+ to B). Excused absences require proper documentation, such as a health center or doctor's note, to be submitted within one week of the absence. In all cases, you are fully responsible for all course material, announcements, and notes missed due to absences. If you are late to class, please enter quietly; I'd prefer a minor disruption to you missing an entire class.

Late Assignments:

Because I have provided you with all of the assignment due dates prior to the start of the quarter, **no extensions will be offered in this course**. Assignments turned in late without a valid extension will lose one partial letter grade for each day, e.g. an A- paper turned in one day late will become a B+. **I will not accept any assignments more than five days after the due date**. Assignments not received within five days of the original due date will be given a zero. No extensions will be granted the day an assignment is due except for documented medical or personal emergencies. Computers crashing, file corruption, and other technology problems are not generally considered valid excuses for late work.

Accommodation:

Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with AccessibleNU (accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; 847-467-5530) and provide professors with an accommodation notification from AccessibleNU, preferably within the first two weeks of class (**by January 15**). All information will remain confidential.

Extra Credit: Because of equity, logistical, and practical concerns, I do not offer extra credit opportunities in this class.

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COURSE SCHEDULE OVERVIEW

Please see detailed course schedule for complete list of readings and assignments

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments
1/8 (Tu)	Introduction	Syllabus Dobson Introduction and Chapter 1	
1/10 (Th)	Contemporary Environmental Politics	Dobson Chapter 2 Thompson (2017) Nordhaus (2018) Lopez-Whiteskunk (2017) Savoy (2017)	
1/11 (F)	Film Screening: A Fierce Green Fire (optional)		
1/15 (Tu)	Environmental Movement	Taylor (2016)	
1/17 (Th)	Politics of Problem Definition	Dobson Chapter 3 Ostrom (2000)	Listen to the Weeds Podcast and bring a short, written summary of the problem the commentators discuss
1/22 (Tu)	Water Politics Part I: Quantity, Quality, and Access	Hughes and Mullin (2018) Anand (2017) Ryder (2016)	Short Paper #1 (2:00 pm)
1/24 (Th)	Water Politics Part II: US Water Policies <i>Guest Speaker: Patty Loew</i>	Teodoro et al (2018) Tempus (2018)	
1/29 (Tu)	Atmospheric Politics Part I: Regulating the Right to Pollute	Dobson Chapter 4 Carter (2018)	
1/31 (Th)	Atmospheric Politics Part II: Climate Change	Dobson Chapter 5 Selin and VanDeveer (2019)	
2/1 (F)	Film Screening: <i>The Island and the Whales</i> (optional)		
2/5 (Tu)	Energy Politics Part I: Dams vs. Salmon in the Pacific Northwest	Oliver and Grant (2017)	Short Paper #2 (2:00 pm)
2/7 (Th)	Energy Politics Part II: Hydroelectric Politics and Climate Change	Dorning (2018) Weiser (2016)	
2/8 (F)	Film Screening: <i>Damnation</i> (optional)		
2/12 (Tu)	Politics of Rights and Responsibility: Toxics	Hoover (2017)	Students choosing Option A for the Final Paper must sign up by 4:00 pm
2/14 (Th)	Midterm Review		- Submit midterm review questions by 8:00 am
2/19 (Tu)	MIDTERM (in-class)		
2/21 (Th)	Mercury Simulation	Simulation Readings	
2/26 (Tu)	Mercury Simulation	Simulation Readings	
2/28 (Th)	Mercury Simulation	Simulation Readings	
3/5 (Tu)	Precautionary Politics	Gupta (2015) Rosenbaum (2017)	
3/7 (Th)	LAST DAY OF CLASS	Kingsworth (2011) Maniates (2001)	
3/8 (F)	Option A FULL DRAFT DUE 3/8 (12:00 pm)		Option A FULL DRAFT DUE 3/8 (12:00 pm)
3/12 (Tu)	Option A Peer Reviews due (2:00 pm)		Option A Peer Reviews due (2:00 pm)
3/12 – 17	Reading Week – make-up class (if needed)		
3/18 (M)	EVERYONE FINAL PAPER DUE (5:00 pm)		EVERYONE FINAL PAPER DUE (5:00 pm)

Disclaimer: This syllabus is a living document and is designed to guide our learning. In the spirit of reflexivity, I reserve the right to adjust the schedule, readings and assignments as appropriate and/or necessary. Updates will be posted on our course Canvas site.

PART I: WHAT ARE ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS?

Class #1 (1/8, Tu) Introduction and Course Overview

Key Questions: Why environmental politics?

Readings: (20 pages)

- Syllabus
- Dobson *Introduction* and *Chapter 1: Origins*

Class #2 (1/10, Th) Contemporary Environmental Politics in the United States

Key Questions: What makes something an environmental problem? What kinds of environmental problems are we currently facing? What is the scope and scale of these environmental problems? In what ways are these political problems?

Readings: (61 pages)

- Dobson *Chapter 2: Ideas*
- Nordhaus, Hannah. 2018. "Inside the battle for the American west." *National Geographic*, November 2018: 42-67. (Electronic Reserves)
- Thompson, Jonathan. 2017. "How to make sense of Trump's changes to Bears Ears." *High Country News*, December 5, 2017 (4 pages) (Canvas Readings folder)
- Lopez-Whiteskunk, Regina. 2017. "It's time to heal Bears Ears." In Trimble, Stephen (ed.) *Red Rock Stories: Three Generations of Writers Speak on Behalf of Utah's Public Lands*. Pages 50-52. Salt Lake City: Torrey House Press. (Canvas Readings folder)
- Savoy, Lauret. 2017. "On compromised ground." In Trimble, Stephen (ed.) *Red Rock Stories: Three Generations of Writers Speak on Behalf of Utah's Public Lands*. Pages 54-58. Salt Lake City: Torrey House Press. (Canvas Readings folder)

Class #3 (1/15, Tu) The Environmental Movement

Key Questions: How do environmental issues get on the agenda? What conflicts and values shape the environmental movement? What catalyzes policy action? When do policymakers act on environmental problems?

Readings: (32 pages)

- Taylor, Dorceta. 2016. "Nation building, racial exclusion, and the social construction of wildlands." Chapter 12 in *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement: Power, Privilege, and Environmental Protection*. Durham: Duke University Press. (Electronic Reserves)

Class #4 (1/17, Th) Politics of Problem Definition

Assignments: Listen to the [Weeds Podcast](#) from August 17, 2018, "We're not gonna pay rent," and bring a short, written summary of the problem the commentators discuss (max. 1 page single-spaced)

Key Questions: What are different ways of explaining environmental degradation? What are its causes? What are the implications of problem definition for solving environmental challenges? How do identities shape environmental problems?

Readings: (36 pages)

- Dobson *Chapter 3: Movements, Parties, Policies*
- Ostrom, Elinor. (2000). The danger of self-evident truths. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 33(1), **pages 33, 37-42 ONLY.** (Canvas Readings folder)

Class #5 (1/22, Tu) Water Politics, Part I: Quantity, Quality, and Access

Assignment: Short Paper #1 due at 2:00pm

Key Questions: What are contemporary water problems in the United States? What theories explain the emergence of these problems? What are the causes of and solutions for distributive conflicts that lead to environmental degradation? What different principles (should) shape responses to water issues?

Readings: (41 pages)

- Hughes, Sara and Megan Mullin. 2018. "Local water politics." In Conca, Ken and Erika Weinthal (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Water Politics and Policy*, Oxford Handbooks Online. 32 pages. (Canvas Readings folder)
- Anand, Nikhil. 2017. "The banality of infrastructure." *Items: Insights from the Social Sciences*. Social Science Research Council, June 27, 2017. 5 pages. (Canvas Readings folder)
- Ryder, Stacia. 2016. "The Flint water crisis and beyond: looking through the lens of environmental justice." *Natural Hazards Observer*, April 2016: 22-25. (Canvas Readings folder)

Class #6 (1/24, Th) Water Politics, Part II: Emerging US water politics

Guest Speaker: Patty Loew, Director, Center for Native American and Indigenous Research, Northwestern University; Professor, Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University.

Key Questions: Whose values and voices shape US environmental politics and policy? What are the implications for social and environmental outcomes?

Readings: (36 pages)

- Teodoro, Manuel P., Mellie Haider, and David Switzer. 2018. "US environmental policy implementation on tribal lands: trust, neglect, and justice." *Policy Studies Journal* 46(1): 37-59. (Canvas Readings Folder)
- Tempus, Alexandra. 2018. "The People's Forest." *Orion*, August. 14 pages. (Canvas Readings)

Class #7 (1/29, Tu) Atmospheric Politics Part I: Regulating the Right to Pollute

Key Questions: What are new environmental policy instruments? What are market-based approaches? What kinds of tradeoffs must be considered when selecting policy instruments? How should policy impacts be measured?

Readings: (63 pages)

- Dobson *Chapter 4: Local and Global, North and South* (29 pages)
- Carter, Neil. 2018. "Policy instruments and implementation." Chapter 12 in *The Politics of the Environment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pages 332-366. (Canvas Readings folder)

Class #8 (1/31, Th) Atmospheric Politics Part II: Climate Change

Key Questions: What are contemporary air and atmospheric problems in the United States? What theories explain the emergence of these problems? What different principles (should) shape responses to atmospheric issues? What is the logic of collective action?

Readings: (36 pages)

- Dobson *Chapter 5: Environmental Futures*, 12 pages.
- Selin, Henrik and Stacy VanDeveer. 2019. "Global climate change governance: Where to go after Paris?" Chapter 13 in Vig, Norman J. and Michael E. Kraft (eds.) *Environmental Policy: New Directions for the Twenty-First Century, 10th Edition*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Pages 322-346.

Class #9 (2/5, Tu) Energy Politics Part I: Dams and Salmon in the Pacific Northwest

Assignments: Short Paper #2 due at 2:00pm

Key Questions: What are contemporary energy issues in the United States? What theories explain the emergence of these problems? What different principles (should) shape responses to energy issues? What is science? What is the role of scientists in environmental politics?

Readings: (6 pages)

- Oliver, Marie and Gordon Grant. 2017. "Liberated Rivers: Lessons from 40 years of dam removal." *Science Findings*. Portland, Oregon: US Department of Agriculture, Pacific Northwest Research Station. 6 pages. (Canvas Readings folder)

Class #10 (2/7, Th): Energy Politics Part II: Hydroelectric Politics and Climate Change

Key Questions: What types of ethical dilemmas do decision-makers face when confronting environmental problems? How should policymakers decide what types of tradeoffs are acceptable when addressing environmental problems?

Readings: (23 pages)

- Dorning, Sandra. 2018. "Klamath and Snake River dam removal: Using contextualization to reevaluate and outdated technology." *Journal of Science Policy and Governance* 12(1). 19 pages. (Canvas Readings folder)
- Weiser, Matt. 2016. "The hydropower paradox: is this energy as clean as it seems?" *The Guardian*, November 6, 2016. 4 pages. (Canvas Readings folder).

Class #11 (2/12, Tu): Politics of Rights and Responsibility: Toxics

Assignments: Students choosing final paper option A must sign up by 4:00 pm

Key Questions: What is environmental justice and how does it (and should it) inform decision-making? Why are some people denied the basic right to a clean and safe environment? Why are some groups disproportionately burdened with pollution?

Readings: (52 pages)

- Hoover, Elizabeth. 2017. "Environmental contamination, health studies, and mitigation politics." Chapter 2 in *The River is in Us: Fighting Toxics in a Mohawk Community*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press. Pages 69-121.

Class #12 (2/14, Th): Midterm Review (in-class)

Assignments: Submit midterm review questions by 8:00 am

Class #13 (2/19, Tu): **MIDTERM (in-class exam)**

The mid-term is cumulative and will draw from lectures, activities, and course readings.

PART II: ENGAGING ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS

Class #14 (2/21, Th): Mercury Simulation

Assignments: Check Canvas for reading and additional assignments.

Class #15 (2/26, Tu): Mercury Simulation

Assignments: Check Canvas for reading and additional assignments.

Class #16 (2/28, Th): Mercury Simulation

Assignments: Check Canvas for reading and additional assignments.

Class #17 (3/5, Tu): Precautionary Politics

Key Questions: *How do policy-makers deal with risk and uncertainty in environmental decision-making? How should policy-makers make decisions under conditions of uncertainty?*

Readings: (40 pages)

- Gupta, Aarti. 2015. "Precautionary Principles." In Morin, Jean-Frédéric and Amandine Orsini (eds) *Essential Concepts of Global Environmental Governance*. London: Earthscan from Routledge. Pages 160-163. (Canvas Reading folder)
 - Rosenbaum, Walter A. 2017. "Common policy challenges: risk assessment and environmental justice." Chapter 4 in *Environmental Politics and Policy*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Pages 127-162. (Canvas Reading folder)
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Class #18 (3/7, Th): Looking Forward (Last class)

Key Questions: *Where do we go from here?*

Readings: (40 pages)

- Kingsworth, Paul. 2011. "Confessions of a recovering environmentalist." *Orion*. 12 pages. (Canvas Reading folder)
 - Maniates, Michael F. (2001). Individualization: Plant a tree, buy a bike, save the world? *Global environmental politics*, 1(3), 31-52. (Canvas Reading folder)
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March 8 (Friday): Full Draft – Final Paper Option A DUE at 12:00pm

March 12 (Tuesday): Peer Review – Final Paper Option A DUE at 12:00pm

March 18 (Monday): EVERYONE Final Paper DUE at 5:00 pm