

Environmental Studies 2330/ Government 2910: Environmental Policy and Politics

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Department of Government and Environmental Studies Program
Bowdoin College
Fall Semester 2019

Meeting times and location: *Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:40 am – 1:05 pm, VAC South 303*

Office Hours: *Thursdays, 2:15 pm – 4:15pm* in Roux 127, and by appointment.

Office telephone: 207-721-5046

Office Location: Roux Center for the Environment, 127

E-mail: sstarobi@bowdoin.edu

Course web site: Blackboard (access for enrolled students only)

Course Description

This course explores the political, economic, legal, ethical, and institutional dimensions of the environmental policy-making process. Effective public policy, at its best, engages the skills, expertise, and insights of many individuals, communities, and disciplines—from idea to implementation and evaluation. As a core course for Environmental Studies coordinate majors, Environmental Policy and Politics endeavors to integrate and build upon students' prior knowledge and coursework within and across the disciplines—adding a social-science lens alongside the contributions of the natural sciences and humanities. This course is neither an environmental law class nor a complete survey of U.S. environmental policy. Rather, we engage the broader case of environmental policy-making in the United States to assist students in understanding and applying key concepts such that they may have the skills to independently comprehend and evaluate a range of other environmental problems and solutions within and beyond U.S. borders. Active group work, in-class discussion, activities and lecture will provide opportunities for students to contemplate different approaches to explaining environmental challenges.

Among other things, this course:

- Prepares students to analyze both historical and contemporary cases as well as contrive and evaluate competing policy alternatives to emerging problems.
- Examines the formation and implementation of regulatory institutions and policies across a range of issues in the U.S. and internationally—including terrestrial, coastal and marine natural resources management, biodiversity, water and air pollution, sustainable development, and environmental justice.

2. Learning Objectives

The overarching objective of this course is to cultivate critical thinking and analytical skills with respect to environmental policy issues. By the end of this course students will be able to:

- (1) **Prepare and participate effectively in class**, including raising thoughtful questions that arise from the readings, fully engaging in assigned readings and work, and offering challenging and substantive replies to others' arguments, comments, and questions (including your Professor and peers), while remaining sensitive to the original speaker/writer and the classroom audience.
- (2) Demonstrate familiarity with several different approaches to solving public policy problems, including their strengths and weaknesses.
- (3) Demonstrate an understanding of how values shape core U.S. and international environmental politics and policies.
- (4) Interpret and analyze different perspectives on crucial questions and debates in environmental policy today
- (5) Effectively communicate ideas, opinions, and arguments on different policy topics, verbally and in writing—individually and as a member of a group.
- (6) Work collaboratively as a member of a group to analyze and devise solutions to an environmental policy problem.

3. Course Format and Requirements

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 for that day.** 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 policy change.

****Assignments include in-class activities, one midterm, one final, and a group policy memo project.**** Specific guidelines for each assignment will be made available in advance of the due date. **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.**

4. Course Materials

The following materials are required for this course. There are two required books, in addition to the readings posted on Blackboard. Both books should be available through the bookstore and are available on Amazon. The library should have copies on reserve as well. With the exception of the main books, reading material will be available for students to access and download through Blackboard or links to resources via the library or internet. Be in touch with me if you are concerned about affording course materials, and we will work together to find a solution.

- (1) Dobson, Andrew. 2016. Environmental Politics: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press.
- (2) Steinberg, Paul. 2015. Who rules the earth?: How social rules shape our planet and our lives. Oxford University Press.
- (3) Additional materials available through Blackboard.

5. Policies

Technology:

While technology in the classroom has its advantages, it is often distracting to your fellow classmates. Unless otherwise noted, During class meetings, all laptops, tablets, phones, and recording devices must be turned off and put away. 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.

Email Communication:

Like many instructors, I often use email to communicate with students individually or as a group. I will do my best to reply to your emails within a reasonable amount of time, typically no later than 48 hours. However, I do not check email continuously nor am I available at all hours of the day, so please do not expect an immediate response (especially if you are emailing outside business hours, 8am – 5pm, Monday-Friday). If the question requires much more than a yes or no answer, it's best to come talk to me in person; I am available immediately after class to answer quick questions or set up appointments to talk further about issues requiring a more in-depth discussion.

Grading and Late Assignments:

Numerical grades will be converted to letter grades according to the following 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).

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+). **Extensions must be requested before the due date.** No extensions will be granted the day an assignment is due except for documented medical or personal emergencies. In calculating course grades, **any missing assignments will be counted as a zero.**

Citation and Plagiarism:

Please refer to Bowdoin's resources on academic honesty for guidance on how to properly use and credit research in your work: <https://www.bowdoin.edu/studentaffairs/academic-honesty/when-to-cite.shtml>

Attendance:

One unexcused absence is allowed for any reason; each unexcused absence thereafter will affect your class participation and potentially lower your **final course grade**. 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.

Accommodation:

Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition must register with the

Director of Accommodations for Students with Disabilities (Lesley Levy, 24 College Street, 207-798-4187) and request the ODSA to provide professors with a letter listing the accommodation(s), preferably within the first 2-3 weeks of the semester. All information will remain confidential. Students are expected to reach out to instructors to discuss and arrange for accommodations--well in advance of the assignment or exam for which it is requested.

Writing Project Workshops:

Writing Assistants are available in the Writing Workshop (Center for Learning and Teaching, 102 Kanbar Hall) to assist you at any phase of your writing process. A Writing Assistant can help you focus your ideas and map out a draft, read and respond to a completed draft, or edit and polish a nearly final draft. Be sure to allow adequate time after a conference to revise your work. You can reserve a 45-minute writing conference by going to the Writing Project website <http://www.bowdoin.edu/writing-project> and following the navigation links to the reservation calendar. To work on a paper longer than seven pages, it is wise to reserve two consecutive conference slots with the same Writing Assistant.

NOTE: Syllabus is a work in progress and subject to change. This syllabus is designed to guide our learning. Over the course of the semester, I will adjust the schedule, readings and assignments as appropriate. Updates will be posted on our course Blackboard site.

Due Date	Assignment	Points (%)
Ongoing	Class Participation & in class activities	150 (30%)
	Midterm	50 (10%)
	Weekly Reading Check-ins	50 (10%)
	<i>Policy Memo and Presentation</i>	200 (40%)
	1. Policy Instruments/Criteria Presentations	15
	2. Group Contract	10
	3. Problem Analysis	15
	4. Criteria and Values	20
	5. Policy Alternatives	25
	6. Analysis & Recommendations	25
	7. Group Memo Presentations	25
	8. Final Policy Memo	50
	9. Peer Assessment	15
	Final Exam	50 (10%)
	TOTAL:	500 (100%)