

PLS 209 – Environmental Politics

Fall 2003

Instructor: Mark T. Imperial

Classroom: LH 110

Phone: (910) 962 – 7928

Class times: M/W 12:00 - 1:15

Email: imperialm@uncwil.edu

Secretary: Ruth Lawrence (910) 962 -3220

Office Hours: M 3:00 – 5:00 & by appointment Office: LH 263

<http://people.uncw.edu/imperialm/>

Course Objectives:

This course is designed to give you a greater appreciation of the politics that surround the development, implementation, and evaluation of environmental policy. Specifically, the objectives of the course are to:

- Help you develop a greater appreciation of the complexity and interrelated nature of the causes of environmental problems
- Help you to better understand how science and human values influence the development and implementation of environmental policies
- Develop your ability to analyze environmental problems and form your own opinions and preferences about competing policies
- Improve your ability to think, act, and communicate more effectively about environmental issues and problems

These objectives will be met by exposing you to a wide range of perspectives on environmental issues using various readings, videos, guest speakers, class discussions, and field trips. The class will develop your critical thinking abilities by analyzing controversial policy issues and by participating in role-playing simulations. Your oral communication skills will be developed through class discussions, debates, and role-playing exercises while the preparation of memos and other written assignments will help develop your ability to communicate your ideas and arguments in written form.

Readings:

The following books are required for this course and can be purchased at local book stores or through vendors on the Internet:

- Hempel, Lamont C.. 1996. *Environmental Governance: The Global Challenge*. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Rosenbaum, Walter A. 2002. *Environmental Politics and Policy*. Fifth Edition. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press

Additional required readings have been placed on reserve in the library or have links on the class web site. Copies of the lecture notes and overheads used in class can also be found on the class web site.

Expectations and Approach

This is not a lecture-dominated class where the instructor speaks and the students passively listen. Instead, information will be presented to you in various ways using readings, lectures, videos, occasional guest speakers, and possibly an optional field trip. Part of your learning will be cognitive or factual in nature. However, much of what you learn in this course will involve participating in class discussions and working in groups in order to share your opinions and experiences with your classmates. The two class simulations and class debate each involve working in groups. We will also periodically undertake group exercises. Although you may prefer to do assignments on an

individual basis, groups often do tasks more effectively than individuals and provide you with an opportunity to participate more than would be possible in a larger class. Groups also provide an opportunity to work directly with and learn from your fellow classmates and allow you to observe how others analyze and solve problems. I encourage you to prepare yourself for, and be open to, the variety of ways that you can learn from this course.

Course Requirements:

Your grade in this class will be based on your ability to understand the theories and concepts presented in the readings and discussed class. More specifically, your grade will depend on your performance on the following course requirements:

Class Participation

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings and come to class prepared to discuss any readings, handouts, or assignments that are due that day. To ensure that students are prepared to discuss the readings, occasionally I will have a pop quiz or randomly ask students to present their assignments or to summarize the readings. Your performance on these activities will affect your class participation grade as will the failure to actively participate in class discussions, group work, or the simulations.

While attendance will not be taken on a regular basis, poor classroom attendance may result in a failing participation grade since you cannot participate if you are not in class. Therefore, you should notify the instructor when you are unable to attend class. If you should miss a session when a video is shown, it may be possible to make arrangements to view the film privately at the library or to borrow the video. In certain circumstances it may also be possible to make-up other in-class activities with a written assignment if frequent absences have become a problem. Your participation grade will also be lowered due to the frequent inability to respond to the instructor's questions, poor class preparation, lack of enthusiastic participation in class exercises, or the failure to treat others in the classroom with respect (e.g., talking while others are talking, ridiculing other students, etc.). Simply put, in order to receive an "A" in this class you must be a civil, active contributor to class and not merely score well on exams and assignments.

Issue Memos

One way we will examine the politics surrounding environmental issues and problems is to examine a series of 8 controversial issues. The readings for these assignments are on reserve. Each reading offers arguments for and against a particular policy question. These readings will be supplemented with additional handouts, video clips, and reserve readings. You are required to prepare a memo that provides your response to the issue in question for at least 5 of the 8 issues. I will take your best 5 grades so you are encouraged to prepare additional memos to improve your class grade. When writing your memos, you are encouraged to develop your own arguments based on the readings and class discussions. They should be argumentative in nature and you should use facts from the readings/class discussion/videos to support your arguments. Your memos will also be graded on their technical merits (e.g., spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.). A sample memo is provided, however, any standard single-spaced, 12 pt. font, 1-inch margin memo format is acceptable (Most word processor software has templates). Your memos are limited to 2 single-spaced pages.

Simulations

You will also participate in 2 simulations, each of which has a corresponding written assignment. The common pool resource (CPR) simulation is designed to help you understand Hardin's "Tragedy of the Commons" and the problems associated with managing many natural resources. After participating in the simulation, each student will write a short memo (no longer than 2 single-spaced pages) reflecting on the experience and the associated readings.

The second watershed simulation is designed to help you better understand the wide range of user conflicts, habitat impacts, and water quality problems associated with urban sprawl and land development. Each student will be assigned a specific role to play at a public hearing on a proposed development project. Prior to the simulation, each

student will be required to prepare their written testimony that they will present at the hearing (no longer than 3 single-spaced pages).

Class Debate

You will also be required to participate in one class debate. This semester we will debate President Bush’s proposal to open up a portion of the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to oil and gas development. To ensure that the each side is equal in number, each student will be assigned to either the pro or the con position. To ensure you come prepared to actively participate in the class debate, you will be required to prepare a written summary of your position that you will present during the debate (no longer than 3 single-spaced pages). You will have the option of working with one other classmate to prepare one written assignment. If you choose this option, you will both receive the same grade for the assignment.

Exams

There will be 2 mid-term exams and an optional take-home final exam. The mid-term exams will contain short answer and essay questions. A review sheet will be posted on the class web site approximately one week before the exam and will include a list of terms and concepts and potential essay questions. The final exam will consist of one or more questions that ask students to apply the concepts discussed over the course of the semester. The take-home final exam will be due at the end of the regularly scheduled exam period. If you elect not to take the final exam, your grade will be based on an average calculated based on 900 points rather than 1,000 points. The take-home final exam will be due at the end of the regularly scheduled exam period.

Grading:

All written work will be evaluated based on your analysis of the readings, the organization of your ideas, the strength and substance of your arguments, your ability to properly apply the concepts discussed in class, and the quality of your writing (e.g., spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.). Failure to complete an assignment or failing to follow directions will result in a 0 for the assignment. The final course grade will be calculated based upon the following weights:

Class participation	10% (100 points)
Issue memos (Best 5 of 8 @ 5% each)	25% (250 points)
CPR Assignment	5% (50 points)
Watershed Assignment	5% (50 points)
ANWR Class Debate	10% (100 points)
Mid-Term Exam #1	15% (150 points)
Mid-Term Exam #2	15% (150 points)
Final Exam	15% (150 points)

Course grades will be calculated based on the following scale: A (920 – 1000), A- (900 – 919), B+ (880 – 899), B (820 – 879), B- (800 – 819), C+ (780 – 799), C (720 – 779), C- (700 – 719), D+ (680 – 699), D (620 – 679), D- (600 – 619), and F (0 – 599). There is no rounding up or down. I have a zero tolerance policy for cheating. Anyone caught cheating will receive a failing grade for the course.

Late Assignments/Incompletes:

Tentative due dates for course assignments are listed on the attached course schedule and are subject to change based on class progress and student preferences. You should check the course schedule and announcements pages on the course web site periodically for changes in due dates. Students may bring forward requests for changing the dates of major assignments for class approval with a minimum of one-week advance notice to the class. Unless I have agreed in advance, all assignments are due at the end of the class period they are due. Informing the instructor of your intention to be absent does not waive your obligation to submit the work that is due. Late assignments lose one full letter grade per class they are late. An incomplete will only be granted when there are serious extenuating circumstances that occur after the withdrawal period.