

PLS 543
Environmental Policy Analysis
Spring 2012

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Office Hours: M 4:00 - 6:00 & by appointment

http://people.uncw.edu/imperialm/UNCW/PLS_543/PLS_543.htm

Classroom: LH 254A

Class times: M 6:30 – 9:15

Secretary: Donna Treolo (910) 962 -3220

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Course Objectives & Learning Competencies

The product of policy analysis is usable knowledge that informs decision makers and this advice can come in a variety of forms and is performed by a wide range of practitioners in the public, private, and nonprofit sector. This course is designed to help students develop their ability to analyze environmental policies and to communicate the results of their analysis to a wide audience of potential decision makers or the public. Accordingly, the course emphasizes applying theories, concepts, and methods for public policy analysis to critically examine environmental problems. The ultimate objective of the course is to develop your analytical and communication skills such that at the conclusion of the course you can:

- Demonstrate an ability to define, frame, and think critically about environmental problems and their societal significance;
- Demonstrate an ability to utilize different theories and decision tools to identify and analyze policy alternatives that address environmental problems;
- Demonstrate an ability to communicate the results of this analysis of environmental problems in a manner that is accurate, clear, concise, and persuasive while also being tailored to the audience's expertise and needs.

These competencies will be developed by exposing students to a variety of theories and concepts using various readings, class discussion, videos, and occasional guest speakers. The course will give students an opportunity to further develop these competencies by analyzing cases, preparing analytical memos, and writing and presenting a research paper that analyzes a specific environmental policy problem.

Readings

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

- Layzer, Judith A. 2012. *The Environmental Case: Translating Values into Policy*. Third Edition. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press. ISBN 978-1-60426-612-2 (Required)
- Rosenbaum, Walter A. 2010. *Environmental Politics and Policy*. Eighth Edition. Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press. (Recommended)

Additional required and recommended 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 & Approach

This is not a lecture-dominated class where the instructor speaks and the students passively listen. This is a seminar class where students take an active part in their learning through class discussions, group work, and case analysis. Course readings are supplemented with videos, occasional guest speakers, and other information available on the class web site. Part of your learning will be cognitive or factual in nature. However, much of what you learn in this course will involve developing your analytical skills, enhancing your self-awareness of the organizations in which

you work, and sharing your professional experiences with others in the class. I encourage you to prepare yourself for, and be open to, the variety of ways that you can learn from this course.

Another important part of your learning involves the analysis of case studies and controversial environmental issues. Case studies are compilations of problem situations actually faced by public managers. A case places you into a real world situation and forces you to sort through and analyze various issues or courses of action. I encourage you to discuss the cases and debate the issues with others prior to class.

Course Requirements

Your grade in this class will be based on your ability to understand and apply the theories, concepts, and techniques discussed in the course readings. 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 all readings, handouts, and assignments that are due. To ensure that students are prepared to discuss the readings, I will randomly ask students to summarize a reading, describe a theory, or discuss a case. Each student should also be prepared to share with the class questions that the readings raised and be able to identify the most significant point or contribution that the author makes to the practice of public administration. Students will typically participate in a CPR simulation at some point during the semester or be asked to participate in other types of role-playing exercises. Students may also get asked to lead the discussion of particular readings or topics in the course depending on the class size. Participation in all of these activities will count towards your overall participation grade.

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 of the ways we will examine and apply the concepts discussed in the readings is by analyzing a series of environmental issues. Each issue involves a series of readings providing arguments for and against a particular policy question. The websites for each issue also contain additional hyperlinks to handouts and other websites and you are encouraged to do independent research to answer the question posed in the assignment. Class discussion of the issues will be supplemented with debates, group exercises, and video clips.

You are expected to prepare a memo that provides your response to each of the issues. However, only your best **5 of 6** grades will count towards your final grade. When writing your memos, you are encouraged to develop your own arguments based on the readings and class discussions. Each assignment is designed to 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.). 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. See the websites for each issue for further directions.

Book Review

Each student is required to read, review, and critique a book that touches on the themes we will discuss this semester related to environmental policy analysis (See the website for the book assigned this semester). You have some flexibility in terms of how you prepare your critique. It is limited to 6 double-spaced (or three single-spaced) pages using 12-point font. Be sure to clearly articulate the central premises or arguments advanced by the author and feel free to agree or disagree with all or part of these arguments. You should also relate the content to the material we discuss over the course of the semester and look for examples that illustrate the concepts we are discussing.

Paper/Project

You are required to prepare a research paper on a topic of your choosing. Since you will obviously spend a lot of time on this assignment I encourage you to choose an issue of interest to you. The only requirement is that it should address some sort of environmental policy or management issue. In certain cases a project may be accepted in place of a paper if it adds to your professional development. You will be required to submit a short paper/project proposal early in the semester when indicated on the course schedule. Your paper proposal must include a 1 - 2 page abstract that clearly indicates the environmental problem and research questions you will examine. It should also include a proposed outline of the paper. It must also include a list of 10 references (in addition to websites) to government reports, books, or journal articles that will constitute the core bibliography of your research paper.

I have high expectations for your paper. There is no set length requirement but I expect most of the papers will be at least 20 or more double-spaced pages. They should be well written, be professional in appearance, and be properly referenced in any acceptable style. All papers must be professional in appearance and include a title page, abstract, use headings/subheadings, have page numbers, and include a bibliography of references consulted. In terms of content, there is some flexibility but all *research* papers involve researching a topic and must clearly specify a research question and use data to answer the question. The term data should be broadly construed. See the assignment web page for more detail on the requirements for this assignment.

We will have our own mini-conference near the end of the semester where you will present someone else's paper. Therefore, you will have to provide a draft of your final paper to your assigned discussant 1 week before the mini-conference. I expect the discussants to make a professional presentation even though it is not your paper and to use appropriate audiovisual aids (e.g., power point) where possible. You will have 10 to 12 minutes for your presentation. Your participation in the mini-conference and comments on the draft paper will contribute towards your participation grade in the course.

Your final paper will be evaluated based on your analysis, 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.). The assignment web page includes evaluation forms that illustrate the areas where the paper will be evaluated

Exam

There will be one take home exam that requires you to apply the theories and concepts discussed during the semester. The exam will be posted on the website approximately one week before it is due.

Grading

All written work will be evaluated based on your analysis of the readings and cases, 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 (20%)	20% (200 Points)
Issue Memos (best 5 of 6 @ 5% each)	25% (250 Points)
Book Review	5% (50 Points)
Paper/Project (25%)	25% (250 points)
Exam (25%)	25% (250 points)

Course grades will be calculated based on the following: 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). In the event that an assignment is given a letter grade, points are allocated by using the midpoint of the grade range and multiplying it the number of possible points. For example, an A for a 5% memo would equal 95% of 50 points or 47.5 while a B+ would equal 89% of 50 points or 44.5. There is no rounding up or down.

All members of UNCW's community are expected to follow the academic Honor Code. Please read the UNCW Honor Code carefully (as covered in the UNCW Student Handbook). Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated in this class. Be advised that I have a zero tolerance policy for cheating or plagiarism. Anyone caught cheating or plagiarizing an assignment 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 beginning 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 day they are late. An incomplete will only be granted when there are serious extenuating circumstances that occur after the withdrawal period.

Disabilities, Respect, and Harassment

Students with diagnosed disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services (962-7555). Please give me a copy of the letter you receive from Office of Disability Services detailing class accommodations you may need. If you require accommodation for test-taking please make sure I have the referral letter no less than three days before the test.

UNCW has recently instituted a Respect Compact to affirm our commitment to a civil community, characterized by mutual respect. That Compact will soon be affixed to the wall of each classroom and can be accessed at: <http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/pdc/documents/SeahawkRespectCompact.pdf>. Students are expected to treat others in this class in accordance with this campus policy.

UNCW practices a zero tolerance policy for any kind of violent or harassing behavior. If you are experiencing an emergency of this type contact the police at 911 or UNCW CARE at 962-2273. Resources for individuals concerned with a violent or harassing situation can be located at <http://www.uncw.edu/wsrc/crisis.html>.

Other Class Policies

Cell phone use will not be tolerated in this class. Turn off your cell phones prior to class. If your phone rings, the Professor reserves the right to answer the call and/or to confiscate the phone.

Laptops may be used in this class. Laptop users should sit in the back row to avoid distracting others. Laptops will be banned from the classroom for the rest of the semester the first time any laptop user is seen engaging in non-classroom related activity.