

PUBPOL 312 (POLI SCI 380)
Environmental Politics and Policy
Fall Term 2021

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Class Meets: TTh, 10:00-11:20am

Classroom: 1120 Weill Hall

Office Hours/Location: Wednesdays, 9:00-11:00am (or by appointment)
Weill Hall 5309 (or via Zoom)

Course Description & Learning Objectives:

As a human society, we are dependent on our natural environment. And yet, in the realm of public policy, environmental problems are among the most neglected issues because they are so politically challenging to address. Why is solving environmental problems so difficult? What policy progress has been made despite the difficulties? And how and to what extent have the difficulties been overcome? To the degree economic development and environmental degradation are two sides of the same coin (a claim we will interrogate), what are the economic costs of environmental protection and what is the role of public policy in determining who within society will bear these costs?

These are just a few of the questions we will consider in this course. We will begin by thinking broadly about environmental politics and policy from a theoretical perspective, gaining an understanding of what makes environmental policymaking so challenging. Then, we will focus on the especially pressing (and especially challenging) environmental problem of climate change. As the world's second-largest emitter of greenhouse gases and the wealthiest country in the world, the United States has an important role to play in mitigating climate change. We will discuss U.S. climate federalism—the idea that climate policymaking in the U.S. occurs at multiple levels of government simultaneously and there is often conflict between these different levels. We will then dive deeper into some of the most important policies at the federal, state and local levels.

From there, the course examines some of the complex challenges, but also the profound opportunities, that characterize policymaking in the realm of climate change and energy issues. Finally, we'll take a close look at climate policy instruments and their *design*; that is, not only whether or not various climate policies are adopted, but also *how effective*

they are and *what their distributive effects are*; that is, who in society do they benefit and who in society do they harm in the short-run, even if they help all of us in the long-run by saving the planet?

My objectives for you, as students in this course, include the following. I want you to come away from the course equipped with the tools to be part of the solution to the deep-seated climate policy problems we face as a country and as a world. I want you to understand—and be able to explain to your family, friends and peers—why climate policy specifically (and environmental policy generally) is so challenging politically, what progress has been made despite the challenges, and what challenges remain.

Given my own expertise, the course will emphasize the U.S. context, though I realize some of you may be from other countries, and I hope you can take lessons learned from the U.S. experience and apply them to the cases of your home countries (or discover how/why they may not be applicable). I hope you will come away from this course with the knowledge and confidence to advocate for specific policies that you believe are the fairest and/or the most effective means of addressing climate change.

Course Readings:

The only required text for you to purchase is *Making Climate Policy Work*, by Danny Cullenward and David G. Victor. We will be reading a large enough portion of this book that I am asking students to purchase it. All other texts will be available free of charge on the Canvas site, but remember, these are copyrighted materials and it is unlawful to distribute them outside of the class.

That being said, I am sensitive to the fact that some students are more financially secure than others, and I would invite you to contact me confidentially if you feel that you cannot afford to purchase this text. In such circumstances, I will be happy to make alternative arrangements so that you can access it free of charge.

Course Requirements and Grading:

There are five elements of the final grade you will receive in this course.

Midterm Writing Assignment (25%): The Midterm Writing Assignment will function as the mid-term assessment for the course, covering material from the first four units (the first eight weeks). It will be a 5-7 page (double-spaced) “take-home essay” assignment in which you will be asked to respond to a prompt provided by me approximately 1-2 weeks before the assignment is due. You can refer to any materials from class (it’s “open book,” “open notes”) but you must work individually on the assignment and should not discuss your response with your classmates. You will be asked to reference/cite course materials and readings in support of an argument you will make in response to the prompt.

Final Writing Assignment (30%): The Final Writing Assignment will function as the final assessment for the course, and will be cumulative, covering material from the entire course. It will be a 10-12 page (double-spaced) “take-home essay” assignment in which you will be asked to respond to a prompt provided by me approximately 2 weeks before the assignment is due. You can refer to any materials from class (it’s “open book,” “open notes”) but you must work individually on the assignment and should not discuss your response with your classmates. Like the Midterm Writing Assignment, you will be asked to reference/cite course materials and readings in support of an argument you will make in response to the prompt. However, unlike the Midterm Writing Assignment, you will be asked to also cite/reference a limited number of materials from outside the course as well.

Guest Speaker Memo (15%): Throughout the semester, we will have five distinguished guest speakers joining our class—an environmental advocate, a state senator, a municipal sustainability manager, and an expert on renewable energy siting. For this assignment, you will choose any one of these five speakers and write a 1-2 page (double-spaced) memo analyzing the connections between what we learned from the speaker and the material we have read for class. More specific instructions will be provided closer to this assignment’s due date.

Questions on Canvas (20%): Once per week, you are asked to make a short (1 paragraph max.) post on Canvas, asking a question or two based on one or more of the readings assigned for a given class. I will sometimes incorporate these questions into our in-class discussions. In general, these questions are an opportunity to demonstrate that you have completed the reading and have thought about it critically. Questions must be posted by midnight (12:00am EST) the night before class meets.

In-Class Participation and Attendance (10%): A seminar-style class like this one only succeeds when students regularly attend and contribute to class discussions. Therefore, 10% of the final grade is simply based on you showing up (policies regarding excused absences are described below) *and* contributing to class discussions and debates.

Course Policies:

Attendance: You are required to attend every class meeting unless formally excused. Excused absences can be due to reasons that include religious observances, university-sponsored athletic competitions (communication from university athletic staff required), family emergencies and health (communication from a medical or psychiatric professional required). Unexcused absences will adversely impact your In-Class Participation and Attendance grade.

Academic Integrity: You are expected to produce work that is your own. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Please refer to <https://lsa.umich.edu/lsa/academics/academic-integrity/academic-misconduct.html> for more information on what constitutes academic dishonesty. All student work in this class is subject to analysis using plagiarism detection software and may also be included in a database used for the purpose of testing for plagiarized content.

Students who violate university standards for academic integrity will automatically fail the class and be reported to the Dean's office for consideration of any further disciplinary action.

Assignment Deadlines: You are expected to submit all written work on time. Submitting assignments late will result in a five-point grade drop (out of 100 possible points) for each day the assignment is late, and no assignments will be accepted more than three days late. Just as you may have excused absences, you may receive excused extensions of deadlines under certain circumstances, but these need to be arranged with me in advance of the deadline, on a student-by-student basis, and through written (email) communications.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with documented disabilities will receive reasonable accommodations and should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office.

Mental Health and Well-Being Resources: If you or another student you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 734-764-8312 or visit <https://caps.umich.edu/>. For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, visit <https://uhs.umich.edu/stressresources>.

Respect for Differences: I hope and expect that students enrolled in this class will come from a variety of backgrounds and have a variety of views about the topics we will discuss. All students must feel comfortable and safe expressing their perspectives in class. Any student who feels disrespected or unsafe due to the views they choose to express in class, or on the basis of their nationality, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, or socioeconomic status, is strongly encouraged to reach out to me to discuss their concerns confidentially.

Electronic Devices: Please use them only for class-related purposes. I reserve the right to ask you not to use them (unless required as a reasonable accommodation for a disability), though I do not plan to do so. However, the use of electronic devices will not be permitted when a guest speaker visits the class.

Office Hours and Appointments: My office hours are listed at the top of the syllabus, and I'm also available by appointment if they do not work with your schedule.

Important Dates:

September 7: No class meeting (but readings/Canvas posts still due)

September 20: Drop/Add Deadline for Fall Term

October 19: Fall Study Break—No Class (no readings/Canvas posts)

November 11: No class meeting (but readings/Canvas posts still due)

Course Schedule:

Week 1:

Tuesday, August 31: Introduction to the Course

Readings Due:

- McKibbin (2015), “Global Warming’s Terrifying New Math.” Chapter 4 in *Global Environmental Politics*.

Unit 1: Theoretical Foundations of Environmental Politics

Thursday, September 2: Ecological Modernization and Treadmill of Production

Readings Due:

- Spaargaren & Mol (1992), “Sociology, Environment, and Modernity: Ecological Modernization as a Theory of Social Change.” *Society and Natural Resources*.
- Gould, Pellow, and Schnaiberg (2004), “Interrogating the Treadmill of Production: Everything You Wanted to Know About the Treadmill but Were Afraid to Ask.” *Organization and Environment*.
- Friedman (2015), “Too Many Americans?” Chapter 8 in *Global Environmental Politics*.
- Daly (2015), “The Delusion of Sustainable Growth.” Chapter 22 in *Global Environmental Politics*.

Week 2:

Tuesday, September 7: Environmental Protection as a Collective Action Problem

Class will not meet, but students should still complete readings and any Canvas posts

Readings Due:

- Ostrom (1990), *Governing the Commons*. Chapter 1 (skip section on p. 7-8).
- Stavins (2011), “The Problem of the Commons: Still Unsettled after 100 Years.” *American Economic Review*.

Thursday, September 9: Environmental Protection as a Distributive Politics Problem

Readings Due:

- Aklin & Mildeberger (2020), “Prisoners of the Wrong Dilemma: Why Distributive Conflict, Not Collective Action, Characterizes the Politics of Climate Change.” *Global Environmental Politics*.
- Wilson (1980), “The Politics of Regulation.” Chapter 10 (p. 357-361, p. 364-372) in *The Politics of Regulation*.

Week 3:

Tuesday, September 14: Environmental Justice

Readings Due:

- Yang (2002), “Melding Civil Rights and Environmentalism: Finding Environmental Justice’s Place in Environmental Regulation.” *Harvard Environmental Law Review*.
- Bullard (2015), “Environmental Racism and the Environmental Justice Movement.” Chapter 26 in *Global Environmental Politics*.
- Singer (2015), “One Atmosphere, Two Worlds.” Chapter 24 in *Global Environmental Politics*.

Unit 2: The U.S. Context and Climate Federalism

Thursday, September 16: Political Institutions and Partisan Polarization, Part 1

Readings Due:

- Mildenberger (2021), “The Development of Climate Institutions in the United States.” *Environmental Politics*.
- Turner & Isenberg (2018), *The Republican Reversal*. Introduction chapter.

Week 4:

Tuesday, September 21: Political Institutions and Partisan Polarization, Part 2

Readings Due:

- Guber (2013), “A Cooling Climate for Change? Party Polarization and the Politics of Global Warming.” *American Behavioral Scientist*.
- Guber, Bohr, and Dunlap (2020), “‘Time to Wake Up:’ Climate Change Advocacy in a Polarized Congress, 1996-2015.” *Environmental Politics*.
- Mildenberger et al. (2017), “The Spatial Distribution of Republican and Democratic Climate Opinions at State and Local Scales.” *Climatic Change*.

Thursday, September 23: The Climate Change Countermovement

Readings Due:

- Dunlap & McCright (2015), “Challenging Climate Change: The Denial Countermovement.” Chapter 10 in *Climate Change and Society: Sociological Perspectives*.
- Triedman (2021), “Chamber of Obstruction: The U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Shifting Discourses on Climate Change, 1989-2009.” *Brown University Climate and Development Lab*.

Week 5:

Tuesday, September 28: Climate Federalism, Part 1

Guest Speaker: Ben Hellerstein, Environment Massachusetts State Director

Readings Due:

- Scheberle (2013), “Environmental Federalism and the Role of State and Local Governments.” In *Oxford Handbook of U.S. Environmental Policy*.
- Rabe (2004), *Statehouse and Greenhouse*. Chapter 1.

Thursday, September 30: Climate Federalism, Part 2

Readings Due:

- Fowler (2018), “Intergovernmental Relations and Energy Policy: What We Know and What We Still Need to Learn.” *State and Local Government Review*.
- Karapın (2020), “Federalism as a Double-Edged Sword: The Slow Energy Transition in the United States.” *Journal of Environment and Development*.

Unit 3: Federal Level Policy

Week 6:

Tuesday, October 5: History of Federal-Level Policy and Institutions

Readings Due:

- Kraft (2013), “Congress and Environmental Policy.” In *Oxford Handbook of U.S. Environmental Policy*.
- Carlson & Burtraw (2019), *Lessons from the Clean Air Act*. Chapter 1.
- Bartosiewicz & Miley (2013), “The Too Polite Revolution: Why the Recent Campaign to Pass Comprehensive Climate Legislation in the United States Failed.” Intro only, p. 3-10
- Rinfret & Furlong (2013), “Defining Environmental Rule Making.” In *Oxford Handbook of U.S. Environmental Policy*.

Thursday, October 7: What’s Happening at the Federal Level Right Now?

Readings Due:

- Stokes (2021), “The Infrastructure Bill Won’t Cut It on Climate.” *The Atlantic*: <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/07/why-congress-must-pass-better-climate-bill/619426/>
- Others TBD

Unit 4: State and Local Level Policy

Week 7:

Tuesday, October 12: State-Level Climate Policies, Part 1

Guest Speaker: State Senator Mike Barrett

Readings Due:

- Carley (2011), “The Era of State Energy Policy Innovation: A Review of Policy Instruments.” *Review of Policy Research*.
- Climate XChange July 2021 Report, “How Do States Plan to Meet Their Climate Commitments?”
- Cheddar News interview with Massachusetts State Senator Mike Barrett: <https://cheddar.com/media/massachusetts-passes-new-bill-aimed-at-tackling-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

Thursday, October 14: State-Level Climate Policies, Part 2

Readings Due:

- Farrell & Hanemann (2009), “Field Notes on the Political Economy of California Climate Policy.” In *Changing Climates in North American Politics*.
- Trachtman (2020), “What Drives Climate Policy Adoption in the U.S. States?” *Energy Policy*.

Week 8:

Tuesday, October 19: NO CLASS – FALL STUDY BREAK

Thursday, October 21: Local-Level Climate Policies

Guest Speaker: Missy Stults, Sustainability Manager, City of Ann Arbor

Readings Due:

- Hughes (2019), *Repowering Cities*. Chapter 1, “Progress or Pipe Dream?”
- A2Zero Climate Action Plan, Executive Summary, p. 6-11
- “One Year of A2Zero”
- OPTIONAL: “Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory Update: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LTQv1anciow>

Midterm Writing Assignment Due Friday, October 22nd at 5:00pm (submit via Canvas)

Unit 5: Challenges and Opportunities in Climate Policymaking

Week 9:

Tuesday, October 26: Environmental/Climate Justice
Guest Speaker: Eli Newell, Sunrise Movement Chicago

Readings Due:

- Harlan et al. (2015), “Climate Justice and Inequality.” In *Climate Change and Society: Sociological Perspectives*
- Mendez (2020), *Climate Change from the Streets*. Chapter 1.

Thursday, October 28: Siting and Social Acceptance
Guest Speaker: Sarah Mills, Graham Sustainability Institute

Readings Due:

- Boudet (2019), “Public Perceptions of and Responses to New Energy Technologies.” *Nature Energy*.
- Pontecorvo (2021), “We Need to Build a Lot of Wind Turbines. Will Americans Agree to Live Near Them?” *Grist*:
<https://grist.org/energy/we-need-to-build-a-lot-of-wind-turbines-will-americans-agree-to-live-near-them/>
- Mulvaney (2019), *Solar Power*. Chapter 5.
- Swiedom (2021), “Opposition Groups Propose The NECEC Could be a Corridor to Nowhere.” *Lewiston Sun Journal*.
- Bledsoe (2021), “A Modern Electric Grid is Crucial to Reach Our Clean Energy Climate Goals.” *The Hill*.
- OPTIONAL: Watch from 1:20 to 18:10:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkWEVfXUGng&t=556s>

Week 10:

Tuesday, November 2: Focusing on Co-Benefits

Readings Due:

- Bergquist, Mildenerger & Stokes (2020), “Combining Climate, Economic, and Social Policy Builds Public Support for Climate Action in the U.S.” *Environmental Research Letters*
- Mayrhofer & Gupta (2016), “The Science and Politics of Co-Benefits in Climate Policy.” *Environmental Science and Policy* [8 pages].
- Saha et al. (2021), “How Climate Action Can Reboot Economies in Rural America.” *World Resources Institute*:
<https://www.wri.org/insights/climate-action-federal-investment-rural-america-us>

Thursday, November 4: Working Around Constraints

Readings Due:

- Downie (2017), “Business Actors, Political Resistance, and Strategies for Policymakers.” *Energy Policy*.
- Meckling et al. (2015), “Winning Coalitions for Climate Policy.” *Science*.
- Richards (2021), “Offshore Wind to Revive ‘Hallowed Ground’ for U.S. Steel.” *E&E News*:
<https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/eenews/2021/08/04/offshore-wind-to-revive-hallowed-ground-for-us-steel-279195>

Guest Speaker Memo Due Friday, November 5th at 5:00pm (submit via Canvas)

Unit 6: Climate Policy Instruments and Policy Design

Week 11:

Tuesday, November 9: Carbon Pricing/Taxes, Part 1

Readings Due:

- Rabe (2018), *Can We Price Carbon?* Chapter 1, Chapter 2 (p. 25-36).
- Krugman (2015), “Environmental Economics 101: Overcoming Market Failures.” Chapter 17 in *Global Environmental Politics*.
- Prasad (2010), “Taxation as a Regulatory Tool: Lessons from Environmental Taxes in Europe.” In *Government and Markets: Toward a New Theory of Regulation*.

Thursday, November 11: Carbon Pricing/Taxes, Part 2

Readings Due:

- Basseches (Forthcoming), “California Cap-and-Trade: History, Design, Effectiveness.”:
https://secureservercdn.net/198.71.233.33/q6w.b01.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Basseches_California-Chapter-Final-Draft-1.pdf
- Breslow & Wincele (2020), “Cap-and-Trade in California: Health and Climate Benefits Greatly Outweigh Costs.” *Climate XChange Report*.
- Matisoff (2010), “Making Cap-and-Trade Work: Lessons from the European Union Experience.” *Environment*.

Week 12:

Tuesday, November 16: Distributive Politics Problems with Carbon Markets, Part 1

Readings Due:

- Cullenward & Victor (2020), *Making Climate Policy Work*. Chapter 1, p. 1-13, p. 20-25, Chapter 2.
- Song & Temple (2021), “The Climate Solution Actually Adding Millions of Tons of CO₂ Into the Atmosphere.” *ProPublica*.
- Song & Temple (2021), “A Nonprofit Promised to Preserve Wildlife. Then it Made Millions Claiming It Could Cut Down Trees.” *MIT Technology Review*.

Thursday, November 18: Distributive Politics Problems with Carbon Markets, Part 2

Readings Due:

- Cullenward & Victor (2020), *Making Climate Policy Work*. Chapters 3-4.
- Meyer (2021), “Obituary: Carbon Tax, Beloved Policy to Fix Climate Change, Is Dead at 47.” *The Atlantic*:
<https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2021/07/obituary-carbon-tax-beloved-climate-policy-dies-47/619507/>
- Raymond (2010), “Beyond Additionality in Cap-and-Trade Offset Policy.” *Issues in Governance Studies*.

Week 13:

Tuesday, November 23: Distributive Politics Problems with Carbon Markets, Part 3

Readings Due:

- Basseches (2020), Chapter 1 (p. 18-32), Chapter 5.
- Cook (2010), “Arenas of Power in Climate Change Policymaking.” *Policy Studies Journal*.

Thursday, November 25: NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 14:

Tuesday, November 30: Distributive Politics Problems with Renewable Portfolio Standards

Readings Due:

- Fischlein & Smith (2013), “Revisiting Renewable Portfolio Standard Effectiveness: Policy Design and Outcome Specification Matter.” *Policy Sciences*.
- Basseches (2020), Chapter 1 (p. 32-34), Chapter 6.

Thursday, December 2: Other Issues in Climate Policy Design

Readings Due:

- Welton & Eisen (2019), “Clean Energy Justice-Charting an Emerging Agenda.”
Harvard Environmental Law Review.

Week 15:

Tuesday, December 7: TBD

Readings Due:

- TBD

Thursday, December 9: TBD

Readings Due:

- TBD

Final Writing Assignment is Due December 16 at 5:00pm EST (submit via Canvas).

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