

Environmental Science, Policy, and Problem Solving

Instructor: Colin Long; 302 Halsey; 424 2182; longco@uwosh.edu

Text: assigned readings on D2L

Course objectives

The goal of this course is to provide you with a better understanding of the interaction between laws and informed environmental science. The class will focus on several laws designed to protect ecosystems or specific portions of the biosphere. The class will also look at how these laws match with existing knowledge of how ecosystems operate. In addition, recent environmental issues will be examined in light of Environmental regulations.

A more general goal of this class is to contribute to your overall “liberal arts” education. Such an education gives you a broad background in the ideas and events that have in some way shaped our modern lives (for better or for worse). It increases your awareness of the diversity and complexity of human life and thought, it “expands your mind”. A liberal arts education does not usually teach you how to do a particular sort of job, it does develop skills that are increasingly necessary in any job. These include the ability to quickly understand complicated readings on unfamiliar subjects, to express your thoughts clearly and persuasively, and to reason critically, creatively, and independently.

Assessment: Your final grade is based on your scores from 3 exams, a presentation on a selected Congressional Act and a paper regarding an environmental issue. The exams will cover subjects discussed in lecture and the readings. The presentation on the Congressional Act is a group activity and will focus on a particular law that mandates environmental regulation, and the paper will focus on a current environmental issue. Points will be distributed as follows: 1st exam 25 points, 2nd exam 25 points, 3rd exam 25 points, Congressional Act presentation 10 points and Environmental Issue paper 15 points. TOTAL = 100 points

Evaluation: There will be no curve. Students will strive for mastery rather than competing against each other. A = 100-93 points, A- = 92-90 points, B+ = 89-87 points, B = 86-83 points, B- = 82 – 80, C+ = 79 – 77 points, C = 76 – 72 points, C - = 71-69 points, D+ = 68-66 points, D = 65-63 points, D- = 62 – 60 points, F = less than 60 points. Without acceptable documentation of illness or other emergency, failure to take an exam at the appointed times will result in a score of 0 for that exam. Without acceptable documentation of illness or other emergency, failure to participate in an assigned presentation will result in a 0 for that panel assignment. There will be no extra credit opportunities in this class.

Academic Integrity (from the Dean of Students Office)

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is committed to a standard of academic integrity for all students. The system guidelines state: "Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors." (UWS 14.01, Wisconsin Administrative Code)

Students are subject to disciplinary action for academic misconduct, which is defined in UWS 14.03, Wisconsin Administrative Code. Students on the UW Oshkosh campus have been suspended from the University for academic misconduct. Students are encouraged to review the procedures related to violations of academic honesty as outlined in Chapter UWS 14, Wisconsin Administrative Code. The system guidelines and local procedures are printed in the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Student Discipline Code 2006-2007 and can be found on the Dean of Students website at www.uwosh.edu/dean/conduct.htm.

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Tentative Schedule

Day	Subject	Assignment
	Introduction to the course	
	What is environmental policy?	
	History of environmental policy in the U. S.	Kraft and Vig 2003
	History of environmental policy in the U. S.	Elliot 1997
	Environmental policy in the U. S.	Powers and Chertow 1997
	Environmental policy in the U. S.	Hammit 1997
	Environmental policy in the U. S.	
	National Environmental Policy Act	NEPA handbook
	National Environmental Policy Act	
	National Environmental Policy Act	
	Decision making processes	Gouin 2010
	Decision making processes	
	Decision making processes	Janssen et al. 2010
	Decision making processes	Babiker and Eckaus 2007
	Exam 1	
	Endangered Species Act	ESA review, Assigned reading
	Endangered Species Act	Assigned reading
	Endangered Species Act	
	Clean Air Act	Clean Air Act review Clean Water Act review
	Clean Air Act	Assigned reading
	Clean Air Act	
	National Forest Management Act	Multiple-use sustained Yield review; NFMA review
	National Forest Management Act	Assigned reading
	GSA	
	National Forest Management Act	
	National Forest Management Act	Assigned reading
	National Forest Management Act	
	Exam 2	
	General Mining Act of 1872	GMA review, SMCRA review Assigned reading
	General Mining Act of 1872	Assigned reading
	Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act 1977	Assigned reading
	Focus on environmental Issues (water)	
	Focus on environmental issues (water)	
	No class Thanksgiving Break	
	No class Thanksgiving Break	
	Focus on environmental Issues (water)	Assigned reading

	Focus on environmental Issues (energy)	Environmental Paper due
	Focus on environmental Issues (energy)	Assigned reading
	Focus on environmental Issues (energy)	Assigned reading
	Focus on environmental Issues (climate change)	
	Focus on environmental Issues (climate change)	Assigned reading
	Focus on environmental Issues (climate change)	
	Focus on environmental Issues (climate change)	
	Exam 3	

Environmental Issue Papers should include:

A description of the issue and the way in which the humans are influencing the ecosystem

2 points

The current policy or management that has led to this situation.

3 points

How would you change policy or management (regulations) to resolve or avoid this situation in the future?

3 points

What scientific evidence supports your new policy/legislative position?

3 points

Paper organization, sentence structure, citations

3 points

The above point breakdown is a general rule and not absolute.

Your paper should approximately 5-7 pages, double-spaced, and include a reference list of sources cited in the paper. Be sure to include proper citations for any ideas that you paraphrase. Do not use footnotes or reference to class notes in the citations.

Congressional Act presentations should include:

History of the legislation (what was its motivation)

3 points

Review of the major points of the legislation

3 points

Two circumstances where the Act, or its regulations, were invoked to stop/prevent environmental harm.

4 points

Note: all participants in the group must be actively involved in the presentation and all group participants will receive the same number of points for the presentation.