

The Evergreen State College Graduate Studies Program

Environmental Policy Development and Implementation

SYLLABUS

MES & MPA Graduate Elective

Faculty: CRAIG PARTRIDGE

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Course Description

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the important concepts and to both theoretical and practical problems in the making and carrying out of environmental and natural resource policy in the U. S. Students will learn several approaches to understanding how, why, and by whom environmental policy decisions are made, and will gain experience with policy analysis and evaluation techniques, negotiation, and with the particular problems of policy implementation. This course takes a process approach to the topic, rather than a descriptive or prescriptive approach, and is aimed primarily at students who see themselves as future practitioners or researchers in this field. Some prior familiarity with the main categories of environmental and natural resource legislation, and with the fundamental topics of political science will help students gain the most from this course.

Several major themes will be woven throughout the material presented. These include the potential tension in policy development between scientific expertise and democratic political values, the forces and arguments for more centralized or more decentralized policy-making, the question of whether there is a general public interest in environmental issues or only competing special interests, the role of non-governmental entities, and the relative importance of objective analysis and interest-based negotiation. The uniqueness of environmental policy on government's overall policy agenda will also be explored.

The course will begin with a grounding of environmental policy in its historical, legal, institutional, and societal context, emphasizing competing theories of government's role and function. Next, we will examine how environmental and natural resource problems gain a place on government's agenda and evolve over time, and we will look at how a wide range of major environmental and natural resource problems are typically categorized for potential government action. We then turn to the common types of policy solutions usually brought to bear on various types of problems, including solutions emphasizing authority, markets, and persuasion, and how these can be melded into broad strategies.

In the first half of the course, students will individually write two papers. First will be a short (1-2 page) response paper based on early readings. Next, students will be asked to write a 5-10 page paper discussing the concepts presented in the first half of the course and applying them to a contemporary policy issue chosen by the student.

In the second half of the course, we will study policy development approaches, including both theoretical and practical considerations. This will include exposure to both a rational-analytical approach and a values-based negotiation approach. Next, we will examine some of the problems of policy implementation, again touching on both theory and practice. Finally we will explore the rationale, practice, and prospects for policy evaluation and improvement.

In the second half of the course, students will be responsible for a 6-12 page professional policy paper, on an assigned real-world policy problem currently being debated in Washington State. Students will consult outside advisors on the perspectives of a diverse set of policy participants, and will use a team discussion of the various perspectives to gain additional insight into the complexity of the assigned policy problem. The paper will follow a format explained in a class workshop.

We will conclude with a discussion of the prospects for effective leadership in environmental and natural resource careers.

During the quarter, we will hear from one or two guest speakers offering unique, experienced perspectives on the policy process.

Credit Policy

To receive full academic credit of 4-quarter hours, students must attend all class sessions, read the assigned texts, discuss the texts, lectures, and guest presentations in seminar, complete the written assignments, and participate in the team discussions. No partial credit will be granted

Texts

Making Environmental Policy, Daniel J. Fiorino, University of California Press, 1995, ISBN 05200 89189.

Environmental Governance Reconsidered: Challenges, Choices, and Opportunities, Robert Durant, Daniel J. Fiorino, and Rosemary O'Leary (eds.), The MIT Press, 2004, ISBN 0-262-54174-2.

About 20 journal articles and text excerpts will also be provided during the quarter, to expand on the main texts and introduce students to the policy literature.

Class and Activity Schedule

Week One -

Topic: Introduction and course overview
Readings: Fiorino - Chapter 1 (p. 1-9);
Clark, The Policy Process: A Practical Guide for Natural Resource Professionals - Chapter 1 (p. 1-9)

Week Two -

Topic: Context for environmental policy: Theories of government
Readings: Fiorino - Chapter 1 (p. 9-21);
Clark - Chapters 1 (p. 9-16) & 2;
Stone, Policy Paradox & Political Reason (excerpt)
Lowery & Gray, "A Neopluralist Perspective on Research on Organized Interests"
Assignment: Response paper due (1-2 pages)
Propose topic for Concept Application Paper

Week Three -

Topic: Context for environmental policy: Legal and institutional settings
Readings: Fiorino - Chapters 2 & 3
Imperial, "Using Collaboration as a Governance Strategy"
Assignment: Concept Application Paper detailed outline or rough draft due (if seeking comments)

Week Four -

Topic: Environmental and natural resource problems: Agenda setting
Readings: Fiorino - Chapter 5; Durant - Meadowcroft, "Deliberative Democracy"
Kurtz, "Coastal Oil Pollution: Spills, Crisis, and Policy Change"
McBeth, et al., "The Science of Storytelling: Measuring Policy Beliefs in Greater Yellowstone"
Public Opinion Strategies memo to The Nature Conservancy
Assignment: Concept Paper detailed outline or rough draft due (if not seeking comments)
Select topic for Policy Paper and perspective for consulting with advisor

Week Five -

Topic: Environmental and natural resource solutions: Policy instruments
Readings: Fiorino - Chapter 6
Ostrom, "Reformulating the Commons"
Schneider, et al. "Building Consensual Institutions: Networks and the National Estuary Program"

Assignment: Lubell, Collaborative Environmental Institutions: All Talk & No Action?"
Concept Application Paper final draft due

Week Six -

Topic: The policy process: I - Analysis
Readings: Fiorino - Chapter 4; Durant - Paehlke, "Sustainability Analysis"; Durant, "Precautionary Principle"
Ferraro, "Assigning Priority to Environmental Policy Interventions in a Heterogeneous World"
Elliott, "Risk Perception Frames in Environmental Decision Making"
Assignment: Meet with role advisor

Week Seven -

Topic: The policy process: II - Negotiation
Readings: Durant - O'Leary, et al, "Environmental Conflict Resolution"
Nie, "Drivers of Natural Resource Based Political Conflict"
LaChapelle & McCool, "The Concept of 'Ownership' in Natural Resource Planning"
Weible, "Beliefs and Perceived Influence in a Natural Resource Conflict: An Advocacy Coalition Approach to Policy Networks"
Bryan, "Tragedy Averted: The Promise of Collaboration"
Assignment: 1st team discussion (in-class seminar period)

Week Eight - May 24

Topic: Policy implementation: Theory and practice
Reading: Durant - Fiorino, "Flexibility"
Daley & Layton, "Policy Implementation and the EPA: What Factors Influence Remediation at Superfund Sites"
Scholz & Cheng-Lung, "Cooptation or Transformation? Local Policy Networks and Federal Regulatory Enforcement"
Imperial, "Taking Institutions Seriously: Using the IAD Framework to Analyze Fisheries Policy"
Assignment: 2nd team discussion (optional - outside of class time)

Week Nine -

Topic: Policy evaluation and improvement
Readings: Fiorino - Chapter 7; Durant - Mazurek, "Third Party Auditing of Environmental Management Systems"
Failing, et al. "Using Expert Judgement and Stakeholder Values to Evaluate Adaptive Management Options"
McCool & Stankey, "Indicators of Sustainability: Challenges and Opportunities at the Interface of Science and Policy"

Week Ten -

Topic: Public leadership in environmental and natural resource careers

Guest spkr: TBA

Assignment: Policy paper final draft due

Week Eleven -

EVALUATION WEEK