

NRES 365: Environmental Policy

Fall 2021
Classroom: TNR 320
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

3 credits
Tue & Thu. 3:30-4:45 pm
College of Natural Resources

Instructor

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Office hours: Tuesday 9-10 am; Thursdays 10-11 am or by appointment.

Course Description

Enhanced understanding, knowledge and skill sets on policy issues, tools and processes are critical to sound decision-making in natural resource and environmental management. In this course, we will examine and analyze a wide range of policy issues and apply a variety of policy tools to address natural resource and environmental issues that involve different stakeholders including landowners, local organizations, businesses, industries and government agencies. Students will evaluate and develop innovative tools or ideas to revise in-place policies to address environmental degradation issues arising from current local, regional, or national natural resource management actions. The class will also have the opportunity to explore, research and evaluate the science, laws, and values impacting the development of policies that attempt to solve, or fail to solve, collective environmental action problems.

Course Philosophy and Objectives

The overarching goal of this course is to provide you with the skills necessary to understand the policies impacting natural resource management and individual behaviors, and to develop policies and programs that increase the adoption of environmentally sound management practices. The following learning objectives form the foundation of this course, and upon completion of the course you will be able to:

1. Explain the role of policies/institutions in natural resources management and analyze how policy is developed in the U.S., including the roles of agenda setting and problem definition.
2. Identify and describe major natural resource policies impacting local environment management.
3. Identify, differentiate among, and evaluate the effectiveness of the different types of commonly used policy tools.
4. Develop, modify and apply policy tools for specific target stakeholders to increase adoption of relevant behaviors and sound environmental decision-making.

5. Use appropriate communication channels including policy briefs, research reports, and presentations.

Course Format and Policies

This class is largely discussion based, and participation in discussions comprises a significant portion of your final grade. Most class periods will incorporate a short presentation followed by discussion. As such, you are expected to attend class. If you must miss a class period, please notify me in advance. You are allowed three absences without penalty.

Assignments that are turned in late will be met with a 10% deduction for each day (including Saturday and Sunday) that it is late. Written assignments are due in the *Canvas* dropbox by 11:59 p.m. on the date they are due. If a situation arises that inhibits your ability to complete an assignment on time, please notify me in advance or as soon as possible to work something out.

This is an upper-level course and, as such, participants are expected to act professionally. This includes being prepared to actively engage in class, treating students and your instructor with respect, and being able to attack problems, not people. We tend to have fun in the class, and the atmosphere is relaxed and very similar to that of a professional meeting of peers.

Readings

Required Textbook: Environmental Policy by Vig and Kraft, ISBN 978-1-4833-5258-9, 9th Edition (2016), CQ Press (SAGE Publications).

All other relevant reading materials will be available in *Canvas* as the semester progresses.

Assignments

I. Quizzes (50 points)

Every Thursday, starting Week 3, to assess your content knowledge and comprehension you will have a brief quiz. You will be asked questions based on lectures, discussions, readings and other course material. Each quiz will be worth 5 points.

II. Leading Discussion (50 points)

As a group, you will lead a 20 – 25 minute discussion during one class period following the instructor's lecture (which you will receive ahead of time). Your discussion should include a series of questions to ask students and/or an activity to help students engage deeper into the topics. Feel free to get creative!

III. Issue Paper Proposal (25 points)

You will work as a team to identify an issue of environmental concern, relevant stakeholders and a normative question. Each member will propose an idea for a final issue paper (written 1-Page) that includes the natural resource or environmental issue, the stakeholders who are generally involved, and the normative question you will explore as a team. So, as a team you are exploring the same issue, but each will be writing their own paper. Feel free to share sources and information but please make sure your writing is ultimately your own.

IV. Issue Paper (Draft 50 points; Final paper 100 points)

Your draft should include at least a fully written issue, background, and chronology sections as well as an outline for the current situation, outlook and sidebar.

Your final paper should include all of the following:

1. The Issue

- a. Provide an overview of a current and controversial natural resources/ environmental issue that is related to individual decision making (e.g. "Groundwater Pumping in Central Wisconsin")
- b. Ask a normative question: "Should the DNR take a stronger regulatory position on groundwater withdrawal in Central Wisconsin?" and use expert opinions to answer it. You will need to find at least one expert opinion that advocates for/against each answer to the question you find (answers to the above question might include: yes, but only for municipal withdrawals, yes, but only for agriculture, no, it shouldn't be regulated at all). Include at least one direct quote from interviews, reports, newspaper articles, and other resources for each expert. This section should shed light on the various opinions and causal stories used to construct the issue, but isn't meant to provide conclusions on the topic, as controversial issues rarely have conclusive answers. Remember this is an unbiased report of the various sides of the issue, not a position paper.

2. Background

- a. History and agenda-setting– What has led to the current situation? What factors, people and events have happened over time to make this an issue in

society? Who has supported and opposed policies associated with the issue? Make sure to include relevant scientific facts.

- b. Institutions and Policy Tools - What institutions are involved in attempting to solve and manage the issue? What policy tools are being used to manage the issue as it relates to individual/ group behaviors across different stakeholders of the issue? Be sure to use the *Schneider and Ingram* policy tool typology.
3. **Chronology** – this is a timeline in graphic form of major events impacting the issue. This should include governmental actions, but also events tied to agenda setting and causal stories.
4. **Current Situation** – what is the status of the issue right now? Have governmental actions to solve the issue been successful?
5. **Outlook** – what are potential future actions and outcomes associated with the issue? What other potential policy tools can be used as we discussed in the class?
6. **Sidebar** – somewhere in your report, you must have at least one appropriately titled sidebar on a topic related to your main issue. For my example, I could describe the impacts of groundwater overuse on families living around a dried-up lake or a description of the types and amounts of crops grown in Wisconsin, relevant water use and their environmental and economic impacts.
7. **Bibliography** – use APA style. You will need to find as many resources as necessary to complete this paper, but need at a minimum:
 - a. at least one Congressional Research Service report
 - b. at least 5 peer reviewed articles, law reviews, books
 - c. at least 5 sources from popular media
 - d. sources should also come from multiple stakeholder perspectives

V. Policy Brief (25 points)

For this assignment, you should assume you are a policy analyst for an organization like Ducks Unlimited, Sierra Club, or the Natural Resources Defense Council, or a staffer for an elected official. Your task is to use the information from your group Issue Paper to frame your policy, assess the current policy tools in use, and then advocate for revision, elimination, or creation of tools. You should include at least three types of tools in your proposed solution. You should compare the tools currently in use to your recommended tools, clearly stating why change is necessary and how your recommended changes will help achieve local environmental goals. You will submit the policy brief in *Canvas* and write a professional email to a local legislators/local administration ((enclosing the policy brief and highlighting key issues and recommendations) with a cc to your instructor.

Please see the examples of policy brief in *Canvas*, and come to the policy document writing sessions. Your policy brief should be 2-page and will include: Heading, Summary, Issue, Alternatives and Recommendations.

VI. Group Presentation (50 points)

Your group presentation will be about 25 - 30 minutes, and should deliver the information from your issue papers and policy briefs as if you are meeting with general public, landowners, elected officials, and essentially any stakeholder who would be interested in the issue.

Many different organizations provide presentations on environmental policy issues. If you refer to the Ecological Society of America website, they provide links to quite a few presentations providing background information along with advocated solutions. For example, see this Congressional briefing presentation: <http://www.esa.org/pao/policyActivities/briefing072008.php>

VII. Final Exam (100 points)

There will be a final exam based on reading materials and content covered in the class. The exams must be taken during the scheduled time and make-up exams will not be given unless there is a documented, valid reason for missing the scheduled exam.

Summary of Assignments/ Deadlines

Assignment	Points	Due Date
Issue Paper Proposal	25	9/23
Policy Brief	25	10/12
Issue Paper Draft	50	10/29
Final Issue Paper	100	11/24 by 6pm
Group Presentation	50	See schedule below

Final Exam	100	12/16 from 8-10am in TNR 271
Quizzes	50	Every Thursday starting Week 3
Leading Discussion	50	See schedule below
Attendance/Participation	50	
Total	500	

Percentage ranges for letter grades

A	93-100%	B	83-86%	C	73-76%	D	60-66%
A-	90-92%	B-	80-82%	C-	70-72%	F	below 60%
B+	87-89%	C+	77-79%	D+	67-69%		

Other Course Policies

I. Accessibility Statement

If you have a learning or physical challenge which requires classroom accommodation, please contact the UWSP Disability Services office with your documentation as early as possible in the semester. 103 Student Services Center, (715) 346-3365; TTY (715) 346-3363;

www.uwsp.edu/special/disability/studentinfo.htm

If you have a learning or physical challenge requiring accommodation, please contact UWSP Disability Services office with your documentation as early as possible. Disability Services Office, 103 Student Services Center, (715) 346-3365,

<http://www.uwsp.edu/special/disability/student/Student%20Information.aspx>

You may also want to refer to Assistive Technology for additional information. Assistive Technology, University Library Room 439, (715) 346-4980.

<http://library.uwsp.edu/depts/AssistiveTechnology/>

II. COVID-19 related Health and safety

For any question or concern about your health and safety related to coronavirus (COVID-19), please check the info and resources here: <https://www.uwsp.edu/coronavirus/Pages/default.aspx>

III. Inclusive and Safe Environment

I want everyone to have a safe and interesting experience in this course. I encourage the respectful exchange of ideas and opinions. I do not tolerate disrespect targeted toward any person or group of people. Examples include disparaging remarks about specific groups of resource users (such as the elderly or those from a particular ethnicity) or language that creates a divisive learning environment (such as racial slurs or words disparaging someone's sexual orientation). We have many, many more things in common than we have things that divide us. Let's work to understand our differences and build foundations for effective communication and collaboration with each other.

IV. Academic Dishonesty

Any instance of academic dishonesty (as described in 14.03 of the Handbook) will be met with the disciplinary actions outlined in section 14, ranging from an oral reprimand to suspension from the university.

V. Communication

I will frequently communicate with you via email or *Canvas*. Please check your UWSP email at least once every two days so that you can stay up to date with any potential changes.

Emails are an effective means of disseminating information and answering relatively simple questions. Emails should include an appropriate greeting, punctuation, closing, and your name. They should also have a subject line with course number/title. Emails written in text speak or without appropriate punctuation will be deleted.

If you have a complex question, need clarification on an assignment, or wish to discuss a grade, please see me in my office during office hours or scheduled appointment.

VI. Emergency Procedures

In the event of a medical emergency, call 911 or use red emergency phone located near 172, 151, 220, or 256. Offer assistance if trained and willing to do so. Guide emergency responders to victim.

In the event of a tornado warning, proceed to the lowest level interior room without window exposure at 122, 120, 157, 153, or 170. See www.uwsp.edu/rmgt/Pages/em/procedures/other/floor-plans for floor plans showing severe weather shelters on campus. Avoid wide-span rooms and buildings.

In the event of a fire alarm, evacuate the building in a calm manner. Meet at the Health Enhancement Center. Notify instructor or emergency command personnel of any missing individuals.

Active Shooter – Run/Escapes, Hide, Fight. If trapped hide, lock doors, turn off lights, spread out and remain quiet. Follow instructions of emergency responders.

See UW-Stevens Point Emergency Management Plan at www.uwsp.edu/rmgt for details on all emergency response at UW-Stevens Point.”

**The syllabus is subject to change. You are responsible for being in class when changes are announced or for contacting me if you have questions.*

Tentative Course Schedule:

Date	Topics	Major Assignments
Defining Environment, Policy, and Environmental Policy		
Week 1 Sep 2	Course Overview and Introductions	Ice-breaker activities and get to know peers and instructor
Week 2 Sep 7 & 9	Defining Environmental Policy Policy Development Process	

Week 3 Sep 14 & 16	Environmental policy tools, criteria and options part 1 Environmental policy tools, criteria and options part 2	Quiz
Week 4 Sep 21 & 23	Policy analysis approach and methods Cost benefit analysis and the environment- methods and examples	Quiz Due: Issue Paper Proposal
Week 5 Sep 28 & 30	Economics of regulations and policy tools choice Behavior and Decision Making	Quiz
Week 6 Oct 5 & 7	Framing policy tools choices Informing policy makers	Quiz Group exercise on policy brief writing
Environmental Policy Issues		
Week 7 Oct 12 & 14	National Security Part 1	Due: Policy Brief

	National Security Part 2	Quiz
Week 8 Oct 19 & 21	Consumer Products Part 1 Consumer Products Part 2	Group 1 Lead Discussion Quiz Group 2 Lead Discussion
Week 9 Oct 26 & 28	Waste Management Pollution	Group 3 Lead Discussion Quiz Due: Issue Paper Draft (10/29)
Week 10 Nov 2 & 4	Biodiversity part 1 Biodiversity part 2	Quiz Group 4 Lead Discussion
Week 11 Nov 9 & 11	Land use/property rights part 1 Land use/property rights part 2	Group 5 Lead Discussion Quiz
Week 12 Nov 16 & 18	Urban Development Energy	Group 6 Lead Discussion Quiz
Week 13	Group Work	Due: Final Issue Paper (11/24 by 6pm)

Nov 23	(Thanksgiving)	
Week 14 Nov 30 & Dec 2	Group presentations: Environmental issues, challenges, and policy solutions.	Groups C and D (11/30) Groups A and F (12/2)
Week 15 Dec 7 & 9	Group presentations: Environmental issues, challenges, and policy solutions Wrapping up	Groups B and E (12/7) Final Review
Final Exam: Thursday, December 16, 2021 from 8 – 10am in TNR 271		