

NRES 365: Environmental Policy

Fall 2020

3 credits

Classroom: Virtual (Canvas and Zoom)

Tue & Thu. 3:30-4:45 pm

Canvas link: <https://uwstp.instructure.com/courses/334974>

Zoom link: <https://uwsp.zoom.us/j/97072840873>

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

College of Natural Resources

Instructor

Dr. Shiba Kar

Office: TNR 180B; Ph. 715-346-2359; Email: skar@uwsp.edu

Office hours: Tuesday 9-10 am; Wednesday 2-3 pm (through zoom using this link: <https://uwsp.zoom.us/j/7153462359>) 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 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 5 p.m. on the date they are due.

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 semester progresses.

Assignments

I. Reflection questions (100 points)

Reflection questions will be completed randomly in classes 10 times (10 points each) during the semester to assess your content knowledge and identify areas that need clarification. You will either be asked questions based on material from lectures, discussions, and readings, or will be asked to identify concepts about which you are unclear in class and need additional help.

II. Leading Discussions (50+50= 100 points)

As a group, you will be assigned a set of reading materials on which you will lead discussion during class in two different weeks. Your discussion should include a brief (about 20 minute) Powerpoint overview of the paper, and a series of questions to ask students. You will be responsible for helping students engage in the discussion with group exercises.

III. Issue Paper Proposal (50 points)

You will work as a team and each of you will identify at least two issues of environmental concern, relevant stakeholders and normative questions. Each team will make a brief presentation on their identified issues in class. Then, the team 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.

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

1. The Issues

- 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

V. Individual Advocacy Policy Brief (50 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 can organize your tools according to the Schneider and Ingram framework or other policy tools categories we have used in this course, and 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 with local legislators/local administration ((enclosing the policy brief and highlighting key issues and recommendations) with a cc to me.

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 20 minutes, and should deliver the information from your group issue paper 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 times 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	50	9/18
Issue Paper draft	50	10/16
Final Issue Paper	100	11/6
Policy Brief	50	Week 13, Wed. 5pm
Group Presentation	50	Week 14 and Week 15
Final Exam	100	12/15; Thursday 12:30-2:30 pm
Reflection question	100	Random in class
Leading Discussion	100	See schedule- discussion groups
Total	600	

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

Emails should include an appropriate greeting, punctuation, a 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.

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/Escape, 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	Readings and Assignments
Week 1 Sep 3	Course Overview and Introductions Environmental policy and legislative process	Ice-breaker activities and get to know peers and instructor Textbook Ch. 1: U.S. Environmental Policy
Week 2 Sep 8-10	Environmental Policy in congress Presidential power and environmental policy	Textbook Ch. 5: Environmental Policy in Congress Textbook Ch. 4: Presidential Powers and Environmental Policy
Week 3 Sep 15-17	Environmental policy in the courts The Evolving State Government Role in Environmental Protection	Textbook Ch. 6: Environmental Policy in the Courts Textbook Ch. 2: State government Role in Environmental Protection Due: Issue Paper Proposal
Week 4 Sep 22-24	Policy tools and behavioral assumptions	Schneider and Ingram (1990) article- Behavioral assumptions of policy tools Fischer and Bliss (2007)- Behavioral assumptions in conservation policy
Week 5 Sep 29- Oct 1	Environmental policy tools, criteria and options	OTA Environmental Policy Tools: A User's Guide (1995)- Read Executive summary and Ch. 1) Stone (1989)-Causal Stories and Policy Agenda
Week 6 Oct 6-8	Framing policy tools choices	Richards (2000)- Framing Environmental policy instrument choice Friedman et al (2000)- Environmental Policy Instrument Choice- The Challenge of Competing goals
Week 7 Oct 13-15	Economics of regulations and policy tools choice	Keohane et.al. (1998)- Choice of regulatory instruments Textbook Ch. 10: Applying Market Principles to Environmental Policy Due: Issue Paper draft

Week 8 Oct 20-22	Cost benefit analysis and the environment- methods and examples	Kotchen (2010)- Cost-Benefit Analysis- a primary tool for economic efficiency in policy Farrow and Toman (1998)- Environmental Benefit-Cost to improve government performance
Week 9 Oct 27-29	Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)- steps, process, examples	The Citizen's Guide to the National Environmental Policy Act (https://www.epa.gov/nepa) Readings on EIA vs EMS
Week 10 Nov 3-5	SWOT analysis, examples, discussion Multi-criteria analysis, examples	SWOT Analysis article - ODI Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis https://projects.ncsu.edu/nrli/decision-making/MCDA.php Examples of MCA Due: Final Issue Paper
Week 11 Nov 10-12	Policy analysis approach and methods	Patton et. al. C. Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning Ch.1 Textbook Ch. 9: Eating and the Environment
Week 12 Nov 17-19	Informing policy makers Group exercise on policy brief writing	Guidelines for Writing a Policy Brief Textbook Ch. 11: Toward Sustainable Production
Week 13 Nov 24	Application of policy tools— local cities, industries (Thanksgiving)	Textbook Ch. 12: Taking Sustainable Cities Seriously Due: Policy Brief
Week 14 Dec 1-3	Group presentations: Environmental issues, challenges, and policy solutions.	Environmental issues, challenges, and solutions
Week 15 Dec 8-10	Group presentations: Environmental issues, challenges, and policy solutions Wrapping up	
Final Exam: December 15th, Tuesday; 12:30-2:30 pm (100 points):		