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ENST 594.06: Environmental Policy - Legislative Process

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ENST 594 – Montana Environmental Policy: Legislative Processes

TU/TH 9:30 – 10:50 AM

Payne Family Native American Center 105

Spring 2019

Instructor

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COURSE OVERVIEW

In 2006, West Virginia's longest-serving Congressman Nick Rahall said, "we all understand that compromise is part of the legislative process, yet at the same time, I would submit that wilderness is not for sale." This pronouncement conveys a line in the sand that continues to be relevant today, at the national and state levels. In Montana, the transfer of public land is a hotly debated issue. That and many other contested environmental issues have been and continue to be debated in the Montana Legislature. Those issues concern the fate of the Colstrip power plants, oil and gas development, hard rock and coal mining and reclamation, climate and clean energy, electricity transmission, fish and wildlife, invasive species, water quality, stream access, land use planning, and others.

In this class students learn about recent and current legislative debates regarding several of those issues as well as the associated environmental policies and politics. Over the course of the semester, each student will investigate, analyze and report on the legislative process of a current environmental issue. For their issue investigations, students are expected to have the opportunity to observe the legislative process and interact with various policy actors, including legislators, the governor and his staff, state agency staff, and representatives of various stakeholder groups such as industry, trade associations, unions, city and county government, and environmental organizations. The class includes a required all-day field trips to the state capitol on March 8, though other optional opportunities will be announced.

The learning experiences in this class will help prepare students to be active and informed citizens in state level environmental policy issues and to work in a wide range of settings including non-profit organizations and governmental agencies that conduct environmental policy research, analysis, writing and communication.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will have:

1. Developed an understanding of federalism, the organizational structure of government and the role of different branches of government in the policy process;
2. Developed an understanding of environmental politics in Montana and aspects of the political culture in the state;

3. Developed an understanding of state legislative processes in Montana and multi-stakeholder participation, including the role, strategies and influence of citizens, state agencies, the Governor's Office, and lobbyists representing a wide variety of organizations;
4. Developed an understanding and appreciation of the history and development of Montanan's Constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment;
5. Developed an understanding and appreciation of bedrock environmental laws including the involvement of citizens and environmental organizations in policy implementation and enforcement;
6. Developed environmental policy research, analysis and writing skills, including the ability to analyze the legislative decision-making; and,
7. Developed an understanding of the techniques of citizen participation in the legislative process.

EVST POLICY APPROACHES REQUIREMENT

This course meets the EVST Policy Approaches distribution requirement.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

The assignments for the class are as follows:

1. Field trip reaction paper (3 double spaced pages, due by next class period)
2. Policy issue investigation and analysis: for this major assignment, students investigate an issue debated in the current session of the Montana Legislature, analyze the outcome or expected outcome, and offer policy advice to one or more policy actors. This assignment is to be completed in parts as follows (also see below for schedule of due dates) with each part subsequently incorporated into the next:
 - a. Policy issue investigation proposal (3 double spaced pages)
 - b. Legislative history & policy analysis work plan (10 double spaced pages)
 - c. Policy issue investigation report (20 double spaced pages)
3. Policy issue investigation presentation (30 minutes)

The field trip reaction paper will be counted along with attendance as part of students' class participation grade. Your participation grade will also take into account factors such as: punctuality; preparation; active listening; engagement with your peers, guest speakers and the instructor; your overall contributions to class discussions of readings; and your participation in class activities.

The schedule for assignments, subject to changes announced in class, and weighting for assignments are as follows:

Assignment/Course Element	% or part of Grade	Due Date
Class participation	10%	N/A
Policy issue investigation proposal	10%	Thurs. 2/14
Field trip reaction paper	class participation	Tues. 3/12
Legislative history & policy analysis work plan	30%	Thurs. 3/21
Policy issue investigation report	40%	Wed. 5/1
Policy issue investigation presentation	10%	As scheduled

Evaluation of written assignments will be based on the completeness, quality of the research, appropriateness of sources consulted, quality of the writing (including originality, organization, and clarity), level of analysis, insight, and documentation. Specific guidelines for assignment will be handed out and discussed in class. Page numbers associated with assignments represent both suggested lengths and upper limits (not including references and appendices); writing should be substantive (well-researched) and pithy. Parts of assignments submitted that exceed the page limit will not be read or graded. Penalties may be incurred for late assignments.

CLASS PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

The quality of your learning and that of your peers will depend on being present and prepared for class. If you are absent you cannot benefit from listening to the discussion or contributing to group learning.

Class will be held mostly in seminar format, and will consist of a combination of lecture, discussion, guest speakers, videos, and student presentations. The success of the class and your learning depends on your active participation. This requires coming to class prepared to discuss assigned readings. Environmental politics and policies can be contentious in Montana; thus, a critical social norm and expectation in this class is that all participants will treat each other with respect in sharing thoughts and ideas in discussion and responding to the views of others.

Email Communication: In accordance with privacy laws the University requires me to communicate with students about academic matters through students' University email account.

A Note about the Course Content: This course assumes students have a moderate level of understanding of the U.S. political system, governmental institutions and policy making processes. Although many policy terms and concepts will be defined, it is important that we all share some common language and knowledge base for conversing about environmental policy. In the first week of class, several optional readings are provided for students who feel they would benefit from a primer or "refresher" on American government and policy making.

Obtaining Assistance: I am available to help if you need assistance outside of class or encounter difficulties of any kind, particularly with developing your issue investigation ideas. Please see me after class, email me, come see me during office hours (by signing up on the sheet outside my office), or set up an appointment via email.

CITATION STYLES

There are three preferred citation style options for citing sources in written work for this class: APA (American Psychological Association); ASA (American Sociological Association); and Chicago. The first two styles call for in-text (author-year) citations and a separate list of references, whereas the latter calls for footnotes (instead of in-text citations). Please do not use endnotes. Page numbers should be included for citations and footnotes for all quotes, and are recommended for all citations.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you are a student with a disability and wish to discuss reasonable accommodations for this course, contact me privately to discuss the specific modifications you wish to request. Please be advised I may request that you provide a letter from Disability Services for Students verifying your right to reasonable modifications. If you have not yet contacted Disability Services, located in Lommasson Center 154, please do so in order to verify your disability and to coordinate your reasonable modifications. For more information, please visit the Disability Services website.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity. All work and ideas submitted are expected to be your own or must be fully and accurately attributed to verifiable sources. The *Academic Policies and Procedures in the University Catalog* states: "Students who plagiarize may fail the course and may be remanded to Academic Court for possible suspension or expulsion." If you have any doubts about plagiarism and citing of others' work or ideas, especially web sources, please consult the instructor.

READINGS AND COURSE SCHEDULE

All course readings generally will be on Moodle one week ahead of time, though some readings will be emailed or handed out in class. There is also one recommended book from which we will be reading several chapters: *Policy Writing Public Policy: A Practical Guide to Communicating in the Policy Making Process, 4th Ed.*, by Catherine F. Smith (Oxford University Press 2015). Those chapters will be available on the course Moodle page (see: <https://umonline.umn.edu/>), though students may wish to obtain the book. Older editions should be fine. Course readings schedules, including guest speakers, will be handed out in class.