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### EVST 367.01: Environmental Politics and Policies

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**EVST 367W**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS AND POLICIES**

CRN 72710 / Fall 2008 / TR 11:10 am – 12:30 pm / JRH 203

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**Course Description**

This course teaches students how to analyze and research environmental and natural resource policy issues and how to advise policy actors on political strategies to protect their interests.

The goal is for students to develop an understanding of the complex dynamics of policy making to prepare them to become active, engaged citizens and to pursue policy-related careers. The focus is on current domestic policy issues.

Students learn about factors that affect the development of policy issues in the public and governmental spheres. The course begins by providing a basic foundation on the features of the U.S. political system. We then briefly examine how environmental problems become recognized, develop into public issues, and gain the attention of government. The course primarily examines the policy making process of formulating and adopting policies to address public issues. Thus, a fundamental objective is for students to understand how governmental decisions are made and how various outside actors attempt to influence those decisions.

This class uses a *Government Politics Model* to analyze current natural resource and environmental policy issues. Models are tools to help us “see” the various components of complex systems – in our case the political system – and understand the relationships among various policy actors. Models not only help us explain current policy debates, but also predict their outcomes and identify ways that various policy actors can “tweak” the outcome in their favor. To be successful in the course, students will demonstrate mastery in applying the model. Students will have opportunities to practice using the model individually and as a class.

In learning to apply the *Government Politics Model* students begin by identifying key *decision makers* and their *political interests*. Student also must be able to describe the decision making process, which we refer to as the *Rules of the Game*. A large part of the course is devoted to understanding the rules of the game, for example, how Congress, agencies, and the courts make decisions – often in various steps or stages. Next students identify the *political interests* and *stakes* of other *policy actors* and assess their ability to influence the decision makers at different stages of the decision making process. In evaluating the relative power of these actors, we consider their *political access* (to decision makers), *political resources*, and their *tactics* or *strategies*. Thus, to master the *Government Politics Model* students must understand and be able to apply these important concepts (*decision makers*, *Rules of the Game*, *policy*

actors, access, interests and stakes, resources, tactics and strategies) in analyzing current policy issues.

Students will develop their policy analysis skills using the *Government Politics Model* by conducting a case study analysis of a current issue, getting feedback, and doing a revision. Students will then have the opportunity to demonstrate their policy analysis skills by conducting their own issue investigations and policy analyses on current topics of their choosing. This major assignment requires doing original research, including interviewing policy actors.

By the end of the course students will:

- Understand the basic organization, decision making processes, and interrelationships among federal policy making institutions, including Congress, the president, executive branch agencies, and the courts.
- Understand and appreciate the influence of interest groups, the media and public opinion in environmental decision making.
- Be able to research and analyze current policy debates, predict outcomes, and strategically advise policy actors by using the *Government Politics Model*, i.e., by identifying decision makers, ascertaining the *Rules of the Game*, assessing the relative influence of policy actors by analyzing actors' interests, resources, tactics, and access to decision makers.
- Have improved skills and confidence in analytic writing, public speaking, and civic debate.
- Attain knowledge of and interest in how to effectively participate in current environmental policy decisions, i.e., citizenship skills and sensibilities.

### **Class Structure**

The class is highly interactive and will include a combination of lecture, discussion, and a variety of activities such as small group discussions, guest speakers, videos, etc. Considerable class time will also be devoted to research project development.

### **Requirements**

Students must be prepared to develop and demonstrate upper division critical thinking, writing and oral communication skills. The course requires:

- Regular class attendance
- Active participation in class
- Homework assignments
- Case study analysis and revision
- A mid-term exam
- Research-based policy analysis

Students are expected to be prepared to discuss assigned readings and participate in class activities, complete all required assignments, including several homework assignments and a case study analysis assignment, which provides an opportunity to develop analytic skills needed to predict outcomes of and recommend strategies to influence current policy debates. A rewrite will help develop your writing skills and fulfill the Upper Division Writing Requirement.

You will then put your analytic skills to use by conducting policy research, for which you will investigate and analyze a current policy issue. This semester the class will focus on climate

and energy policy. The instructor may also offer one or more well-defined group research project options.

### **Grading Policy**

Course grades are based on the following components:

1. Participation (10%)
2. Homework assignments (20%)
3. Case study analysis, including revision (20%)
4. Midterm exam (20%)
5. Policy research paper (30%)

Late homework assignments will not be accepted. The case study analyses turned in late will receive a letter grade reduction for each class period they are late, and assignments not turned in will receive a grade of "zero." Policy research papers will receive a letter grade reduction for each day late. If unforeseen or special circumstances occur or are anticipated, you must speak with the instructor in advance of due dates.

### **Attendance Policy**

Regular attendance is a requirement. Attendance will be taken each day in class. Students who have 5 or more unexcused absences throughout the term may receive up to a full letter grade reduction in their course grade. Excused absences will be given on a case-by-case basis. Students wishing to have an excused absence generally must notify the instructor in advance of a class that they will miss, or provide an acceptable reason such as illness or death in the family, and may be required to provide verification. Repeated lateness to class is disruptive to the learning environment and may also result in a course grade reduction. Students at risk of incurring a grade reduction due to poor attendance will be given notified and given an opportunity to improve.

### **Extra Credit**

Extra credit (for up to a maximum of 2.5% boost in your course grade) can be earned by attending a public hearing or meeting and completing a report about it. Public hearings are an important component of democratic participation. Here is your chance to see what goes on and perhaps participate yourself. You must attend in person (not watch community access cable) and provide a short (3 to 4 page) report that identifies the date, location, presiding agency, level of government, the topic or decision under consideration, a rough timeline for the decision to be made, and the law or policy for which the hearing is required. You should also summarize and assess the nature of the comments, identify which arguments or testimony you found more compelling, explain why and provide your own opinion on the issue. Finally, indicate if you provided testimony or could see yourself doing so. Due by Tues., Nov. 18.

### **Description of Major Assignments**

1. **Case Study Analysis** – To help hone your analytic skills for the term paper, you will be given a short written case study to analyze the policy making process of a specific issue, using the *government politics model*. Because the course meets the University's *Upper Division General Education Writing Requirement*, case study analyses will receive an initial grade, substantial feedback for improvement, and then will be revised, resubmitted, and re-

graded. Both versions will be counted toward the assignment grade. First drafts are due Thurs., Oct. 2, and revised papers are due Thurs., Oct. 16.

**2. Policy Research Paper** – The purpose of the project is to conduct original research and analysis on a current policy issue related to energy or climate change that is being actively debated and will soon be decided. Students will pick topics subject to the instructor's approval during the week of Oct. 27. Students will determine the location of the issue in the policy process, research the background for this issue, and gather information needed to write individual policy analyses using the *government politics model*. This effort should involve preparing interview questions and interviewing key policy actors, and if possible decision makers, as well as gathering information through other means on actors' interests, stakes in the issue, resources, and strategies employed. As part of this major assignment, an **Issue Background** will be due Thurs., Nov. 13. Students are encouraged to meet individually with the instructor or TA during the week of Nov 13. Additional information will be handed out in class and special training sessions (**Policy Research Workshops**) will prepare students to conduct this research

In this assignment you will bring course materials to bear in analyzing the group research project. In addition to providing an issue background and identifying the location of your issue in the policy making process, your goal will be to illustrate an in-depth understanding of policy developments for the issue. The following indicates the kinds of information and analyses that should be included:

- What are the positions of the main policy actors, and why?
- What influence they have had on the development of policy to date.
- What is the source of their influence, i.e., what resources and advantages do they have?
- What is the nature of their access to the key decision makers in the policy making process?
- How have they influenced policy in the past?
- What are the strategies they are employing now?
- How are they likely to influence future direction of the policy?
- Picking one policy actor, what strategies would you recommend she/he employ and why?

The above is not intended to be an exhaustive check-list. Rather it is intended to get you to think about pieces of information and aspects of analysis that are necessary to gain an in-depth understanding about policy development regarding a particular issue. Thus, rather than asking yourself whether you have methodically and dutifully hit upon every point raised above, you should ask yourself whether you have covered all the main pieces that will result in in-depth understanding of the issue. You will be revising your **Issue Background** as your second formal paper revision required to fulfill the *Upper Division General Education Writing Requirement*.

**Policy Research Papers** are due on the last day of classes Thurs., Dec. 4.

Additional instructions and guidelines for each assignment will be handed out and discussed in class.

### **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 2008-09 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.

### **Reading Materials and Phone Communications**

There is no required text. All reading materials will be on Electronic Reserve (E-RES). Materials on E-RES can be accessed through the Mansfield Library course reserves home page: <http://eres.lib.umt.edu/eres/default.aspx> by searching for by the course (EVST 367) or the instructor (Saha). The course reserve page password is "EVST367".

Phone communications may be necessary for gathering information (conducting interviews) for the research papers, particularly for national or regional policy topics. It is recommended that each student plan for several hours of prime time long-distance phone calls.

### **Class Schedule**

In addition to the readings listed below, supplementary readings will be posted on E-RES throughout the term, for the role play exercise, for example. Due dates for assignments are also shown in the schedule below.

Tues 8/26 Course Introduction

**POLITICAL PROCESS HOMEWORK HANDED OUT**

Thurs 8/28 Introduction to Environmental Politics and Policy **POLITICAL PROCESS HOMEWORK DUE**

Switzer (2004) The Political Process (Ch 3)

Tues. 9/2 Introduction to Public Land History and Policy

Fairfax (2005) Changing Expectations: From the Civil War to the Weeks Act, 1865-1911 (Ch 3)

Thurs. 9/4 Public Lands Policy Continued

Clarke and Angersbach (2001) The Federal Four: Change and Continuity in the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, and National Park Service, 1970-2000 (Ch 3)

McClure and Schneider (2001) The General Mining Act of 1872

Ring (2008) A Fractured Party

**POLICY EVALUATION HOMEWORK HANDED OUT**

Tues. 9/9 Introduction to the Bedrock Environmental Laws **POLICY EVALUATION HOMEWORK DUE**

Kraft (2004) Judging the State of the Environment (Ch 2)

**POLICY PROCESS HOMEWORK HANDED OUT**

- Thurs 9/11 Bedrock Environmental Laws Continued / The Policy Process  
Kraft and Furlong (2004) Understanding the Politics of Public Policy (Ch 3), p. 78-99 only  
RECOMMENDED: Kingdon (1995) Agenda Setting (Ch 13)
- Tues 9/16 Policy Process Case Example – The Clean Air Act  
Layzer (2002) The Nation Tackles Pollution: The Environmental Protection Agency and the Clean Air and Water Acts (Ch 2)
- Thurs 9/18 Introduction to the Legislative Process **POLICY PROCESS HOMEWORK DUE**  
Project Vote Smart (2005) How a Bill Becomes a Law [http://www.vote-smart.org/resource\\_govt101\\_02.php](http://www.vote-smart.org/resource_govt101_02.php)  
RECOMMENDED: Kraft (2006) Environmental Policy in Congress: From Consensus to Gridlock (Ch 6)
- Tues 9/23 Legislative Process Continued / Public Policy Theories and Models / The Government Politics Model  
Kraft and Furlong (2004) Understanding the Politics of Public Policy (Ch 3), p. 69-77 only  
The Government Politics Model  
**CASE STUDY ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT HANDED OUT**
- Thurs 9/25 Topic to be announced  
Readings to be assigned
- Tues 9/30 Case Study Analysis Practicum
- Thurs 10/2 Interest Group Behavior **CASE STUDY ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT DUE**  
Bosso and Guber (2006) Maintaining Presence: Environmental Advocacy and the Permanent Campaign (Ch 4)
- Tues 10/7 Interest Group Role Play Prep Day  
Readings to be assigned
- Thurs 10/9 Interest Group Role Play
- Tues 10/14 Introduction to Climate Policy  
Gerrard (2007) U.S. Policy (Ch 3)  
Rabe (2007) Taking It to the States (Ch 16)  
RECOMMENDED: Gerrard (2007) Introduction and Overview (Ch 1)
- Thurs 10/16 Public Opinion and Climate Policy **CASE STUDY ANALYSIS REVISION DUE**  
Johansen (2006) Weather Wars: Global Warming and Public Opinion (Ch 5)

Tues 10/21 Midterm Review

Thurs 10/23 Midterm Exam

Tues 10/28 Policy Research Workshop I (researching current policy issues)  
SPECIAL TRAINING DAY, CLASS MEETS IN MANSFIELD LIBRARY, RM. 283  
**CURRENT ISSUE ASSIGNMENT HANDED OUT**

Thurs 10/30 Science and Policy **CURRENT ISSUE ASSIGNMENT DUE**  
Dessler and Parson (2006) The Science and Politics of Global Climate Change (Ch. 3)  
Revkin (2004) Bush vs. the Laureates: How Science Became a Partisan Issue  
Pegg (2007) Effects of Bush Climate Science Censorship Linger

Tues 11/4 Election Day – No Class

Thurs 11/6 Policy Research Workshop II  
SPECIAL TRAINING DAY, CLASS MEETS COMPUTER CLASSROOM, LOCATION TBA  
**ISSUE BACKGROUND ASSIGNMENT HANDED OUT**

Tues 11/11 Veteran's Day – No Class

Thurs 11/13 Media and the Policy Process **ISSUE BACKGROUND ASSIGNMENT DUE**  
Greenblatt (2004) Media Bias

Tues 11/18 Policy Research Workshop III **LAST DAY TO SUBMIT EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS**  
Rouge Communications. Modules 1-7 <http://www.roguecom.com/interview/>

Thurs 11/20 Research Day

Tues 11/25 Research Day

Thurs 11/27 Thanksgiving – No Class

Tues 12/2 Research Day

Thurs 12/4 Course Wrap Up **POLICY RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**

Friday 12/12 Finals Week – Final Class Meeting 10:10 A.M. – 12:10 P.M.