

1-2013

## PSCI 449.50: Environmental Health Policy

Laura Dimmler

*University of Montana - Missoula*, [laura.dimmler@umontana.edu](mailto:laura.dimmler@umontana.edu)

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi>

---

### Recommended Citation

Dimmler, Laura, "PSCI 449.50: Environmental Health Policy" (2013). *Syllabi*. 825.  
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/825>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Course Syllabi at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

**UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH POLICY PSCI 449**

**Instructor:** Laura Dimmler, PhD  
E-mail: [laura.dimmler@umontana.edu](mailto:laura.dimmler@umontana.edu)

**SPRING 2013  
Three Credits**

## **Course Description**

This course is designed to provide students with a broad understanding of environmental health policy in the U.S. – its evolution, current status, and emerging areas needing greater emphasis. The course will begin with an overview of NEPA – the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 – the basic national charter for the protection of the environment. The course also will explore other significant environmental health laws derived from the 1970s and 1980s, including CERCLA and SARA, RCRA, TSCA, and the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts as well as critical amendments to these major legislative initiatives. Theoretical principles such as bureaucratic politics and environmental justice, and innovative approaches such as the precautionary principle will be considered within the context of specific research articles and case studies where environmental interests have been addressed or ignored by government regulators. Issues related to global environmental health policy, such as emerging infectious diseases, and emergency preparedness also will be covered.

## **Course Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Define major pieces of U.S. environmental legislation and the roles of federal and state governments in policy development and implementation, as well as the key institutions and policy processes.
2. Understand the politics of environmental health, and the outcomes, failures, and successes of environmental health policy since the 1970s.
3. Appreciate the important role of citizen action in the shaping of past and future environmental health policy as the U.S. confronts shifting demographics and epidemiological trends, economic constraints, and new threats to the nation's health and security as a result of unmitigated environmental degradation on both national and global levels.
4. Describe the social, economic, and environmental impact of environmental health policy on various population groups, including those in Montana and other rural communities in the U.S. and abroad.
5. Comprehend the critical linkages regarding international environmental health issues and maintaining public health and the environment in the United States, and the influence of emerging infectious diseases and other environmental disasters on emergency preparedness and the public health system.

## **Required Course Readings**

All of the following books are required readings for this course:

Minteer, B.A. (2006). *The Landscape of Reform*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Blatt, H. (2011). *America's Environmental Report Card: Are We Making the Grade?* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Dauvergne, P. (2008). *The Shadows of Consumption: Consequences for the Global Environment*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Kraft, M.E., and Kamieniecki, S. (2007). *Business and Environmental Policy: Corporate Interests in the American Political System*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Sze, J. (2007). *Noxious New York: The Racial Politics of Urban Health and Environmental Justice*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Pellow, D.N. (2007). *Resisting Global Toxics: Transnational Movements for Environmental Justice*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Price-Smith, A.T. (2009). *Contagion and Chaos: Disease, Ecology, and National Security in the Era of Globalization*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Vig, N.J., and Kraft, M.E. (2012). *Environmental Policy: New Directions for the 21st Century*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

## **Environmental Health Legislation Web Links**

You are required to read the legislation posted at these web links:

National Environmental Policy Act

[http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/laws\\_and\\_executive\\_orders/the\\_nepa\\_statute.html](http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/laws_and_executive_orders/the_nepa_statute.html)

Clean Air Act

<http://www.epa.gov/air/caa/>

Clean Water Act

[http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/cwa.cfm?program\\_id=45](http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/cwa.cfm?program_id=45)

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)

<http://www.epa.gov/lawsregs/laws/rcra.html>

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)

<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/policy/cercla.htm>

Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA)

<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/policy/sara.htm>

Toxic Substances and Control Act (TSCA)

<http://www.epa.gov/lawsregs/laws/tsca.html>

**Additional readings are uploaded in Moodle. Please be sure to access the course online on a weekly basis and keep up with the reading schedule for the course.**

### Course Assignments

**PLEASE SUBMIT ALL ASSIGNMENTS TO ME VIA E-MAIL, EXCEPT THE BLOGS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED IN MOODLE:**

(E-mail: [laura.dimmler@umontana.edu](mailto:laura.dimmler@umontana.edu))

Assignments	Percent of Grade		Due Dates
	Undergraduate	Graduate	
CDC Article Analysis	500 points	250 points	February 15
Case Study Analysis #1: Libby, Montana	500 points	250 points	March 31
Case Study Analysis #2: Hines Shintech	500 points	250 points	April 15
Class Participation: Threaded Discussions (2)	250 points (total)	250 points (total)	March 3 and April 21 – see Moodle
Book Report	750 points	750 points	May 6
Graduate Students Only: Additional Assignment - Policy Analysis Paper	NA	750 points	Detailed Outline and Reference List: March 3 Policy Analysis Paper: May 17

### CDC Article Analysis

For this assignment, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) link:

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/articles.htm>

Select one article found on this page that is of interest to you, and relates directly to public health and the environment; read the article, and write a paper that includes:

1. The title and author(s) of the article
2. A brief synopsis of the article (one paragraph)
3. What did you learn from the article?
4. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the article?

5. How does the information in the article link to the larger issues of public health and the environment?
6. Did you find the article a useful source of information? Explain why or why not.

Your paper must be in APA format (no abstract required), and 3-5 pages typed and double-spaced. Be sure to list the title of the article at the top of your paper. If you use any other sources of information for your paper, you need to provide a reference list in APA format.

**This assignment is due by midnight on February 15, 2013.**

### **Case Study Analysis**

You will be required to prepare two case study analyses for this course. For each analysis, you need to answer the following questions:

1. What is the case about? (1-2 paragraphs)
2. What are the critical environmental health issues discussed in the case?
3. Does the concept of environmental justice pertain to the case? If so, explain how.
4. What do you think should be changed to avoid cases such as these in the future?
5. Provide any other comments or perspectives which you think are important to explain the case – this should not be solely your opinion – if you make a point, you need to support your argument using peer-reviewed research articles, scholarly books or other reference materials.

Your paper must be in APA format (no abstract required), and 3-5 pages typed and double-spaced. Be sure to list your name and the title of the case at the top of your paper. If you use any other sources of information for your analysis, you need to provide a reference list in APA format.

**Case Study Analysis #1 Due – March 31, 2013**

**Case Study Analysis #2 Due – April 15, 2013**

### **Book Report**

Students must write a 7-10 page (typed and double-spaced, in APA format) book report on this book:

Dauvergne, P. (2008). *The Shadows of Consumption: Consequences for the Global Environment*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

In your report, you'll need to include:

1. A brief description of the book (about 1-2 pages)

2. Discussion and analysis of the key issues impacting the environment that are presented in the book (3-4 pages)
3. Your evaluation of the book – Did you enjoy reading it? Did the book add value to your understanding of the issues? How would you critique the book? What were some of the shortcomings of the book? (3-4 pages)

If you use any other sources of information in your paper, you must include a reference list. The book report must be in APA format with a title page; an abstract is not required.

**The book report is due by midnight on May 6, 2013.**

### **Environmental Health Policy Analysis Paper (Graduate Students Only)**

Graduate students must submit an additional assignment consisting of a policy analysis paper related to a topic of interest covered in the course. The paper must be 15-20 pages typed and double-spaced, in APA format with an abstract and reference list.

Select an appropriate environmental health policy topic from the range of issues covered in this course. The paper must address the nature of the problem, the historical context of the issue, an assessment of current policy, and recommendations for policy improvement.

**By March 3, submit a detailed outline of your topic and a comprehensive reference list (in APA format, typed and double-spaced with a minimum of 15 references) for instructor approval. Reference sources for your paper need to be peer-reviewed journals (many of these can be accessed online). Do not use Wikipedia as a reference source – it is not peer-reviewed.** If you have questions about suitable sources, please contact the reference librarian at the university or the instructor.

**The final paper is due by midnight on May 17, 2013. All completed assignments must be sent to the instructor's e-mail address for submission.**

### **Course Grading**

There are 2,500 total points possible in the course. The following will be used to determine the final course grade:

**A** = 2,500 – 2,250

**B** = 2,249 – 2,000

**C** = 1,999 – 1,750

**D** = 1,749 – 1,650

**F** = 1,649 and below

### **Student Access Statement**

Students with disabilities may request reasonable accommodation by contacting the instructor. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through

collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). “Reasonable” means the University permits no fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications.

### **Student Code of Conduct**

If the instructor detects any instances of plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, misrepresentation, failure to appropriately attribute reference materials or the reuse of a student’s written materials from other courses on any exam, paper, assignment or other work submitted by a student, or submit the work of another student as your own work, the result will be an immediate failure of the course, with a grade of F, and referral for possible institutional action (see the Student Handbook, Code of Conduct).

**NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus if necessary at any time. No late assignments will be accepted without prior notification to the instructor along with a compelling reason why the student has missed the due date.**

### **Course Reading Schedule**

**January 28**

#### **Foundations of Environmental Health Policy**

Readings: Minter – *The Landscape of Reform*  
Blatt – *America’s Environmental Report Card*

Read NEPA – see the **Environmental Health Legislation** web links above

**February 4**

Readings: Continue reading Minter and Blatt

RCRA – see the **Environmental Health Legislation** web links above

TSCA – see the **Environmental Health Legislation** web links above

**February 11**

Readings: Finish reading Minter and Blatt

**February 18**

#### **Politics, Policy, and Environmental Health**

Readings: Kraft and Kamieniecki – *Business and Environmental Policy: Corporate Interests in the American Political System*

Vig and Kraft – *Environmental Policy: New Directions for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

CERCLA and SARA – see the **Environmental Health Legislation** web links above

**February 25**

Readings: Continue reading Kraft and Kamieniecki, and Vig and Kraft

Clean Water Act – see the **Environmental Health Legislation** web links above

**March 4**

Readings: Finish reading Kraft and Kamieniecki, and Vig and Kraft

Clean Air Act – see the **Environmental Health Legislation** web links above

**March 11**

**Global Health, Racial Politics, and Environmental Justice**

Readings: Begin reading – Pellow – *Resisting Global Toxics*

Begin reading – Sze – *Noxious New York*

Read Meadows – *Leverage Points* (journal article in Moodle)

Precautionary Principle – see <http://www.sehn.org/precaution.html>

**March 18**

Readings: Finish reading Pellow and Sze

**March 25**

Readings: United States General Account Office. (2003). EPA's cleanup of asbestos in Libby, Montana, and related actions to address asbestos-contaminated materials. U.S. Government Printing Office, GAO-03-469

**April 1-5**

**Spring Break**

**April 8**

**Climate Change**

Visit: <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/>

Readings: Hines Shintech Case

**April 15**

**Emerging Infectious Diseases (EIDs)**

Readings: Price-Smith – *Contagion and Chaos*

**April 22**

Readings: Continue reading Price-Smith

**April 29**

Readings: Finish reading Price-Smith

**May 6**

**Book Report Due**

**May 17**

**Environmental Health Policy Analysis Paper Due  
(Graduate Students Only)**