

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Department of Urban Affairs and Planning

UAP 4444 – ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Tues. 9:00-11:50 AM; Architecture Annex 444; Fall 2003

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Office Hours: Monday 2-4 p.m. and by appointment

Course Description

This class examines the theory, practice and politics of the environmental policy making process. We will start by discussing the central environmental problems in the US and the different governmental approaches to address these issues. We will analyze the background and context of environmental policy, and the role of different stakeholders groups in the policy design process. Traditional approaches to regulation will be contrasted to modern instruments of environmental management. Different methods of policy evaluation will be analyzed. Current environmental policy debates will be presented through improvised Congressional Hearings where the students will play the role of the some policy actors. We will wrap-up with a discussion on global environmental problems and the uncertainties on the path towards sustainable development.

Educational Objectives

By the end of the course you should be prepared for more advanced study of environmental policy or for an internship with a governmental agency or an environmental organization. You should be able to publicly discuss the following issues:

- The most significant environmental problems affecting the World and the US.
- Origins and evolution of environmental policy approaches in the US.
- The policy design process and the role of the different stakeholders involved.
- Environmental policy evaluation.
- Strengths and weaknesses of traditional regulation and the emergence of more efficient policy instruments.
- The main premises of important environmental legislation.
- US policy and international environmental agreements.

More important, you should have polished your analytical, communication and research skills. I hope that by the end of the semester you will be a more critical and active citizen moving towards sustainable development.

Requirements

In this class you will not have the traditional final and mid-term evaluations. I created a wide range of short assignments in order to allow a continuous evaluation of your work and to stimulate your development in different skills that are critical in the environmental policy design arena. This means that you will need to work on a larger number of projects than you are probably used to. In contrast you are not supposed to spend much time memorizing any materials.

- I expect you to come to class fully prepared to discuss the assigned readings. The Department of Urban Affairs and Planning values the role of **participation** and active engagement by students in the learning process. Moreover, we believe a prerequisite for learning is that students should **attend class regularly**, participate fully when called upon, and have command of the assigned readings at the scheduled time.
- Early in the semester I will give you **three assignments** that will cover the first modules of the class. I will provide you a set of questions and you will have one week to prepare a document with your answers.
- Twice in the semester we will simulate a **Congressional Hearing**. You will be divided into several stakeholder groups that are involved in an environmental controversy. Each group will work together to write a 5-page policy briefing stating their position. Each group will then present their position during the improvised hearing to be held in class. One week after the hearing each group is required to write a 5-page decision based on the class discussion. Your policy briefing, presentation, and final decision will be evaluated.
- Later in the semester we will discuss some of the most important Acts of environmental legislation. You will have to write **two memorandums** with a summary of one of the Acts discussed in class that day.
- Your last requirement is a 12-page **term paper** on a topic of your interest related with environmental policy. More detailed guidelines and a list of optional topics will be presented later in the semester. I strongly encourage you to stop by my office or to send me a note so that we can discuss your ideas and hopefully I will be able to provide some guidance.

All written assignments should be typed and double-spaced, and must be submitted at the beginning of the class period in which they are due. Specific instructions for the format of each of these assignments will be given.

Grading:

Class Participation - 10%
Assignment #1 - 5%
Assignment #2 - 5%
Assignment #3 - 5%
Hearing Briefing #1 - 10%
Hearing Discussion #1- 5%
Hearing Decision #1- 5%
Hearing Briefing #2 - 10%
Hearing Discussion #2 - 5%
Hearing Decision #2 - 10%
Memo #1 - 5%
Memo #2 - 5%
Term Paper - 20%

Grades will be based on the following scale:

95-100% of total possible points = A
90-94% of total possible points = A -
87-89% of total possible points = B+
84-86% of total possible points = B
80-83% of total possible points = B-

- 77-79% of total possible points = C+
- 74-76% of total possible points = C
- 70-73% of total possible points = C-
- 60-69% of total possible points = D
- 0-60% of total possible points = F

Readings

Fiorino, Dan. *Making Environmental Policy*. University of California Press: 1995.

Portney, Paul R. and Robert N. Stavins, editors, *Public Policies for Environmental Protection*, Resources for the Future: 2000.

Vig, Norman J. and Michael E. Kraft, editors, *Environmental Policy: New Directions for the Twenty-First Century*, CQ Press: 2003.

Other readings will be available through Blackboard.

Calendar

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Aug 26:

- Introduction.
- The state of the Global and US Environment.
(For more information I suggest reading: “State of the World 2002” edited by the Worldwatch Institute).

Sept 2:

- History of environmental protection in the US
Vig and Kraft, Chapter 1.

ASSIGNMENT #1 DISTRIBUTED

SECTION II – MAJOR ACTORS IN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY MAKING

Sept 9:

- Federal Institutions: the role of the president, congress, courts and EPA
Vig and Kraft, Chapters 5, 6 and 7.
Portney and Stavins, Chapter 2

ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

Sept 16:

- The role of the private sector.
- The environmental movement
- Interest Groups and Lobbying
Layzer (2002), The Environmental Case: Translating Values into Policy. Chapter 1

ASSIGNMENT #2 DISTRIBUTED

SECTION III – ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY INSTRUMENTS

Sept 23:

- Strategies
- Traditional regulation: History, Enforcement, Advantages and Disadvantages
Fiorino, Chapter 6.

ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

Sept 30:

- Reinventing Regulation
- Alternatives to traditional regulation
Vig and Kraft, Chapter 17
Clinton, Bill and Al Gore (1995), State of the Union Address: Reinventing Environmental Regulation.

Oct 7

- The Policy Process
Smith (1999), The Environmental Policy Paradox. Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Oct 14:

- HEARING – Evaluation of Negotiated Regulation – EPA's Program XL

BRIEFING #1 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

SECTION IV – EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

Oct 21:

- Environmental Policy Evaluation
- Risk analysis
- Economic Analysis
Rich (1998) Program evaluation and environmental policy: the state of the art (pp:23-41)
Fiorino, Chapter 4.

DECISION #1 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS
ASSIGNMENT #3 DISTRIBUTED

SECTION V – POLICY CASE STUDIES

Oct 28:

- NEPA

ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

Nov 4:

- Air and Water Pollution
Portney and Stavins Chapter 4 and 6

MEMO #2 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

Nov 11:

- Solid Waste and Hazardous Waste
Portney and Stavins, Chapter 7 and 8

MEMO #2 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

Nov 18:

- HEARING: U.S. Climate Change Policy

BRIEFING #2 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS
TERM PAPER TOPIC DUE

Nov 25:

- Thanks Giving Break!!!

SECTION VI – GLOBAL PROBLEMS

Dec 2:

- International Approaches to Environmental Policy
Vig and Kraft, Chapter 13, 15 and 16

DECISION #2 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

Dec 9:

- Towards Sustainable Development
Vig and Kraft, Chapter 17

TERM PAPER DUE DECEMBER 14TH AT 5 PM IN MY OFFICE

Important Dates

September 9 - Assignment 1 Due
September 23 - Assignment 2 Due
October 14 - Hearing Briefing 1 Due
October 21 - Hearing Decision 1 Due
October 28 - Assignment 3 Due
November 4 – Memo 1
November 11 – Memo 2
November 18 - Hearing Briefing 2 Due
November 18 - Term Paper Topic Due
December 2 - Hearing Decision 2 Due
December 14 - Term Paper Due

Policies

Honor Code

I take the Virginia Tech honor code very seriously and it will be strictly enforced in this class. In turn, you may expect that I shall treat you with the dignity and respect that such a system implies. If you are unfamiliar with the Honor Code, please see the online university undergraduate catalogue (www.honorsystem.vt.edu). Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance on assignments, plagiarism, and falsification are all violations of the honor code.

All graded assignments must contain the honor pledge at the end.

Writing Center

You have permission (and encouragement) to take your assignments or any other writings to the Writing Center for assistance before turning them in for credit.

Late Policy

Assignments received after the due date will be downgraded one full letter grade per day (24-hour period). If you cannot attend class on a due date, it is your responsibility to turn in the assignment in advance. If you know that you will be late in turning in an assignment, please contact me in advance to share your reasons so that we can work together to establish a completion date for you. No e-mail submissions without my previous consent.

Students with Disabilities and Special Needs

I will make every effort to accommodate students who have special learning needs or documented disabilities. In order to do so, I must know within the first two weeks of class if you have special needs so that I may make appropriate accommodations.

You are strongly encouraged to visit me during office hours to review notes, class discussions, or simply for advice. I will be pleased to assist you in any way that I can. If you are not able to come to my office hours, contact me so that we can schedule an appointment. I am typically most readily contacted via email but feel free to call me as well.