

SYLLABUS

PSCI 2116: Introduction to Environmental Policy

Spring 2020

MWF 10-10:50AM, EDUC 220

Instructor: Christina Boyes (she/her/hers)

Office: Ketchum Hall 215

Student Support Hours: Tuesdays and

Email: Christina.Boyes@colorado.edu

Thursdays from 10:15-11:15AM, or by
appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What could Australian policymakers have done to prevent the massive bushfire now burning in much of their country? Why didn't they enact policies that might have prevented these fires from spreading so far or so quickly? Why does President Trump want to cut EPA funding while others seek to increase it? What impacts would the reintroduction of wolves to Colorado have on local communities? Environmental policy issues like these are frequently in the news. They affect your daily life in the city of Boulder, at the state level, in the United States, and as a resident of a country that is a member of the United Nations.

Understanding the policy process that leads to environmental policies and the decision-making of the actors involved can be challenging. In this course, we will look at how policy goals are affected by coalitions with diverse interests and politicians' decisions surrounding the funding and implementation of environmental programs. We will analyze the interaction of policy, environmental sciences, and ethics across numerous environmental policy problems. The class will focus on analyzing environmental policy issues that affect students; from the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals to the creation of Open Space parks around Boulder.

The course incorporates an element of active learning. Students will analyze environmental policy problems and the behavior of actors up close by interviewing policy actors involved in environmental policymaking decisions here in Colorado. Using critical thinking and the application of a framework for studying socio-environmental systems in the field, students will assess firsthand how citizens and politicians work together to develop environmental policies and push for funding changes to achieve their goals. In class and via the readings, students will engage in the exploration of issues surrounding 'green' policies and sustainability. We will study the ways environmental policies affect individual decision making and behavior. We will also explore policy responses in actual cases, looking at government and nongovernment actors and their initiatives.

The course has a multidisciplinary lens. We cannot understand environmental issues without understanding the environmental, economic, psychological, and engineering characteristics of a policy problem that affect how a policy is created and implemented. In class activities and reading assignments will focus on actual case studies. Lively debate and discussion is encouraged as a means of helping us to explore the nature of policy problems and actors' responses to them.

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of the class, students will be able to:

1. Recognize key actors in public policy, their strategies, and their goals.
2. Identify, analyze, and describe how politics affects efforts to encourage sustainability and 'green' public policies.
3. Articulate the Sustainable Development Goals, their origin, and the factors and resources required to make progress towards them.
4. Describe trade-offs, unintended consequences, and externalities of environmental policymaking efforts and how different policy actors work towards sustainability and environmental policy at the local, state, national, and international levels of analysis.
5. Analyze social-environmental systems and propose novel and workable solutions to environmental policy issues that affect their daily lives.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

What Gets Graded and How are Grades Weighted?

Participation and Attendance – 10%

Outlines – 5%

Group Work – 5%

Interviews – 20%

Test 1 – 10%

Test 2 – 10%

Test 3 – 10%

Research Paper Presentation – 10%

Research Paper – 20%

Participation and Attendance

An "A" grade in participation and attendance involves participating actively in class discussions on a regular basis, missing no more than two classes in the semester without notifying me in advance, and being respectful of your peers in conversation.

If you are uncomfortable with actively engaging in class discussions, you are also welcome to meet with me during student support hours to discuss the material, sending me your notes from class as evidence of your participation, or working with me to create an alternative means of participating.

You do **not** need a doctor's note for class absences unless they last for three class periods or more, or you are hospitalized due to a severe accident or illness. Please put your health first and notify me upon your return if you have missed due to a severe medical issue. I will help you catch up with the missed material. If you miss more than ten classes however, you would be better off withdrawing from the course or taking an incomplete.

Outlines

Each class, you are expected to complete at least one reading. One student per group will be asked to outline the readings each class. Thus, over the course of the semester, each student will be asked to complete several

outlines. The outlines are study and discussion tools for your groupmates and you to work from and use to help you prepare for the test. At the end of the semester, you will receive an outline grade based on my feedback and that of your peers.

Group Work

For this class, you will be assigned a group at the start of the semester. In that group, you will complete several in-class tasks, as well as engage in activities with other groups. Like the outline portion of the grade, your final grade for group work will be based on my evaluation of your performance, informed by the comments and critiques of your classmates. You will also be asked to fill out an evaluation worksheet for each of your group members at the end of this semester which will also be counted as a part of this grade.

Interviews

This class incorporates an element of experiential learning. To give you the chance to speak with community leaders and study issues that matter to you, you will be asked to complete an interview with one group or individual working on environmental policy at the local level. **The interview must be conducted on one of the following dates: 2/17/20, 2/19/20, 4/15/20, 4/17/20, or 4/20/20.** To allow you to complete the assignment, **there will be no classes on these dates.**

Handouts (10%)

A handout will be provided with questions for you to ask your interviewee(s), a space for them to sign and describe their organization and its goals, and space for you to prepare and ask a minimum of five additional questions. The completed handout must be submitted by the class period following your completion of the interview. Please see the extra credit section for an important caveat regarding the due date.

Write-ups (10%)

In addition to the handout, you are expected to write a reflection on the interview itself and to describe how this interview will help you to complete your final research project. You will need to use two additional academic sources to help you prepare the write-up and will need to cite them correctly in text. The Write-up also requires a complete reference section in APA format. The write-up is also due the class period following your completion of the interview and the caveat on the due date described in the extra credit section applies to this assignment, as well.

Tests

Students will take three tests over the course of the semester. Each test will include a multiple choice and an essay component. The two components are weighted as follows:

- *Multiple Choice (75% of each exam grade)*
- *Essay (25% of each exam grade)*

Your research paper takes the place of the final exam.

Research Paper

You are required to write a research paper for this class. The prompt will be discussed and finalized in class on January 24th and 27th 2020, and the final prompt will be posted to Canvas on January 30th, 2020. The completed paper will be 10 double-spaced pages written in 12 pt. Times New Roman or Garamond font. You are required to use APA or MLA citation style, use headings and subheadings, provide a full and accurate reference section, and to cite in-text wherever necessary.

Proposal (5%)

The proposal is a one-page, single-spaced, Times New Roman or Garamond 12pt. font document. The proposal should summarize the paper you plan to write, why it interests you, which policy actor(s) you plan to interview, and a list of 5-10 sources you are considering for the project. You must submit and receive approval on your proposal no later than February 10th, 2020 in order to receive full credit for this component of your paper.

Draft Review at the Writing Center (5%)

You are required to review your draft with the Writing Center staff at CU Boulder. Make an appointment as soon as possible in order to ensure that you can make the deadline. A handout will be provided for you to have signed by the Writing Center staff as proof that you have completed this step. The handout must be submitted with your research paper.

Completed Research Paper (10%)

The final research paper is due in class on April 29th, 2020.

Extra Credit

The **only** opportunity for extra credit that I offer during the semester is the opportunity to conduct a second interview handout and write-up for use as a resource in your research paper. I recommend you take advantage of this opportunity. Completing a second interview handout and write-up can earn you an additional 5% towards your **total semester grade**. If you choose to make use of this extra credit opportunity, your first interview handout and write-up are due no later than February 28th, 2020.

Required Textbooks

You are required to use two textbooks for this course. All other readings will be posted by me to Canvas, and may include news articles or academic journal articles. To the best of my knowledge, both textbooks are available in the CU Bookstore and offer online editions. I have also arranged reference copies with 24 hour rental periods through Norlin library on campus. If you cannot obtain the textbook for any reason, please let me know no later than January 17th, 2020.

1. Matson, P. Clark, W., and Andersson, K. (2016). *Pursuing Sustainability: A Guide to the Science and Practice*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
2. Rinfret, Sara and Pautz, Michelle C. (2019) *US Environmental Policy in Action*, 2nd edition. London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-11316-2_9.



University of Colorado
Boulder

COURSE CALENDAR

1/13: Syllabus Day and Group Selection
1/15: Environmental Policy in Practice
1/17: The Development and Context of American Environmental Policy
1/20: NO CLASS
1/22: The Messy Process of Making Environmental Policy
1/24: Case Studies in Sustainability: London
1/27: Review Test 1
1/29: Test 1
1/31: Review Test 1 Results
2/3: Official Actors in the Policy Process
2/5: Unofficial Actors in the Policy Process
2/7: Dynamics of Social-Environmental Systems
2/10: Governance of Social-Environmental Systems
2/12: <i>Film: Before the Flood</i>
2/14: <i>Film: Before the Flood (ctd., and discussion)</i>
2/17: <i>Independent Research Project (no class)</i>
2/19: <i>Independent Research Project (no class)</i>
2/21: Case Study: Nepal
2/24: Translating Vague Statutes into Rules and Regulations
2/26: Implementing Environmental Policy and Regulations: Where the rubber meets the road
2/28: Interview 1 Write-up Due
3/2: Review Test 2
3/4: Test 2
3/6: Review Test 2 Results
3/9: A Framework for Sustainability Analysis: Linking ultimate goals with their underlying determinants



University of Colorado
Boulder

3/11: Is it Working? Evaluating Environmental Policy
3/13: Case Study: The Yaqui Valley
3/16: Linking Knowledge with Action
3/18: Case Study: Ozone and the Montreal Protocol
3/20: Environmental Policy in Action: Past, Present, and Future
3/23-3/27: Spring Break
3/30: <i>Research Check-in: Presentation Group 1</i>
4/1: <i>Research Check-in: Presentation Group 2</i>
4/3: <i>Research Check-in: Presentation Group 3</i>
4/6: Review Test 3
4/8: Test 3
4/10: Review Test 3 Results
4/13: The Intersection of Natural Resource and Energy Policy
4/15: <i>Independent Research Project (no class)</i>
4/17: <i>Independent Research Project (no class)</i>
4/20: <i>Independent Research Project (no class)</i>
4/22: Interview 2 (Extra Credit) Write-up Due
4/24: The Politics and Policies of Food
4/27: Changemaker Roundtable
4/29: LAST DAY OF CLASS Research Paper Due

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Accommodation for Disabilities: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

Classroom Behavior: Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns: CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name. If you use a name other than the one that is listed on the roster or prefer pronouns other than those that are listed, please let me know.

Honor Code: All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu; 303-492-5550). Students found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment, and/or Related Retaliation: The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, intimate partner abuse (including dating or domestic violence), stalking, or protected-class discrimination or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the



University of Colorado
Boulder

OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

Religious Holidays: Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Please refer to the attendance policy for information on how I treat absences.

See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.