

**ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS IN AMERICA**  
**Political Science 2241 -WRI**  
Spring 2007  
Barbelin 112G  
Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday at 1:00 pm  
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***Course Description***

This course analyzes environmental politics in the United States through a careful examination of political ideologies and institutions. In order to understand the “proper” relationship between humans and the natural world, we explore competing frameworks by consider the meaning of environmentalism, conservationism, preservationism, deep ecology, eco-racism, and eco-feminism. As the course demonstrates, many controversies in environmental politics can be traced back to first assumptions concerning the role of nature in the lives – social, aesthetic, political, and economic – of human beings. The heart of the course uses recent works in political science to establish the actors in environmental decision-making and implementation. We consider the following topics: federalism and state environmental policy, public opinion, interest groups, political parties, the Presidency, Congress, the Bureaucracy and the EPA, the Courts, and the role of elites. In addition to examining traditional regulatory approaches to environmental degradation (Clean Air Act, Endangered Species Act), we look at newer market-based incentive systems in an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of environmental policy in the United States.

This course is designed to 1) provide an intensive look at an important subject in political science and 2) provide a forum for the writing of a high-quality research paper that brings together skills learned generally in the course of your college work and techniques and approaches highlighted by this class. The paper will be written in sections over the course of the semester. Students will be given extensive comments on these “draft” sections and they will be asked to rework these papers into a highly refined final paper – one that reflects both a consideration of content and style. Students will be encouraged to edit each other’s work and it is a goal of this class that we have a continuing conversation that focuses both on the texts we are reading and the work that is being pursued independently by each member of the class.

***Learning Goals and Means of Achievement:***

- 1) Introduce students to a major and growing field of political science – environmental politics – through a) the reading of works in the field; and b) relevant current events which connect the academic articles to current public policy and public debate.
- 2) Through readings and constant writing, students explore the extent to which public policy differences are grounded in “first assumptions” about the relationship between humans and nature.
- 3) Students design a research project and write a major research paper. This paper develops general writing skills (the ability to write an introduction, state a coherent thesis (hypothesis), and present compelling points using evidence from relevant sources to prove that the thesis is true) and skills specific to writing a research paper in political science and public policy. Through rewrites, self-editing, and the editing of other students’ work, students develop skills in writing and editing.
- 4) Students develop general research skills by repeatedly searching databases, congressional records, and academic monographs.
- 5) Students develop oral presentation skills through a) presenting an analysis of a course reading; and b) presenting a summary of their original research work.

## ***Required Texts***

Judith A. Layzer. *The Environmental Case: Translating Values into Policy*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, CQ, 2005.  
Bob Pepperman Taylor.  
*Our Limits Transgressed: Environmental Political Thought in America*.  
University Press of Kansas, 1995.  
Norman Vig and Michael Kraft, eds. *Environmental Policy*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, CQ, 2003.  
Worldwatch Institute State of the World. W. W. Norton, 2006.

Course documents and external links, available on Blackboard.  
*The New York Times*.

It is a *mandatory* requirement of this class to read the environmental articles in *The New York Times* each day. You may subscribe to the paper (there are discount student rates available) or read the articles online for free. You need to follow the developments of your own case and cases that are similar/different that challenge/help develop your conclusions concerning your own case.

## ***Requirements and Grading:***

Grades will be based upon class participation and attendance (30%); multiple short papers and a final 20 page research paper (50%); and two exams (20%).

### **●Attendance, Reading Materials *Before* Class and Class Participation**

#### **●Attendance**

You are expected to be in attendance and on time for every class. There will be a sign-in sheet that will circulate at the start of every class. If you are late, it is your responsibility to get the sheet and mark your attendance. **If you miss more than 3 weeks of class, you will fail the class** unless there are special circumstances, verified **in writing** by the Associate Dean. You should attend class unless you are ill or you are experiencing an emergency. Attending class helps boost your participation grade. If you are not in class, it is your responsibility to get notes from at least one other student.

#### **●Participation: Reading Materials *Before* Class, Analysis, and Discussion**

This course integrates lecture and seminar discussion. Therefore, it requires that students read the texts **before** class and come prepared with questions and observations.

**You should be prepared to explain the author's objectives; to summarize the main arguments and how they are developed; and finally, to raise questions about the validity of the assumptions and the logic of the argument.** CLASS PARTICIPATION WILL BE A MAJOR PART OF YOUR FINAL GRADE. Please remember that class participation depends on quality not quantity – you need not feel obligated to participate every session or every ten minutes. Class participation means attending class prepared, listening to the arguments of others, and contributing when appropriate. You should seek to further your understanding of the text – thus furthering the class discussion.

In addition to everyday participation, you will sign up, *in advance*, for two class sessions during which you (and one other student) will be given a particular text to focus upon. While you should read all texts carefully and thoughtfully, you should give your assigned reading special attention. For this session, you should read the material with extra care and try to have THREE points or observations about the reading before coming to class.

It is highly recommended that read through two short texts concerned with clarity of presentation and argument. William Strunk and E.B. White's *The Elements of Style* is a short and concise guide to elementary rules of usage, principles of composition, and various approaches to style. Anthony Weston's *A Rulebook for Arguments* is a guide to understanding how to construct (and deconstruct) an argument. There are no assignments for these books but you should aim to review them before you write your first paper. I have put both books on reserve in the library and they are available widely at general interest bookstores.

### ●Exams

The two exams will emphasize the basic arguments of the political scientists we have studied, knowledge of the cases considered in the Layzer book, and *major* developments in environmental politics throughout the semester as covered by *The New York Times*. The final, scheduled during finals' week, is comprehensive.

### ●Writing Assignments

Your research paper will be written in installments over the course of the semester. First, a paper proposal indicating the topic in environmental politics you will focus your research on and a short proposed bibliography (3 pages). Second, an "institutions" paper that analyzes the politics – the institutional relationships, legal strategies, public opinion, etc. – that seems to affect the policy-making process. You will be trying to connect the theories of the political scientists (e.g. public opinion in regards to environmental degradation tends to be strong but not salient) with YOUR PARTICULAR CASE (e.g. President Bush's Clear Skies Initiative seems to confirm/deny that public opinion theory). Third, a theoretical paper that explores the ways in which the "environment" is defined in your chosen example. What assumptions do parties make about the relationship between humans and nature? Fourth, a preliminary conclusion. All papers will be graded and students will be given extensive comments regarding both content and style. You will be given handouts to guide your writing of each section.

The final paper will require a reworking of the various sections – focusing on both substance (as you will have learned more about your case) and style (as you will have had a chance to edit your work and read the comments of others). **THE FINAL PAPER MUST BE MORE THAN A REPRINTING OF YOUR EARLIER DRAFTS WITH MINOR CORRECTIONS YOU MUST RESPOND TO THE COMMENTS AND DEVELOP YOUR ARGUMENTS FURTHER.** Your grade will be based on your ability to 1) develop and present persuasive and clear arguments backed up by careful evidence; and 2) integrate the material you have read in the course with your independent research.

One goal of this class is to write a paper that is thoughtful and complete. You will think about your claims over the course of the semester and it is my hope that the production of early drafts will encourage you to develop your ideas. For example, your original understanding of a political actor's motivations might be changed by subsequent readings (in the course or in your research). You will rewrite all the sections of the paper. This should enable all participants to produce work that they are proud of – and that they can use as a writing sample for professional or scholastic applications.

All papers must carefully consider and examine arguments made in the texts. It must also be well organized, possessing of a clear progression of ideas and evidence from introduction through to conclusion. Each paragraph should have a clear purpose and an easily identifiable role within the larger argument being developed. Papers must have your name on the BACK of the LAST sheet (thus, papers can be marked blindly). All papers must have page numbers, reasonable margins and font sizes, clear page citations, and be double-spaced. Please include a meaningful title and clearly written thesis statement. You are expected to BOTH run a spelling check on the computer AND proofread your paper. **LATE PAPERS WILL BE PENALIZED. PROBLEMS WITH DEADLINES SHOULD BE DISCUSSED ONE WEEK PRIOR TO THE DEADLINE.** Although it is not required, I strongly encourage that you print on BOTH SIDES (it saves my back carrying your papers; it saves trees; and it saves you money).

Citation format for all papers:

All papers should use standard University of Chicago footnotes (see Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual* or *Chicago Manual of Style*) and include a bibliography.

●**Academic Honesty Policy:** The Academic Honesty Policy and a single-page course contract are available on Blackboard under Course Documents. You are required to read the policy, sign the contract, and return it to me by the date indicated on the syllabus. If you have any questions regarding the Policy, please see me in office hours. Writing and test-taking are part of the learning experience. Your learning is compromised if you steal the ideas or words of other students or other authors. **If you violate the Academic Honest Policy, you will fail the assignment and the course.**

**A WORD OF CAUTION ABOUT THE INTERNET:** University policies concerning plagiarism apply to copying materials from the internet. If you block copy text into a document, remember to put that material in quotation marks and copy the source into your document.

●**Communication:** All announcements, documents, and exam dates for this class will be listed on our Blackboard website. **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR CHECKING BLACKBOARD DAILY.** I will send e-mails to the class using Blackboard. If you do not check your SJU account, it is your responsibility to have mail from this account forwarded to the account that you check regularly. I will make all changes to the syllabus and schedule on Blackboard. You should also feel free to post comments on the readings and discussions using Blackboard.

●**Accommodation for Disabilities:** If you have a documented disability (learning, physical, psychological) for which you are or may be requesting reasonable academic adjustments, you are encouraged to contact Services for Students with Disabilities, 113 Science Center, 610-660-1774 or -1620 as early as possible in the semester. If you suspect that you have an *undiagnosed* disability (learning, physical, psychological), please contact Services for Students with Disabilities. Please discuss any instructional needs or accommodations with me in office hours early in the semester. All requests for extended-timed testing must be discussed with me two weeks prior to the date of each exam.

●**EXTRA CREDIT:** The University sponsors a variety of academic events (see the Events Calendar on your MySJU page). If you attend any of these events and write a one-paragraph summary of the main point, I will give you extra credit. This form of extra credit helps you when you are *between* grades at the end of the semester. You *may* get the extra half grade if you have attended a talk or two.

**ALL POINTS OF VIEW THAT ARE ARGUED CAREFULLY AND PERSUASIVELY ARE ENCOURAGED IN YOUR PAPERS AND CLASS COMMENTS.**

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## **I. OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION**

What is the state of the environment? What are the environmental issues that our political institutions must respond to?

(1/16) Review of syllabus and introduction to the course; **HW #1 due on 1/19.** The assignment and the required resources “Electronic Environmental Resources” are posted on Blackboard under course documents.

**Read syllabus and Academic Honesty Policy (Blackboard), sign course contract (Blackboard), and return contract by 1/23.**

(1/17) Collective Action Problems

**Read to discuss today:** Hardin, Garrett, “The Tragedy of the Commons,” Blackboard.

*World Watch State of the World*, pp. xxiii-xxvii. (readings continued on next page)

President Bush's State of the Union Address, 2007 at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/01/20060131-6.html>. Please read the parts of the speech that address environmental issues. Note how environmental issues are connected (or not) to other issues raised by the President.

In-class collective action experiment.

Sign up for World Watch articles. There are 10 articles in the book, you will sign up and write half page abstracts for three. **Abstracts are due on 1/30.**

(1/19) Discussion of State of the Union and global, national, and local environmental issues.

**HW#1 due today.** No new reading.

*The Political Roundup*: We will begin class with a discussion of the articles that appeared in the *New York Times* this week. What other sources can we locate for news?

## II. POLITICAL IDEOLOGY:

**Theoretical Approaches to the Problem of Environmental Degradation: *Why* should we protect the environment? What is a Public Good? How do we describe the relationship between humans and nature?**

(1/23) Leopold, "The Land Ethic," Blackboard.

John Stuart Mill, *On Nature*, Blackboard.

*Our Limits Transgressed*, pp. 1-27.

Read requirements for research paper (documents grouped on Blackboard). Begin researching (through print media and internet) environmental issues that are of personal interest. Identify websites that provide information on "live" cases. See some examples in Layzer.

(1/24) *Our Limits Transgressed*, pp. 27- 81.

(1/26) *Our Limits Transgressed*, pp. 81-133.

## III. AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

### **From Progressive Conservation to Environmentalism**

(1/30) Vig and Kraft, "Environmental Policy from the 1970s to 2000: An Overview," Ch 1.

Layzer, "Introduction," Ch 1.

**Worldwatch abstracts due today. Each abstract should be on a separate sheet of paper.**

### **Congress and the Rise of Regulation**

(1/31) Vig and Kraft, "Environmental Policy in Congress: From Consensus to Gridlock," Ch 6.

Layzer, "Federal Grazing Policy."

Spend one working on paper proposal. Focus on the case you will research. Proposal is due 2/13.

### **The Presidency and Executive Leadership**

(2/2) Vig and Kraft, "Presidential Leadership and the Environment," Ch 5.

Layzer, "Government Secrets at Rocky Flats."

*The Political Roundup*: Discussion of the articles that appeared in the *New York Times* this week.

## **Bureaucracy and the EPA**

(2/6) Vig and Kraft, "Still Reforming after All These Years: George W. Bush's "New Era" at the EPA," Ch 8. Layzer, "Oil v. Wilderness in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge."

## **Interest Groups**

(2/7) Vig and Kraft, "The Boundaries and Contours of American Environmental Activism, Ch 4. Layzer, "The Nation Tackles Pollution: The Environmental Protection Agency and the Clean Air and Water Acts."

## **Public Opinion**

(2/9) Dunlap, "Public Opinion and Environmental Policy," Blackboard.

**HW #2:** Spend at least 30 minutes exploring public opinion on the environment using **Polling the Nations**, available on the SJU library webpage under "E-Resources A-Z." How do Americans think about the environment? Write down **5** observations. I will collect this assignment.

In class, we will construct an SJU environmental survey.

(2/13) **Proposals for papers due today at the start of class.** No new reading.

Using the survey we constructed together, we will go out onto the campus and administer the survey to SJU students on campus. Bring all completed surveys back to the classroom. We will discuss the results during the next class.

(2/14) Discussion of the survey exercise. Looking at the results, how do the views of SJU students compare to the views of Americans? What issues are of special concern on the SJU campus? Do you trust the results of the survey?

## **The Flow of Public Policy**

(2/16) John Kingdon, "Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies," Blackboard  
Anthony Downs, "Up and Down the Issue Attention Cycle," Blackboard

(2/20) **First section of paper due at the start of class today. See guidelines on Blackboard.**

## **Federalism: The States' Role in Policy Implementation & Litigation**

(2/21) Vig and Kraft, "Power to the States: the Promise and Pitfalls of Decentralization," Ch 2. Layzer, "The New England Fisheries Crisis."

## **The Courts: Policy Implementation and Litigation**

(2/23) Vig and Kraft, "Environmental Policy in the Courts," Ch 7. Summaries of recent court cases, Blackboard

(2/27) **MIDTERM EXAM.** Covers all material including the Courts.

## **IV. Eco-Racism and Claims of Environmental Justice**

(2/28-3/9) Readings to be announced.

**SPRING BREAK! No classes 3/6, 3/7, 3/9.**

## V. THE CONVERGENCE OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICS

### Case Studies

(3/13) Layzer, “Jobs vs. the Environment: Saving the Northern Spotted Owl;” “The New England Fisheries Crisis.”

### Property Law, Rights, and the Takings Clause

(3/14) Layzer, “Backlash: Wise Use, Property Rights, and the Anti-Environmental Movement,” Ch 10.

(3/16) Holmes and Sunstein, “Why Tradeoffs are Inescapable,” in *The Cost of Rights: Why Liberty Depends on Taxes*, Blackboard; Richard Epstein, *Takings: Private Property and the Power of Eminent Domain*, Blackboard.

**(3/20) No new reading. Paper due today. Rewrite your first section attending to the following:**

**1) value frames used by political actors. Carefully distinguish differences between conservationists and preservationists. Look at the way issues are framed and the effects this has on policy-formation, political agendas, and policy outcomes. Review lecture notes and Layzer (chapter 1) to do revisions.**

**2) the party identification and motivations of political actors. Identify the party of all legislators and executives. Comment on their previous voting records (e.g., use LCV scores or other scores provided by industry groups) and their motives. Comment on the economic, moral, and/or political motivations of political actors.**

**3) the integration of the reading assignments. For example, if you are talking about a policy-cycle, did you think about Downs or Kingdon (see index in Vig/Kraft and Layzer)?**

**Using bold, highlight those areas of the paper that have been dramatically changed. YOU MUST HAND IN YOUR FIRST DRAFT ALONG WITH YOUR NEW DRAFT.**

### Emissions Trading: Market Alternatives to Traditional Regulation

(3/21) Vig and Kraft, “Economics, Incentives and Environmental Regulation,” Ch 9.

Vig and Kraft, “Risk-Based Decision-making,” Ch 10.

Vig and Kraft, “Understanding the Transition to a Sustainable Economy,” Ch 12..

(3/23) Layzer, “Market-Based Solutions: Acid Rain and the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990,” Ch 11.

(3/27) No new reading.

## VI. GLOBAL WARMING

(3/28) Vig and Kraft, “Climate Policy on the Installment Plan,” Ch 13.

(3/30) Layzer, “Climate Change: The Challenges of Formulating International Environmental Politics,” Ch 9.

Vig and Kraft, “Environment, Population and the Developing World, Ch 15

## VII. RESEARCH OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

**(4/3, 4/4, 4/10, 4/11, 4/13, 4/17, 4/18: Presentation of student research. See Blackboard document for guidelines).**

**4/6: No class today, Easter Break.**

## **VIII. CONCLUSIONS**

**(4/20)** Layzer, “Ecosystem-Based Solutions: Restoring the Florida Everglades.”

**(4/24-4/25): Readings based on student research projects to be announced.**

**(4/27) 4/29: Last day of classes. No new reading.**

**Final papers due today.**

**Final exam is comprehensive and will take place during finals week. Do not make travel plans until you have confirmed the date of our final. See Blackboard announcements' page for the date of final exam.**