

# SYLLABUS FOR U224 – ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS AND POLICY

Department of Planning, Policy and Design  
School of Social Ecology  
University of California at Irvine

**Spring 2013**

**Section 54350**

Professor: **David Feldman**  
Office: **300G Social Ecology I - Tel.: 824-4384**  
Hours: **9:30-10:30 Tuesday and by appt.**

Class meeting: **Tues. & Thurs. 11 – 12:20**  
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## *Introduction*

Environmental politics and policy are distinctive areas of discourse because they explicitly bridge nature and society. They also comprise a unique segment of activities – vital to the well-being of the planet, and to our individual and collective lives. How we choose to manage these activities will affect global-scale resource management, urban & regional planning, and community design challenges that lie at the intersection of the natural and built environment. As scholars, teachers, policy analysts, or planning professionals, you will be expected to address these challenges.

This course examines fundamental concepts and controversies surrounding environmental politics and policy. We focus on four major issues: (1) the role of science in environmental and natural resource decisions and in assessing risk; (2) the aims and challenges confronting efforts to promote public involvement in environmental and natural resource policy; (3) the effectiveness of strategies to manage environmental problems, including command-and-control regulation, economic incentives, and voluntary compliance; and, (4) the growing trans-boundary character of environmental and resource problems and the difficulty in coordinating trans-boundary responses.

My objectives in this course are three-fold:

- To help you understand the critical debates in environmental politics and policy, and their significance for decision-making and the evaluation of policy outcomes.
- To enable you to analyze and understand contemporary environmental problems – and the political debates surrounding them – in order to weigh strategies for managing them.
- To equip you with tools of environmental policy analysis – and to distill lessons from various scholars who study, and practitioners who use, these tools – in your own professional work.

## *A Road Map of Environmental Politics & Policy controversies*

Contemporary environmental policy and politics are infused with controversy. You are expected to familiarize yourself with their substance through the readings (featured on the syllabus and web-site) and through class discussions. Among the most significant contemporary controversies we will

discuss are: How scientifically certain must we be about an environmental problem before we act? What are the thresholds of adequate information – as well as risk – necessary to make sound environmental decisions? What are the respective roles of scientists, non-governmental activists, and policymakers in decisions pertaining to the environment and natural resources? What measures can be taken to broaden public input into decisions? And, under what conditions and circumstances are trans-national collaboration and the search for solution to global environmental problems possible?

***Readings for purchase:***

1. Dauvergne, Peter. 2010. *The Shadows of Consumption: Consequences for the Global Environment*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
2. Fiorino, Daniel J. 2006. *The New Environmental Regulation*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
3. Koontz, T., T. Steelman, J. Carmin, K.S. Korfmacher, C. Moseley, C. Thomas. 2004. *Collaborative Environmental Management: What Roles for Government?* Washington D.C.: Resources for the Future.

***Reserved Readings (on EEE):***

1. Ascher, William, and T. Steelman and R. Healy. 2010. *Knowledge and Environmental Policy: Re-imagining the Boundaries of Science and Politics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
2. Collins, Craig. 2010. *Toxic Loopholes – Failures and Future Prospects for Environmental Law*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
3. Feldman, David L and Ivan Blokov. 2012. *The Politics of Environmental Policy in Russia*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.
4. Keller, Ann Campbell. 2009. *Science in Environmental Policy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
5. Prakash, Aseem and Matthew Potoski. 2006. *The Voluntary Environmentalists – Green Clubs, ISO 14000, and Voluntary Environmental Regulations*. NY: Cambridge University Press.
6. Rabe, Barry G. 2004. *Statehouse and Greenhouse: The Emerging Politics of American Climate Change Policy*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.
7. Worster, Donald K. “Nature, Liberty, and Equality,” pp. 37-47, in Swearer, Donald K. (editor). 2009. *Ecology and the Environment: Perspectives from the Humanities*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

***Requirements and grading***

To facilitate dialogue, and discussion, regular attendance is **expected**. Each class will be devoted to a focused and specific issue or topic and will feature a brief lecture followed by discussion. Readings, scheduled to coincide with a session's topic, should be read prior to class to ensure meaningful discussion. Furthermore, each student is responsible for **four products**:

- Each of you will be divided into “subsets.” On alternate dates, as noted in the syllabus, each student in that subset - is responsible for a brief, **electronically submitted** (2-3) page paper that, drawing upon the readings and discussion, answers a specific question found in the syllabus for that specific date. **Each student is responsible for 2 papers**, each worth 20% of your final grade, for a total of ..... 40%.
- Students will also be responsible for a final paper, 10-12 double-spaced pages in length that provides a highly-focused analysis of an environmental policy or politics issue. *Course readings* can be incorporated, as well as any other materials you wish to use. The paper is due **Monday, June 10th**. It should be transmitted electronically, as a Word document ..... 50%.
- Class participation: while a large class, active engagement in discussion, posing questions, and raising salient issues are central to your learning. Thus, participation is expected ...10%.

### ***Class Schedule***

Week #1: 4/2 - 4      **Introduction – the natural and social realms in environmental policy**  
 Read: *Dauvergne, chap. 1; Worster reading, pp. 37- 47.*

Week #2: 4/9 - 11      **Spatial, temporal, & ethical facets of environmental politics & policy**  
 Read: *Rabe, chapter 1; Dauvergne, chapter 2; Koontz, et. al., chapter 1.*

*Writing Assignment: Group A* - Drawing on the readings and class discussion, are contemporary environmental problems different in magnitude or consequence from previous ones? Can people agree on what constitutes a critical environmental problem (2-3 pp.)? **(Due: April 11<sup>th</sup>).**

Week #3: 4/16 - 18      **Science in environmental politics & policy – speaking truth to power?**  
 Read: *Keller, chapter 1; Ascher, et. al., chapter 2; Koontz, at. al., chap. 6*

*Writing Assignment: Group B* - Drawing on the readings and class discussion, how is science and other information used in making environmental policy? What role do scientists play in the process of policy-making? Do they facilitate or impede problem-solving (2-3 pp.)? **(Due: April 18<sup>th</sup>).**

Week #4: 4/23              **Agenda-Setting and policy formulation – actors and protagonists**  
 Read: *Keller, chapter 2; Fiorino, chapters 1-2.*  
 - **NO CLASS APRIL 25<sup>TH</sup>** -

Week #5: 4/30 - 5/2      **Implementing environmental policy – achieving compliance & change**  
 Read: *Fiorino, chaps. 3-6; Prakash and Potosi, pp. 34-80.*

*Writing Assignment: Group C* - Drawing on the readings and class discussion, how does an environmental get the attention of policy-makers? What interests and other factors determine this, and how do they enhance an issue’s political importance (2-3 pages)? **(Due: May 2<sup>nd</sup>).**

Week #6: 5/7 - 9              **Evaluation - why environmental policies succeed or fail?**  
 Read: *Fiorino, chapter 7; Dauvergne, chapters 3-6.*

Writing Assignment: Group A - Drawing on the readings and class discussion, how should we evaluate policy success or failure? Is it based on compliance, improvement, adoption of innovation or all three? What makes “new” regulation different as regards evaluation (2-3 pp.)? **(DUE: May 9<sup>th</sup>).**

Week #7: 5/14 - 16    **The public in environmental policy – attitudes, concerns, participation**  
Read: *Koontz, chapters 2-5 and 7-9; Feldman and Blokov, Chapter 4.*

Writing Assignment: Group B - Drawing on the readings and class discussion, does involving various “publics” in the making and implementation of environmental policies lead to more effective solutions? How do policy outcomes depend on the role of civil society (2-3 pp.)? **(DUE: May 16<sup>th</sup>).**

Week #8: 5/21 - 23    **Risky Business – hazards, disclosure, perceptions, and decisions**  
Read: *Dauvergne, chapters 7-10, Collins, chapter 4.*

Writing Assignment: Group C - Drawing on the readings and class discussion, are environmental risks determined mostly by science, mostly by societal values, mostly by political power, or *partly* by some combination of these factors – and others (2-3 pp.)? **(DUE: May 23<sup>rd</sup>).**

Week #9: 5/28 - 30    **The politics of sustainability – what is it and isn’t**  
Read: *Dauvergne, chapters 11-18*

Week #10: 6/4 - 6    **International & trans-boundary environmental politics – is consensus possible?**  
Read: *Dauvergne, chapters 19-24.*

**June 10<sup>th</sup>: final 10-12 page paper due - electronically.**

***Course Policies:***

**DROPS:** Must be submitted by 5PM of week 2 using WebReg system. No exceptions after week 2.

**ADDS:** Must be submitted by 5PM of week 3 using WebReg system. No exceptions after week 3.

**CHANGE:** Must be submitted by 5PM of week 2 using WebReg system. From week 3 through 6, you must use the Student Access system to submit a request for a grade option change. No exceptions will be considered after week 6.

***Students with Disabilities:*** If you anticipate needing any type of an academic accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please discuss this with me during the first week of class AND please register with the Disability Services Center (<http://www.disability.uci.edu/>). In order for you to receive any type of academic accommodation, I will need formal notification from the Disability Services Center during the first two weeks of the quarter of the type of academic accommodations to which your disability entitles you.