

"Never underestimate the power of self-delusion"

Environmental Policy
Political Science 5322-001/6322-001
PADMIN 6322-001
Fall Semester, 2006
Tuesday, 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Room OSH 236

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COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course is a survey of the politics and policies that have an impact on our natural resources. We will examine the ways in which public policy affects resource scarcity, environmental health and safety, natural aesthetics, recreation, and economic growth. The course will focus on *how* governments make environmental policy decisions, with an emphasis on the relative roles of science, public opinion, interest groups and lobbying, and concepts of environmental ethics and environmental justice.

The course objectives are:

1. Provide a concise understanding of how governments make decisions that affect the relationship between humans and their environment.
2. Provide a general understanding of current political conflicts over natural resources, with an emphasis on the American West.
3. Explain how natural resources policy is made in the American system of government.
4. Examine the relationship between four distinct levels of government: federal, state, local, and tribal.
5. Focus on the relationship between democratic processes and environmental policy making.
6. Explore the role of special interests in the policy-making process, and how they affect the distribution of public goods and services.

REQUIRED READING

1. *Collapse*, by Jared Diamond. Viking/Penguin, 2005.
2. *Cities in the Wilderness*, by Bruce Babbitt. Island Press, 2005.
3. *High Country News*. This is a bi-weekly regional newspaper that focuses on western environmental issues

4. Websites:

The Sierra Club, at: <http://www.sierraclub.org/>

Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise, at: <http://www.cdfc.org/>

Redefining Progress, at: <http://www.redefiningprogress.org/>

The Center for Responsive Politics, at: <http://www.opensecrets.org/>

The Cooler Heads Coalition on Global Warming, at: <http://www.globalwarming.org/>

5. Handouts provided in class.

6. For graduate students enrolled in POLS 6322 and PADMIN 6322, there is an additional book: *Our Limits Transgressed*, by Bob Taylor. University Press of Kansas, 1992

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Optional Midterm.

An essay exam will be scheduled for the last hour of class on **October 24**. The students that choose to take this exam will be given three questions; they must answer two of them. Regular class will meet from 6:00 to 8:00. Students who choose not to take the mid-term must remain deep in thought until 9:00, but may leave the building.

2. Final Essay.

This is a comprehensive take-home essay. It is not a traditional exam; rather, it is an analysis of the materials used in class—books, websites, *High Country News*, lectures, guest speakers, hand-outs, etc. A paper copy is due at the latest by Monday, **December 11**, before 5:00 p.m., at my office in the American West Center (Annex 1032). A penalty of five points will be assessed for each working day the final is overdue. You must answer two questions. Each answer should be a minimum of three pages (six pages for graduate students) typed double-spaced. Thus your answers must be concise, specific, and free of filler, unsolicited opinion, and what your pet did on your last camping trip. You may, of course, exceed the minimum length. The questions are:

Question 1. “Scarcity begets regulation.” Explain this statement in regard to how the government distributes goods and services. What is the alternative to regulation? How does scarcity affect prices, private subsidies, and public subsidies? How would national land planning change the way scarce resources are allocated in the U. S.? How does scarcity affect people in terms of class, region, generation, partisanship, and political status? Is resource scarcity the primary reason why societies collapse? If so, why didn’t they regulate?

Question 2. What is the relationship between environmental policy and democracy? Are environmental groups a threat to democracy, or a part of democracy? Do subsidies affect the ability of government to meet the long-term needs of the citizenry? How do democratic governments respond to dramatic environmental change? How does citizen input, through public interest groups, public hearings and scoping, letter-writing campaigns, etc. affect environmental policy?

Remember: the purpose of the essay is to demonstrate your ability to analyze the materials covered in this class--it is your chance to show off what you have learned in this class. Be sure to answer each of the sub-questions in each question. Both of your answers should include material from the **required reading, class lectures, and guest speakers**; be comprehensive. All of the required reading contains material relevant to each question, so make sure you include that material in your answer. All material in your answers that comes from sources other than your own head must be referenced. Information from printed sources should be referenced with the name of the author and the page number where it was found. Material taken from speakers and lectures should be referenced with the name of the speaker and a date.

The key to success: I expect to see a large number of such references. When I am finished reading your essay, I should be able to say: this person has obviously attended class, read **all** the required reading, and is able to synthesize and utilize that information in a coherent manner.

3. Analytical Research Paper.

(12 pages for undergraduates, 15 pages for graduate students)

This assignment allows the student to investigate a Utah environmental issue of her/his choice, pending approval by the professor. I prefer that only one student write about each issue, so have your topic approved early to make sure no other student selects it first. The goal of an analytical research paper is to *explain* how policy is made regarding the particular issue you have selected. The title of each paper should begin with "The Politics of..." to indicate that you are analyzing a political process, and not writing a polemic or investigating a technical question. Thus your topic should be a public environmental policy affecting Utah that has engendered political conflict, with discernible partisans and competing proposals. The focus must be on Utah.

The paper must be organized into the following sections, with a subheading in the paper introducing each section:

1. **Introduction:** Identify your topic and your research question: what is it that you are going to explain to the reader?
2. **Actors:** Identify the principal actors in the policy-making process; what roles do they play? What incentives do the actors have as they attempt to influence policy?
3. **Conditions:** Identify current laws, policies, etc. that are provoking attempts to influence policy. What is it about the status quo that makes policymakers try to maintain it, or change it?
4. **Behaviors:** Identify the behaviors of policymakers as they attempt to influence policy; what political actions are taken to influence policy?
5. **Outcomes:** What impact do the actor's behaviors have on policy conditions?
6. **Conclusion:** What significant lesson can we learn from your analysis? What insight can you provide about environmental policymaking?

Your paper must be organized in this fashion; each section of the paper should be significantly different from the other sections. If you fail to write the paper according to these guidelines, you will not receive a grade (at least not one you can show mom and dad). So, avoid pain; follow the directions!

The style of references is up to you; just make sure everything is cited in such a way that the reader can find the source. You must reference everything that is not your original writing. If you use verbatim material it must be enclosed in quotations. Also, you cannot use material you have written for another class (see the section on legal matters at the end of this syllabus). The paper is due **November 28**, at the beginning of class. A penalty of five points will be assessed for each working day the paper is overdue. Remember: it is an *analytical* research paper; *do not simply summarize an issue!* If you have problems I'll be happy to help you; just ask.

A superior paper will have the following characteristics:

- A. There will be obvious differences among the 6 sections of the paper.
- B. The paper will clearly identify the relationships between the 6 sections, i.e. how one element affected the others.
- C. The paper will not consist of a chronology of events; rather, it will attempt to discover **why** policy making occurred the way it did.
- D. The paper will demonstrate that you have the ability to analyze your research topic at a conceptual level.
- E. The paper will also demonstrate that you have competently completed all research assignments and incorporated any relevant course material into the paper, and have thoroughly researched the existing literature.

During class on **November 28**, each student will deliver a five-minute presentation on their paper. Your presentation should provide a concise summary of your principal findings and conclusions. The quality of your presentation will affect the grade for your paper. People with an *excused* absence for that evening will deliver their presentations on **December 5**. A one-grade penalty on your paper will be assessed if you are not prepared on-time for your presentation.

NOTE: put your **student ID number**, not your name, on your final essay and research paper, and indicate if you are registered as an **undergrad or grad** student. Be sure to **paginate**; if you don't, I'll assume you are fudging on the length. I won't grade your paper if you don't do these things.

NOTE: Make a back-up of all work you do on a computer. You should make either a paper copy or an electronic copy of everything you turn in for this class. Turn in only paper copies, not electronic copies. I will not accept the techno-age version of the dog-eat-my-homework excuse; back it up. I keep all papers turned in to me, so you might want to make a paper copy for yourself as well.

NOTE: All research papers must be submitted on-line to **Turnitin.com**. This is a plagiarism-prevention service that will scan your paper and attempt to match sentences or phrases to a huge data base of papers and publications. It will notify me if a paper is not original. This is necessary due to the high incidence of cheating in recent classes.

4. Graduate students collective presentation.

On **November 21**, the graduate students will lead a class discussion of *Our Limits Transgressed*. The objective is to summarize and critique the book so that the undergrads

will understand its basic themes and concepts. The grad students will collectively plan this presentation.

5. Class discussion and participation

This class is most interesting if all students come to class prepared. Listening to me lecture all evening is incredibly boring. I prefer an iterative teaching style that involves students in an exchange of ideas, information, and opinions. Your informed participation in class discussion is an integral part of the requirements for the class. I expect you to come to class and **stay** for the entire period. Because an entire week's classes are condensed into one evening, a missed class equals a missed week. **If you miss more than two classes you must drop the class or receive a failing grade.**

GRADING

If you choose to take the optional midterm, the assignments are weighted as follows:

Midterm =	25 %
Research Paper =	25%
Final Exam =	50%
Participation =	Plus or minus up to 5 points on final grade

If you choose **not** to take the midterm, the assignments are weighted as follows:

Research Paper =	50%
Final Exam =	50%
Participation =	Plus or minus up to 5 points on final grade

GRADING POLICY

I expect a high standard of performance from students. If you are not pleased with the grade you earn on an assignment, you may re-do the assignment and I will re-grade it. Thus, anyone who wants an "A" in this course can get it, depending on your willingness to work.

CONSULTATION

I will be most happy to meet with any student by appointment. I have both email and phone-mail, so it is not difficult to contact me. If you need help, by all means ask for it; I will be happy to assist you.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Turn off all cell phones, beepers, Blackberries, palm pilots, beeping watches, prison leg-locators etc. while in class. These devices are an inconsiderate intrusion on your classmates and instructor.

EMAILING PAPERS AND EXAMS

You must provide a paper copy of all written assignments. Do not email your assignment to me.

ORGANIZATION AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Aug. 29:

THEME FOR THE EVENING: “Thinking in Patterns”
 Introductions

Sept. 5:

THEME FOR THE EVENING: “History, Science, Ecology and Politics”
 Read: Diamond: Prologue, Part One
Select paper topics

Sept. 12:

THEME FOR THE EVENING: “Democratic Processes”
 Read: Diamond: Part Two

Sept. 19:

THEME FOR THE EVENING: “The Commons”
 Read: Diamond: Part Three

Sept. 26:

THEME FOR THE EVENING: “Subsidies”
 Read: Diamond: Part Four

Oct. 3:

THEME FOR THE EVENING: “Externalities”
 Read: chapters 1-2 from Babbitt
 Guest speaker:

Oct. 10:

THEME FOR THE EVENING: “Policy Investing”
 Read: chapters 3-4 from Babbitt
 Guest speaker

Oct. 17:

THEME FOR THE EVENING: “Iron Triangles”
 Read: chapter 5 from Babbitt
 Guest Speaker

Oct. 24:

THEME FOR THE EVENING: “Private Property”
 Discussion of Diamond, Babbitt, *HCN*
 Optional Mid-term exam, 8-9 p. m.

Oct. 31:

THEME FOR THE EVENING: “Access to the Commons”
 Read: The Sierra Club website

Nov. 7:

THEME FOR THE EVENING: “Resource Scarcity”

Read: Website for the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise

Nov. 14:

THEME FOR THE EVENING: “Lessons applied”

Read: The Center for Responsive Politics Website

Nov. 21:

THEME FOR THE EVENING: “The Ecological Footprint”

Grad students lead a discussion of *Our Limits Transgressed*

Read: The Redefining Progress website

Nov. 28:

Research Papers due

Student presentations

Dec. 5:

Student presentations, wrap-up

Dec. 11:

Final Essay: due before 5:00 p.m.

LEGAL MATTERS:

1. Reasonable Accommodation:

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the instructor of this class will make reasonable accommodation for any qualified student. Such accommodation will be afforded based on the specific disability and as agreed in writing.

2. Academic Dishonesty:

Any act of academic dishonesty will result in a course grade of E and a recommendation of additional disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty includes:

-cheating: giving or receiving unauthorized assistance on any academic work.

-plagiarism: presenting the language, structure or ideas of another person as one's own original work.

-falsification: any untrue statement, either oral or written, concerning one's own academic work or the academic work of others, or the unauthorized alteration of any academic record.

-original work: all academic work undertaken in this course must be original, i.e. it must not have been submitted in a prior course or be submitted in a course being taken concurrently.

Let me make this clear: if you cheat, you fail the class, no exceptions.