

Natural Resources Policy

Forest and Wildlife Ecology & Environmental Studies 515, 3 credits
Tuesdays & Thursdays 9:30-10:45, Fall 2023
Animal Science 209

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PIE lab: People, Institutions, and Ecosystems

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Course Themes

Environmental policy in the United States impacts our environment and natural resources such as forests, wildlife, and water. We will think critically about natural resource policy and investigate the policy-making process and themes of values, economics, justice, and science. We begin with the idea that institutions and policies are not a fixed inheritance but are instead choices that are constantly being revised. Students will become familiar with the major laws, public agencies, and stakeholders that have shaped resource policy in the U.S. In order to understand current natural resource conflicts and trends, we will trace the history of natural resource problems, policy fixes, and transformations in the U.S. and delve into specific cases, assessing ecological, social, and economic outcomes. We will explore policy tools such as regulation, incentives, and ecolabeling which are increasingly interwoven in the multilayered environmental policy system of the 21st century. The goal of the course is to prepare students to engage in the policy-making process by providing a foundational knowledge of U.S. natural resources politics and policy and the communication skills to make your voice heard and your knowledge understood.

Learning Outcomes

- 1) Demonstrate an understanding of U.S. natural resources policy by:
 - Summarizing the policy process, major federal and state laws, and decision-makers governing natural resources in the United States,
 - Analyzing environmental policy and policy research drawing on the themes of values, economics, justice, and science and articulating policy implications for lay and professional audiences, and
 - Differentiating the roles in policy development of different actors and their values and interests.
- 2) Develop advanced skills in professional communication through writing and speaking, including logical thinking, use of persuasive rhetorical strategies, and communication for diverse audiences.

Why? Communication skills can help you be heard, open career doors, and make a difference as a citizen and human. This course fulfills the Communication B requirement.

Participation

Active participation facilitates learning. Specifically, students will be expected to:

- Participate fully in class discussions and exercises. The classes will combine lecture with participation in large-group discussion, small group discussion, debate, and short in-class writing reflections. Showing up prepared to participate—including bringing copies of course readings with you—is critical to the learning experience.
- Complete three assignments about policy and democratic participation. Some assignments will include a graded first and revised final draft to build your writing and editing skills. Writing and editing are critical tasks for researchers, policymakers, and scientists. The three assignments are:
 - Write a 2-page policy brief, including a first and final draft.
 - Write a 2-page persuasive comment letter to a relevant legislator, resource agency, or other external audience, including a first and final draft.
 - Write a 2-3 page reflection on attendance at a public meeting.
- Meet individually with Prof. Rissman at least once during the semester to discuss a writing assignment.
- Present your ideas and research. Everyone will be graded on at least two presentations:
 - Participation in class (persuasive talk, class activities)
 - Final project presentation
- Read the assigned texts before each class session. I have shortened the readings to less than ~25 pages per class (previously they ranged from 20-70 pages per class).
- Conduct an individual final project on a natural resource policy topic in which you select to write either 1) a policy brief, 2) a persuasive letter or 3) a series of shorter thank you (shine) or complaint (shade) letters. These must connect to one or more course themes (values, economics, justice, science) and/or policy process issue (such as public participation or federalism). Mid-semester, students will submit an outline for a proposed project and initial literature cited, followed by a brief or letter/s. A library day will help with your use of evidence. You will have a chance to showcase your work in a final presentation.
 - Outline and Literature Cited
 - Interview Expert(s), turn in notes and reflection
 - First and Final Draft of Brief or Letter/s (3-4 pages)
 - First and Final Draft of Statement of Context for your Brief or Letter/s (2 pages)
 - Oral Presentation in class or recorded video
- Take a midterm and final exam.

I encourage everyone to consult with the UW Writing Center on campus: writing.wisc.edu. Seriously, they will read your draft and help you make it better. Email them and make an appointment.

Evaluation

The course grade will be based on the following activities:

- 15% Class participation (attendance, in-class participation, speeches/activities is 5%, individual meeting with Prof. Rissman)
- 10% Policy brief (Assignment 1)
- 10% Persuasive letter directed to a policy decision (Assignment 2)
- 10% Public participation forum in person (public meeting reflection, Assignment 3)
- 15% Midterm
- 20% Final Project
- 20% Final Exam

Assignments in the course are sequenced to build on one another. In turn, to encourage you to complete assignments on time, late assignments will be counted down one grade (i.e., from A to AB to B) for every day they are late.

Extra credit opportunities:

1% added to grade: Attend or view online a second public meeting and answer the questions about it

Here is how percentages translate into letter grades. Grades are not curved, although I do try to maintain equity from year to year to ensure appropriate challenge.

- A: 94-100%
- AB: 89-94%
- B: 84-89%
- BC: 79-84%
- C: 72-79%
- D: 65-72%
- F: under 65%

Graduate students are assessed separately from undergraduates. Graduate students are held to a standard appropriate for graduate level work and will complete an individual rather than group project.

Required Texts

There is no course textbook. All readings are on Canvas. Because we work closely with readings in class, I expect that we will all bring these readings to class to aid in our discussions (printed or on a laptop).

How the course meets the credit hour policy standards

This class meets for two 75-minute class periods each week over the spring semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, assignments, studying, etc) for about 3 hours out of the classroom for every class period. The syllabus includes more information about meeting times and expectations for student work.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is critical to the mission of the University of Wisconsin—Madison, and all students are expected to uphold the core values of academic integrity which include honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. This institutional commitment has two implications for our course: cheating and plagiarism, and respectful discussion in a polarized time.



Cheating and Plagiarism

[Academic misconduct](#) will be treated strictly, in fairness to students who put in an honest effort on their work. Any evidence of cheating will result in a score of zero on the assignment. Incidences of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the campus, which may administer additional punishment. Plagiarism includes appropriation of whole passages with or without credit, appropriation of unique words and phrases without credit, appropriation of both main and supporting ideas without credit, and paraphrasing without credit. Plagiarism also includes submitting a paper written by someone else. Ethical research requires that you properly document the sources you use. Even when you do not quote directly from another work, if reading that source contributed to the ideas presented in your paper, you must give the authors proper credit. If you are unsure of how to properly cite sources, ask Prof. Rissman for guidance, or visit the [Writing Center webpage on quoting sources](#).

Use of AI for writing is not permitted in this course, since my job is to help you become a better writer and thinker. So ChatGPT and other software are not permitted for assignments.

Respectful Discussion in a Polarized Time

For Badgers, academic integrity extends beyond cheating. It speaks to our shared purpose in this class: to understand natural resources policy and to communicate well with each other. I invite you to help create a classroom community where we can talk honestly, openly, and respectfully

about important issues. We will learn more together when we create a space for everyone to share their thoughts and experiences openly.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assessments

(Check CANVAS for final reading list, assignment instructions)

Session	Date	Topic and Required Reading	Assigned	Due
UNIT 1 Policy Process and Themes				
1.1	Policy Process			
1	Sep 7	Introduction to Natural Resources and Environmental Policy Ciciora, Phil. How will the Inflation Reduction Act affect US environmental policy? September 1, 2022	Policy Brief (Assignment 1)	
2	Sep 12	Making State and Federal Policy: Process, Players, and Politics Book of Authority (TED Ed video refresher on branches of government, 4 min) - Cubbage, Fred, Jay O’Laughlin, and M. Nils Peterson. 2017. <i>Natural Resource Policy</i>. Waveland Press, Long Grove, IL. Excerpts from Chapters 1 & 2 (1-6, 12-15, 38-40, 42-44). (~15 pages) - News article, Waters of the United States - Policy basics		
3	Sep 14	Policy Process and Policy Tools (guest lecturer Yu Lu) - Rosenbaum, Walter A. <i>Environmental politics and policy</i>. CQ Press, Thousand Oaks, CA. Presidency; Congress; Bureaucracy; Courts (~17 pages total) - Bardach, Eugene. 2012. <i>A practical guide for policy analysis</i>. Things governments do (141-149) - Food and Agriculture Organization. Preparing policy briefs. Pages 1-30 (read for Assignment 1) - Policy Basics Questions (1 page)	Public Meeting (Assignment 3)	
4	Sep 19	Judiciary and the Constitution - Kubasek, Nancy and Gary Silverman. <i>Constitutional principles underlying the American legal system</i>, (19-33). Zartner. 2019. How giving legal rights to nature could help reduce toxic algae blooms in Lake Erie. The Conversation.	Final Project	Draft Policy Brief (Assignment 1)
1.2	Themes			
5	Sep 21	Why and for whom? Values - Kennedy, James J. & Jack Ward Thomas. 1995. <i>Managing natural resources as social value. A new century for natural resources management</i>. Chapter 18, (311-321). - Moore. 2017. Tiffany pushes end to state's mining moratorium. <i>Lakeland Times</i>. Bergquist, Lee. 2017. Wisconsin no longer leads in conservation. <i>Milwaukee Journal Sentinel</i>. (for full graphics, read online)	Persuasive Letter (Assignment 2)	
6	Sep 26	At what \$ cost and benefit? Economics - Rosenbaum. Chapter 5 excerpt on Benefit-Cost Analysis, (163-173). - Scorse. 2019. Market-based policies work to fight climate change,		

Session	Date	Topic and Required Reading	Assigned	Due
		from India to Jamaica. The Conversation.		
7	Sep 28	Campus Field Trip with Missy Nergard See Canvas for UW sustainability policy	Response to Policy Brief (Assignment 1)	
8	Oct 3	Library Day – Meet at Steenbock Room 105 lab in the basement - Review UW Library Research Guide customized for our class on Canvas - Begin filling in persuasive letter policy brainstorming Gorden, Raymond L. 1992. <i>Basic interviewing skills</i> . Chapter 1, (1-8).		
9	Oct 5	Who wins and loses? Justice - Cole, Luke W. and Sheila R. Foster. 2001. <i>From the ground up: environmental racism and the rise of the environmental justice movement</i>. New York University Press: New York, NY. Preface & Introduction Chapters (1-18). - Additional Reading		Final Policy Brief (Assignment 1)
10	Oct 10	With what evidence? Science Years of Living Dangerously. Season 1, Episode 1. The whole 1-hour show is worth watching. For this class please watch about climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe and the Texas drought that closed the Cargill Plant. Minutes 2:20 to 3:55, 37:37 to 44:00 and 48:44 to 53:30 (13 min total). Two northwoods friends push Wisconsin DNR to protect lakeshore forests. <i>Milwaukee Journal Sentinel</i>. Sept 5, 2022.		Draft Persuasive Letter (Assignment 2)
11	Oct 12	Synthesis; Guest speakers, WDNR Wisconsin DNR Mission and Natural Resources Board webpages		
12	Oct 17	Midterm Exam	Response to Persuasive Letter (Assignment 2)	
UNIT 2 Policy Topics				
2.1	Land			
13	Oct 19	Private Lands and Forestry - Cubbage et al. 2017. State environmental and forestry law (361-368); Farm Bill Illustration, (232); Wetlands clearing Illustration, (211-213). - Private land reading		
14	Oct 24	Public Land - Nagle and Ruhl. 2002. Primer on the law of the forests. In <i>The law of biodiversity and ecosystem management</i> (401-410). What is federal land? (9 min video)		Persuasive Talk (Last names A-I)
15	Oct 26	Agriculture and Farm Bill Horst and Marion 2019. Racial, ethnic and gender inequities in farmland ownership and farming in the U.S. - Renton et al. 2020. The Case for Crop Insurance Reform		Persuasive Talk (Last names J-Z) Final Project Proposal
16	Oct 31	Tribal Sovereignty and Law GLIFWC treaty rights webpage and video (18 minutes) 1854 Treaty of LaPointe_Ojibwe_wasChippewa.pdf	Response to Final Project Proposal	Final Persuasive Letter (Assignment 2)
17	Nov 2	Wildfire		

Session	Date	Topic and Required Reading	Assigned	Due
		Miller, Char. 2021. The burning debate — manage forest fires or suppress them? LA Times.		
18	Nov 7	Grasslands and rangelands - Hardin, Tragedy of the commons. - Rissman et al. 2023 Grassland policy review.		
19	Nov 9	Public participation, NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act Council on Environmental Quality. <i>A citizen's guide to the NEPA</i>. (1-3, 8-19). - News article		
2.3	Wildlife			
20	Nov 14	Wildlife - Weeks, Linton. 2015. Hats off to women who saved the birds. NPR History. - Cubbage et al. 2017. Wildlife (379-404)		Draft of Final Project
21	Nov 16	Endangered Species Act The God Squad and the Northern Spotted Owl. Movie. (57 minutes) - Hamer, Emily. 2019. What Wisconsin species could be impacted by changes to the Endangered Species Act? Wisconsin State Journal interview with Rissman		
2.4	Pollution			
22	Nov 21	Policy Role Play TBD		
	Nov 23	No Class, Thanksgiving		
23	Nov 28	Clean Air Act, Climate Change - Rosenbaum. 2017. Chapter 6 excerpts (195-207, 210-215-can skip the smog wars, 207-210) - Cubbage et al. 2017, (218-220)	Response to Draft Final Project	
24	Nov 30	Clean Water Act - Rosenbaum. 2017. Chapter 6 excerpts (215-234). - Wisconsin nonpoint news article		Public Meeting Responses (Assignment 3)
UNIT 3	Synthesis			
25	Dec 5	Final Exam		
26	Dec 7	Final Project Presentations		
27	Dec 12	Final Project Presentations		Final Project

