



University of Colorado Boulder
ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMICS
ECON 3545 SYLLABUS, SUMMER 2026

Instructor: Fengyu Zhang

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Zoom: <https://cuboulder.zoom.us/j/2856593776>

- **Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 9am -11am on Zoom

INSTRUCTOR BIO

I'm an economics PhD student here at CU. My main research interests are in the field of environmental economics and more specifically on how renewable energy relate to the environment. Outside of school I like hiking, bouldering, and most of all those other basic Boulder outdoor activities.

Term Start: May 26, 2026

Term End: Jul 17, 2026

COURSE WEBSITE

Canvas is our class website:

- Login using your University of Colorado Boulder IdentiKey and password at <https://canvas.colorado.edu/>
- Under Course List, click "ECON 3545: Environmental Economics"

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Economics has been a central driver of natural resource degradation, yet it is also at the core of the solution to most environmental problems. A primary goal of this course is to develop insight into how humans manage natural resources and why. Once we understand incentives, we can propose policies aiming at the conservation of natural resources. We will focus on understanding the core concepts that underpin environmental economics. Students will have the opportunity to apply their new knowledge toward understanding current environmental problems.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Identify environmental problems, emphasizing the optimal role for public policy relative to a market inefficiency.
2. Determine the economic information and tool required to address an environmental problem and how to apply them.
3. Explain the building blocks and tools of environmental economics so that you can understand and evaluate environmental economics literature.
4. Concisely and effectively communicate environmental economics findings and recommendations to policymakers.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

Requires prerequisite courses of ECON 2010 (minimum grade C-).

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

Textbook (required): Hanley, N., Shogren J. and White, B. (2019) **Introduction to Environmental Economics** 3rd Edition. Oxford. ISBN: 978-0198737230

NOTE: *If you rent our textbook from Amazon or other textbook retailer, make sure that the dates of the rental period end by July 20, 2026, or later.*

Course Website: Grades and any further additional readings will be posted on Canvas. Please check Canvas frequently for any relevant notifications/changes that may occur throughout the course.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

Journal articles will be provided by the instructor in the Canvas System, by links to websites or via the CU Library.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY AND DELIVERY

This course is delivered via distance education format using the CU Canvas system. This format will use a combination of readings, online discussion, and other web-based resources. You will interact with the instructor and other students using the communication functions provided by Canvas. You will submit assignments in accordance with the course outline using Canvas.

COURSE PRESENTATION AND PROCEDURES

There will be 16 modules corresponding to the 8 weeks of the course (2 modules per week). Each module may include a variety of assignments and materials, such as readings from the course texts, supplemental class notes, graded discussion questions, individual projects, exercises, quizzes, exams, and additional outside resources including readings and video content.

COURSE OUTLINE

Review the separate weekly class schedule found on Canvas under “Syllabus” link.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

This course is designed to engage you through class discussions on the topics covered in the course materials. It is important that you participate in class discussions to facilitate learning by other students and gain exposure to different viewpoints of other students in the class.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

Course grades will be determined by the completion of assignments, exams, and discussions, as shown below:

Assignment	Points Per Assignment	Frequency	Number of Assignments Dropped	Grade Points	Grade Percentage
Introduction Discussion Post	15	1	0	15	1.50%
Perusall*	5	At least 20	Any >20	100	10%
Exercises*	20	10	1	180	18%
Proctored Quizzes*	30	6	2	120	12%
Projects	100	2	0	200	20%
Final Reflection Discussion Post	15	1	0	15	1.50%
Proctored Midterm Exam	150	1	0	150	15%
Cumulative Proctored Final Exam	220	1	0	220	22%
Total				1000	100%
Extra Credit				40	4%
Possible Points Available					104%

Keep a copy of all work created for the course, including work submitted through Canvas.

*The lowest grade of these assignments may be dropped. See assignments section.

ASSIGNMENTS

Perusall (100 POINTS) – There will be 23 or more Perusall activities, each worth 5 points. I will count only your 20 best Perusall scores so you can use these judiciously.

Perusall is an interactive social learning platform where you can annotate and discuss videos, articles, podcasts, and other forms of media with your classmates. It is free to use and accessible through our course Canvas page. Each Perusall assignment will contain information of requirements and objectives.

Discussion postings (30 POINTS) - There will be two 15-point discussion postings, one at the start of the term and one at the end. The discussion will occur asynchronously; I will post a discussion question and you will respond to the questions at your convenience prior to the due date. Each discussion post consists of your initial post and a response to one (or more) of your classmates.

Exercises (180 POINTS) - There will be a 20-point exercise associated with most modules, 10 in total. Your lowest one (1) exercise is dropped from your final grade calculation. Exercises will consist of longer, quantitative questions where you will show your work, and will be open book and open notes. Exercises will be accessed and completed through Canvas. You have 2 attempts on each exercise and your average score will be recorded. You will not be able to see correct answers until after the due date.

Proctored Quizzes (120 POINTS) – There will be a 30-point quiz associated with some modules, 6 quizzes in total. The format of the quizzes will be multiple choice, calculations, and short answers, and will be closed book and closed notes, though you are allowed to bring one 8.5" × 11" blank paper. You must show both the front and back page of your paper before the quiz begins. Your lowest two (2) quizzes are dropped from your final grade calculation. You only have one attempt on each quiz, and you will not be able to see correct answers until after the due date.

Before Quiz 1, an ungraded practice quiz will be provided so that you can set up and familiarize yourself with Proctorio ahead of time. Since Quiz 1 occurs early in the semester, it will not be proctored to accommodate any difficulties with software setup. However, all other quiz rules still apply, including the one-attempt limit. Quizzes 2–6 will be remotely proctored.

Projects (200 POINTS) – There will be two (2) projects in which you will be asked to think critically about an environmental economics topic, develop an informed argument or write-up regarding the topic, and discuss with your classmates. The format of the projects will be long-form discussion posts on Canvas. The first project will take place in week 3 and the second in week 7. Detailed descriptions and rubrics of these projects will be available in Canvas.

Exams (370 POINTS) – There will be two (2) exams. The proctored midterm exam (6/18-6/21) is worth 150 points and the proctored cumulative final exam (7/16-7/19) is worth 220 points. The format of the exam will be multiple choice and calculations and will be closed book. The exams are completed in a proctored setting. More details on proctoring below.

This course requires proctored examinations. Exams are proctored which will require planning on your part. Proctors are individuals who administer the exam process following the guidelines provided by University of Colorado Boulder to ensure academic integrity.

Who can be my proctor?

If you are in Boulder or nearby, you can take your exam:

1. **With me** at the Department of Economics. There is no cost for using this proctor. This option is only on selected days during the quiz or exam period.
2. With **Proctorio or a comparable online proctoring service as determined by your instructor**. Online proctoring is a service that uses a webcam and microphone to ensure academic integrity. To use this service, you must have access to a computer with a webcam and a microphone. There is no cost for using this proctor.

If you are outside of Boulder, you can take your exam:

1. At **an accredited college or university testing center** in your town or nearby. There may be a cost for using this testing center.
2. With **Proctorio or a comparable online proctoring service as determined by your instructor**. Online proctoring is a service that uses a webcam and microphone to ensure academic integrity. To use this service, you must have access to a computer with a webcam and a microphone. There is no cost for using this proctor.

Please see Canvas for detailed information about proctoring, Proctorio, and a nationwide list of accredited college or university testing centers. If you are in a rural area or on a military base, you may need to be approved to use a person as a proctor and information is provided on Canvas for this approval process.

EXTRA CREDIT

There may be 40 points of extra credit available (= 4% of the course grade).

- Extra credit may be available during the semester for completing certain activities, such as listening and commenting on a podcast or solving practice exams. These extra credit opportunities will be determined by the instructor and announced on Canvas.

GRADING SCALE

COURSE GRADING CRITERIA

Grade	Percentage Grade	Equivalent Points	Indicates
A	93-100	930 – 1000	<i>Excellent</i>
A-	90-92.99	900 – 929	
B+	87-89.99	870 – 899	
B	83-86.99	830 – 869	<i>Above Average</i>
B-	80-82.99	800 – 829	
C+	77-79.99	770 – 799	
C	73-77.99	730 – 769	<i>Average</i>
C-	70-72.99	700 – 729	
D+	67-69.99	670 – 699	
D	63-67.99	630 – 669	<i>Below Average</i>
D-	60-62.99	600 – 629	
F	0-59	600 or lower	<i>Failure</i>

GRADING POLICIES

I will adhere strictly to the grading policies outlined in this syllabus. There will be **no** rounding of grades. An 89.99% will remain an 89.99%. Any requests for grade bumps or rounding will be ignored. I do this to ensure fairness to all students.

COMMUNICATION

I want to help you learn about environmental economics! Please do not hesitate to contact me about anything.

E-mail

- My policy is to respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays. On weekends, responses may take up to 48 hours. I always respond to email. If you have not had a response within those time frames, I did not receive your email. Please send it again. Please be sure to use your CU email address, other emails occasionally end up in my spam folder.

Additional ways to contact me

- Online Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9am – 11am using Zoom

General Course Announcements

- Announcements: Please check the “announcements” section on Canvas.

POLICY ON DUE DATES

Each lecture you will complete a series of critical thinking questions that reflect material from the various delivery formats and required readings. It is your responsibility to turn in each assignment on the required date. There is a 24-hour grace period for each assignment, during which a 4% penalty per hour will be applied to your score. For example, if an assignment is submitted 10 hours late with a raw score of 16/20, the final score would be calculated as: $16 - (20 \times 4\% \times 10) = 16 - 8 = 8$. After 24 hours, the assignment will not be accepted for credit under any circumstances.

The exceptions that may be considered are due to sickness, university excused functions, or circumstances beyond the students' control. The instructor reserves the sole right to determine what grounds constitute a reasonable excuse for missing or submitting a late assignment. In such situations, you must contact me as soon as possible and preferably before the missed or late assignment is due.

Students have four-day windows to take examinations. As a result, no late or make-up requests will be accepted for missed exams.

Late submissions for extra credit assignments will not be accepted.

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

CU Boulder uses Canvas.

Here is the list of recommended system requirements: [Canvas Computer Specifications](#)

Here is the detailed list of internet browsers in Windows, MacOS, iOS and Android:

[Supported Browsers](#)

Technical Support

If you are experiencing issues with Canvas, please contact:

- o CU Boulder's Help desk at 303-735-4357 (5-HELP) or help@colorado.edu.
5-Help will answer your call: Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday from noon to 6:00 p.m., Closed during [University Holidays](#)
- o On your computer, click the “help” (?) icon on the left side of Canvas, once logged in
- o Within the Canvas App, you can search the Canvas support guides, Report a Problem or chat with Canvas Support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

COURSE POLICIES:

COURSE WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Any student who wishes to withdraw from the course must do so by June 30. You can submit a request directly to [Continuing Education](#). For complete information, please visit their website at <https://ce.colorado.edu/resources/topics/dates-and-deadlines-general-info/>

NETIQUETTE

All students should be aware that their behavior impacts other people, even online. I hope that we will all strive to develop a positive and supportive environment and will be courteous to fellow students and your instructor. Due to the nature of the online environment, there are some things to remember.

1. Always think before you write. In other words, without the use of nonverbals with your message, your message can be misinterpreted. So please think twice before you hit submit.
2. Keep it relevant. There are places to chat and post for fun everyday stuff. Do not stray from the discussion in the assigned questions.
3. Never use all caps. This is the equivalent of yelling in the online world. It is not fun to read. Only use capital letters when appropriate.
4. Make sure that you are using appropriate grammar and structure. In other words, do not use “R U” instead of “are you”. There are people in the class that may not understand this type of abbreviation, not to mention it does nothing to help expand your writing and vocabulary skills. Emoticons are fine as long as they are appropriate. A smile is welcome, anything offensive is not.

5. Treat people the same as you would face-to-face (or kinder). It might be easy to hide behind the computer. In some cases, it empowers people to treat others in ways they would not in person. Remember there is a person behind the name on your screen. Treat all with dignity and respect and you can expect that in return.

Website: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

Compiled by Melissa Landin, Instructor, Dept. of Communication, Inver Hills Community College, mlandin@inverhills.edu

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote, or online. Failure 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 [classroom behavior policy](#), the [Student Code of Conduct](#), and the [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#).

REQUIREMENTS FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Members of the CU Boulder community and visitors to campus must follow university, department, and building health and safety requirements and all applicable campus policies and public health guidelines to reduce the risk of spreading infectious diseases. If public health conditions require, the university may also invoke related requirements for student conduct and disability accommodation that will apply to this class.

If you feel ill and think you might have COVID-19 or if you have tested positive for COVID-

19, please stay home and follow the [guidance of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) for isolation and testing](#). If you have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms and have not tested positive for COVID19, you do not need to stay home but should follow the [guidance of the CDC for masking and testing](#).

ACCOMMODATION FOR DISABILITIES, TEMPORARY MEDICAL CONDITIONS, AND MEDICAL ISOLATION

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, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) on the Disability Services website. If you have a required medical isolation for which you require adjustment, you must let me know as soon as possible.

PREFERRED STUDENTS' 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.

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 Honor Code may include but are not limited to: plagiarism (including use of paper writing services or technology [such as essay bots]), 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 Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution: honor@colorado.edu, 303-492-5550. Students found responsible for violating the [Honor Code](#) will be assigned resolution outcomes from the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution as well as be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Visit [Honor Code](#) for more information on the academic integrity policy.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND/OR RELATED RETALIATION

CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits [protected-class](#) discrimination and harassment, sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. These behaviors harm individuals and our community. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these concerns, and individuals who have been subjected to misconduct can contact OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, [reporting options](#), and [support resources](#) can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors must inform OIEC when they are made aware of incidents related to these policies regardless of when or where something occurred. This is to ensure that individuals impacted receive outreach from OIEC about resolution options and support resources. To learn more about reporting and support for a variety of concerns, visit the [Don't Ignore It page](#).

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS

Campus policy requires faculty to provide reasonable accommodations for students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Please communicate the need for a religious accommodation in a timely manner. In this class, you must advise me of needed religious accommodations at least one week in advance.

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

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

A variety of instructional support services, such as writing center, guidance on personal or educational issues, tutoring questions and library resources are available to the students. For more information about their services, visit their websites linked under “CU Student Resources” on the modules page on Canvas.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The University of Colorado Boulder is committed to the well-being of all students. If you are struggling with personal stressors, mental health or substance use concerns that are impacting academic or daily life, please contact [Counseling and Psychiatric Services \(CAPS\)](#) located in C4C or call (303) 492-2277, 24/7.

Free and unlimited telehealth is also available through [Academic Live Care](#). The Academic Live Care site also provides information about additional wellness services on campus that are available to students.