

ECON 3545 – Environmental Economics

Instructor and About the Course

Lecture: MWF 1:25-2:15pm

CASE E340

Contact Information

Instructor

Name: Austin Kennedy

Email: auke9230@colorado.edu

Office Location: ECON 401

Office Hours: Monday 2:30-3:30pm, Wednesday 12:15-1:15pm or by appointment.

Instructor Bio

My name is Austin Kennedy, I am a fourth-year PhD student in the Department of Economics, and I am very excited to be teaching you Environmental Economics this semester! My research primarily concerns development economics (i.e. why are some countries still poor and what do we do about it), especially as it relates to international trade and finance. The interaction between economic development and environmental degradation is a relationship that cannot be ignored, so I look forward to exploring sustainable development and other environmental concepts with you in this class. As a Colorado native, I really enjoy spending time in nature, primarily through hiking, camping, and snowboarding. My other interests include exercising, basketball, ceramics, baking, craft beer, watching movies, and PC gaming (on the rare occasion I have time for it).

Communication

To make things easier on everyone, I will try to communicate to the class primarily through Canvas announcements, so be sure to have Canvas notifications on so that you do not miss anything. If you need to contact me, feel free to visit during my office hours or send me an email and I will get back to you as quickly as possible. I do ask that before emailing me, you check this syllabus for an answer to your question first. Please allow 24 hours for me to respond before sending a follow-up email.

Course description

Environmental issues are complex, multi-dimensional issues that economics is often both part of the cause and the solution to. This course analyzes the environmental costs and consequences associated with economic activity, and ways to correct them through economic

policy. The first part of this course will cover relevant economic principles such as the theory of externalities, environmental valuation, and cost-benefit analysis. We will then move on to applying these principles to more specific issues such as pollution, energy, climate change, biodiversity loss, and more.

Course Objectives

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

- Use evidence to identify sources and consequences of environmental degradation associated with human activity.
- Understand and explain the incentives and economic fundamentals that underlie these activities and develop policy that balances the costs and benefits associated with environmental economic policy.
- Comprehend research in environmental economics and critically analyze policy and media surrounding environmental issues.
- Develop and concisely communicate environmental policy in a manner that is understandable to policymakers and the general public.

Prerequisites/Major Requirements

ECON 2010 (Principles of Microeconomics), with a minimum grade of a C-.

ECON MAJORS ONLY-ECON 4545

This course is designed for non-ECON majors. This semester, the department is allowing ECON majors to receive credit for ECON 4545 upon completion of supplemental assignments. These will be a part of your total course grade, and you must have an average of a C- or higher on these assignments in order to receive ECON 4545 credit. You must explicitly let me know that you intend on taking this course for ECON 4545 credit in order to receive it. This course does count as an elective for ECON minors.

Required Texts

Optional but recommended: Harris, Jonathan and Roach, Brian. *Environmental and Natural Resource Economics: A Contemporary Approach*, 5th edition

Student Responsibilities and Class Expectations

I will expect you to **maintain a high standard of professionalism at all times** in this class. Environmental issues are complex and inherently political, thus you may disagree with me or other students at times. You will maintain respect for myself and your peers, even in disagreement, at all times. My hope for this class is that we can use evidence-based arguments to engage in healthy discourse; ad hominem attacks or irrelevant soapboxing will not be tolerated.

If you are actively talking or distracting other students during class, you may be asked to leave. Respect is the general rule here.

Grading Criteria and Points Breakdown

Your grade is out of 100%.

3% Participation

10% Attendance

10% Discussion Posts

15% Article Analysis

15% Group Project

25% Quizzes

25% Final

Participation: Participation counts as a half percent for each class you participate in. You may not earn more than three total percentage points, but I would encourage you to continue participating after you have earned all three percentage points. If you have participated in a class, be sure to come up to me after class so I can record your participation credit. You can also receive a participation credit (one-half percent) by coming to my office hours.

Attendance: I will randomly take attendance over the course of the semester and will drop two attendance grades. As per university policy, I do not discriminate between excused and unexcused absences.

Discussion Posts: For every chapter we get through, there will be a discussion post you must complete through Canvas, where a prompt will be given and you will respond in at least 3 sentences. While there is no right answer for these discussion posts, you should be thoughtful in your answers and, as always, appropriate and professional. Blatant soapboxing, ad hominem attacks, and low-effort posts will be penalized. I will drop one discussion post grade.

Article Analysis: For this assignment, you will find a relevant and recent news article relating to a topic that you find interesting, and that you can directly relate back to class. You will write at least two paragraphs, the first summarizing the article and explaining why it is relevant, and the second analyzing the article and its claims, and relating it back to concepts from class and proposing policy based on what we have covered in the class.

You will be graded on how relevant the article you choose is, the quality of your writing, how well you relate the article back to class, and how well you use evidence and economic principles to back up your policy recommendation. Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and will result in a zero for the assignment.

Group Project: You will have one group project where you will work with 3 or 4 of your peers. More details will be provided during class.

Quizzes: There will be no midterm in this class. Instead, every two chapters we will take a short, multiple choice quiz. There is evidence that shorter, more frequent examination is associated with better mental health and learning for students. I will drop your lowest quiz grade.

Final: The final exam is cumulative and will be taken in-person, in the same classroom we have lecture, at the date and time given by CU's final exam schedule. It will be multiple choice.

Grading Scale

Grades will be assigned as follows:

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
94-100	90-93	87-89	84-86	80-83	77-79	74-76	70-73	67-69	64-66	60-63	<60

Grades may be curved depending on the class average. At the end of the semester, I will round grades to the nearest whole number, meaning an 89.5% will be rounded to a 90 (A), and a 89.4 will be rounded to an 89 (B+).

Submission Policies

Late assignments will receive a 20% grade reduction for each additional day after the deadline that they are submitted.

University Policies

Classroom Behavior

Both students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote or online. Those who fail 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 policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution policies](#).

Requirements for COVID-19

As a matter of public health and safety, all members of the CU Boulder community and all visitors to campus must follow university, department and building requirements and all public health orders in place to reduce the risk of spreading infectious disease. Students who fail to adhere to these requirements will be asked to leave class, and students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred to [Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution](#). For more information, see the policy on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#). If you require accommodation because a disability prevents you from fulfilling these safety measures, please follow the steps in the “Accommodation for Disabilities” statement on this syllabus.

CU Boulder currently requires masks in classrooms and laboratories regardless of vaccination status. This requirement is a precaution to supplement CU Boulder’s COVID-19 vaccine requirement. Exemptions include individuals who cannot medically tolerate a face covering, as well as those who are hearing-impaired or otherwise disabled or who are communicating with someone who is hearing-impaired or otherwise disabled and where the ability to see the mouth is essential to communication. If you qualify for a mask-related accommodation, please follow the steps in the “Accommodation for Disabilities” statement on this syllabus. In addition, vaccinated instructional faculty who are engaged in an indoor instructional activity and are separated by at least 6 feet from the nearest person are exempt from wearing masks if they so choose.

If you feel ill and think you might have COVID-19, if you have tested positive for COVID-19, or if you are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated and have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, you should stay home and follow the further guidance of the [Public Health Office](#) (contacttracing@colorado.edu). If you are fully vaccinated and have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, you do not need to stay home; rather, you should self-monitor for symptoms and follow the further guidance of the [Public Health Office](#) (contacttracing@colorado.edu).

Accommodation for Disabilities

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.

Preferred Student 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 academic integrity policy. Violations of the Honor Code may include, but are not limited to: plagiarism, 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 the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu; 303-492-5550). Students found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found on the [Honor Code website](#).

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. The university will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, or protected-class discrimination or harassment by or against members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, [reporting options](#), and the support resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when they are made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, dating and domestic violence, stalking, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted

receive information about their rights, support resources, and reporting options. To learn more about reporting and support options for a variety of concerns, visit [Don't Ignore It](#).

Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Please alert the instructor as soon as possible about any potential conflicts.

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