

Introduction to Public Policy Analysis: Environmental Policy

PSCI 2016

Class: Tuesday/Thursday 11:00-12:15

Room: University Club Rm 4

Office Hours: see below

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The course is designed to teach you the basic tools for analyzing policy problems and policy processes. The course is built on the premise that most interesting policy problems are quite complex, indeed beyond the capacity of any individual (including your professor) or any organization to comprehend all the relevant information. If policy problems were as simple as portrayed on radio/television talk shows, they would have been solved long ago. In this view, most major policy failures occur, not because policymakers are not smart and in most cases at least moderately well-intentioned, but because of major flaws in their understanding of the problems they are dealing with. So, our emphasis here is on learning a disciplined, comprehensive method for thinking about policy problems and designing policies to deal with those problems.

Having an intelligent, well-reasoned, understanding of the policy problem does not automatically mean that others will agree with your preferred policy alternative. That's the political problem inherent in all policy-making, at all levels of government from City Council to the global community. We need a good policy alternative, but in order for that alternative to be adopted and implemented as policy, it also has to be politically feasible. Anyone who watches government leaders in international agencies, Congress, in state government, or in any government agency knows that in reality policymakers are continually analyzing the tradeoffs between their preferred policies and what they consider politically feasible.

So, this class will focus on two basic analytical frameworks. One framework (the problem orientation) focuses on analyzing what would be the best (or at least a better) alternative to existing policies. The second framework (the decision process) helps us analyze the political feasibility of our preferred policy alternative, and can also be used to consider how existing policy processes could and/or should be reformed.

For this particular class, the policy problems and the policymaking processes that we will be examining will be environmental policies/problems, broadly defined. As you will see, the environmental umbrella covers quite a range of issues—from energy policy and climate change to land use and how we use our natural resources. In the U.S., while the federal government has the dominant role in most issues, its jurisdiction is often shared with state government. Often in areas where national policies are politically stalemated, the most innovative policymaking occurs at the local, state, or sometimes regional level. While most of the readings involve the federal government, your term projects will analyze environmental problems and political alternatives in Colorado, so that you can utilize and add to your understanding of environmental policy at a more concrete and personal level.

A second key premise of the course is that all environmental issues (and most non-environmental policy debates) require us to integrate science, values, and policy. Most of you are probably familiar with the basic science involved in the issues we will be discussing, e.g. food security, energy, and climate change. But in every case, human behavior is a central cause of environmental problems, hence understanding our own behaviors—i.e. environmental social science—is critical to finding effective policies to address those problems. Evaluating alternatives to current policies cannot be done without value judgments about what is or isn't wrong with those policies and consideration of the tradeoffs between environmental consequences and other goals in trying to shape the future of human interaction with the environmental systems that are the basis for our future survival. There is no simple formula or textbook for how to do this integration of natural science, behavioral science, values, and policy. So, part of our responsibility in this course is learning by doing and through discussion of how we can do a better job of integrating the different kinds of knowledge necessary for shaping our collective future.

Course Objectives:

- 1. To enhance your ability to make a reasoned policy analysis/argument for or against existing policies and to come up with better alternatives;**
- 2. To enhance your ability to analyze policymaking processes that generate the policies you want to support or change;**
- 3. To enhance your understanding of U.S. environmental policies, the policymaking processes that generated those policies, and contemporary debates about those policies and processes.**

Textbooks:

Steven Cohen, Understanding Environmental Policy (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).
Michael Kraft, Environmental Policy and Politics, fifth edition (Boston: Longman, 2011).
Lester Brown, World on the Edge: How to Prevent Environmental and Economic Collapse (New York: WW Norton, 2011). A free PDF version of this text can be downloaded from http://www.earth-policy.org/images/uploads/book_files/wotebook.pdf.

Other readings not included in the texts will also be on the CULearn website. Most/all are copyrighted material and utilized here within the "fair use" doctrine which prohibits any commercial use or further distribution of these materials. TBA indicates readings or assignments "to be announced".

Environmental Policy/Politics Resources on the Internet:

1. GREENWIRE. From any on-campus computer, go to the University Libraries website for Chinook, and enter "Greenwire" in the box that follows Keyword. Follow links to a variety of daily/weekly reports on lots of different issues. To use this resource off-campus, you will need a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection. (Search VPN on CU website to download.)
2. Environmental Protection Agency ENVIROFACTS provides EPA data and reports for any site in the U.S. (Try looking up your home town.) <http://www.epa.gov/envirofw/> See other government sites listed in Kraft textbook, pp.73-74.
3. The official source for information on U.S. energy production and consumption is <http://www.eia.gov/>.
4. Websites for the major environmental groups are listed in the Kraft textbook, p. 101.
5. The Earth Policy Institute website has additional information and resources for the World on the Edge text on a wide variety of environmental issues. www.earth-policy.org

Office Hours:

Monday 1:00-2:30 pm; Tuesday 2:00-4:30; Wednesday 11:00-12:00, 1:30-2:30, and by appointment. You are encouraged to use office hours to raise questions that haven't been adequately addressed in class, to discuss questions related to class, or for help on any aspect of the class.

Course Requirements:

Like your other classes at CU, what you get out of this class depends mostly on what you put into it. To the extent possible, I hope this will be a seminar, rather than a lecture class, so your active participation in the class discussions, in asking and answering questions, and sharing your analysis of these problems is an important part of the class. **Making those discussions productive for yourself and for your classmates requires coming to class having done the reading for that day in advance of the class.** Not coming to class or coming to class without having read the material or done the assignment will detract significantly from the participation portion of your grade. There will undoubtedly be questions for which I don't have ready answers, so students who have laptops are encouraged to bring them to class or students may volunteer to find answers for participation credit. Credits can also be earned by attending Environmental Studies colloquia or environmental speakers at the Center for the American West. To the extent possible, I hope to use small group discussions, class debates, and assignments that encourage active learning. I will try to provide out-of-class alternatives for those who are shy about participating in class discussions and debates, but active participation will still be expected.

There will be two quizzes, both short-answer questions focusing on concepts, plus a mid-term and a final exam, as well as a term project. The mid-term and final will be essay exams done in class (or the exam period) on a question which asks you to apply policy analysis tools to an issue not previously covered in class. In this and in other classes, correct regurgitation of lectures and readings is better than a garbled or incoherent regurgitation, but still an inferior form of learning. What we seek to do in this class is to enhance our ability to make well-reasoned judgments about existing policies and policy processes and reasoned arguments about what policies would be better and/or how those processes should be changed. The final grade will be based on class participation 15%, two quizzes 20%, mid-term exam 20%, term project 20%, and final exam 25%.

Last Minute Quiz Questions:

1. The most important thing I learned was _____?
2. The thing I still don't understand is _____?

As part of your class participation grade, you will be assigned two weeks during the semester where you are expected to provide short answers to the Last Minute Quiz questions for each class during those two weeks. **Responses can be submitted at the end of class or by email, as long as the responses arrive the day of the class.** Responses received later than that will not count, since the purpose of the LMQ is to provide feedback to the instructor on what has been learned and what needs to be clarified before the class moves on to a new subject.

Term Projects:

The term projects will consist of an analysis of a local environmental problem, preferably in Boulder or Colorado. The project can focus on an analysis of the policy problem or it could focus on the policy process, but realistically there is not time to do both. The project will be a group effort, with part of the

grade depending on how your contribution to the final product is rated by your peers. Possible topics include any topic from the World on the Edge textbook where the research question is to write and present a policy analysis of that issue in Colorado. So, that could include water supply or water quality (in Colorado); farmland, soil, and agricultural productivity; greenhouse gas emissions; energy usage; renewable or non-renewable energy production; environmental consequences of poverty; or forest health and other natural resources. It could also include the policymaking processes in Colorado for any of these issues, i.e. water policy, energy policy, agricultural policy and practices, climate policy, or natural resource management. For this type of project, the research would be focused on the politics of the issue, rather than on recommendations to deal with the policy problem. Each group must have a topic not already claimed by another group. Other topics on environmental issues in Colorado are possible with the permission of the instructor.

The term project will be done as a collective effort by groups of 5 students randomly assigned by instructor. The assignment is to analyze the policy or policy process in question using the Problem Orientation or Decision Process framework. Each group will make a presentation of its analysis to the class at the end of the semester. The powerpoint slides from the class presentation and a 2-3 page written version of your contribution to the collective effort will be the primary basis for your term project grade, which will also include the quality of the presentation and a peer evaluation of your contribution to the group's work.

Class Schedule and Assignments:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Aug 23	Introduction, Course Objectives, and the Kidney Exercise <u>Assignment:</u> Read syllabus, bring questions to the next class.
Aug 25	Kidney Exercise Working Groups <u>Assignment:</u> Kidney Exercise readings on CULearn (Each group should plan to meet on campus during the regular class time.)
Aug 29	Kidney Exercise Results and Discussion <u>Assignment:</u> Cohen, chs. 1-2. (Each group should prepare a 5 minute report on its recommendations for rank ordering the possible kidney recipients.)
Sept 1	Introduction to the Problem Orientation (Rethinking the Kidney Exercise) <u>Assignment:</u> Clark, "Problem Orientation" CULearn
Sept 6	Example: What To Do With the Trash? (Deconstructing the Problem) <u>Assignment:</u> Cohen, ch. 3. On the web, find one other example of the trash problem or what is being done to deal with that problem. Bring to class. Using the EPA website, find a Superfund site in or near your hometown. What was the origin of that site?
Sept 8	Example: Leaking Underground Tanks (Thinking About Values)

Assignment: Cohen, ch. 4. Ringquist, “Environmental Justice” CULearn.

Sept 13 Example: Cleaning Up Toxic Wastes and Old Mines
Assignment: Cohen, ch. 5, and read “Cleaning Up Abandoned Mines in the West” at <http://centerwest.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/mines.pdf>

Sept 15 Example: Global Climate Change
Assignment: Cohen, ch. 6. Pick any two of the following carbon footprint calculators. Do you get the same results? If not, what’s different about the calculators?

Carbon Footprint <http://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.html>

PG&E Carbon Footprint Calculator <http://www.pge.com/microsite/calculator/calcl.jsp>

ClimateSmartCalculator –Zerofootprint <http://calc.zerofootprint.net/calculators/boulder>

Cool Climate Carbon Footprint Calculator <http://coolclimate.berkeley.edu/uscalc>

EPA Emissions Calculator http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/ind_calculator.html

Nature Conservancy Carbon Calculator <http://www.nature.org/initiatives/climatechange/calculator>

Sept 20 Lessons: What Have We Learned?
Assignment: Cohen, chs. 7-8. Come prepared to discuss what you have learned from Cohen’s examples.

Sept 22 Assessing the State of the Environment: Measuring Trends
Assignment: Kraft, ch. 2

Sept 27 U.S. Environmental Policies: Controlling Pollution
Assignment: Kraft, ch. 5

Sept 29 U.S. Environmental Policies: Managing Natural Resources
Assignment: Kraft, ch. 6

Oct 4 First Quiz and Term Project Group Meetings

Oct 6 Analyzing Policy Processes: The Decision Process Model
Assignment: Clark, “Decision Process” CULearn

Oct 11 Environmental Policymaking in the US
Assignment: Kraft, ch. 4

Oct 13 Evaluating Environmental Policies and Processes
Assignment: Kraft, chs. 7-8 **Bring bluebooks to class for midterm.**

Oct 18 **Midterm Exam**

Oct 20 Applications: Food Security: Science
Assignment: Brown, chs. 2, 3

- Oct 25 Food Security: Values and Behavior
Assignment: Brown, ch. 5
- Oct 27 Food Security: Policy Alternatives
Assignment: Brown, ch. 12. Come prepared to brainstorm about other possible policy alternatives and how we would evaluate the various policy alternatives.
- Nov 1 Applications: Energy: Science
Assignment: Read the series of webpages under “Energy Explained” at http://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/index.cfm?page=us_energy_home
- Nov 3 Energy: Values and Behavior
Assignment: Skim Limerick and Geller, “What Every Westerner Should Know about Energy”, <http://www.centerwest.org/publications/pdf/energycons.pdf> What strategies do the authors use to (hopefully) change the energy behavior of their readers?
- Nov 8 Energy: Policy Alternatives
Assignment: Brown, chs. 8, 9.
Recommended: Abrahamse, “Household Energy Conservation” CU Learn
- Nov. 10 Second Quiz (and Term Project Group Meetings)
Term project groups should also schedule a meeting with me prior to the fall break.
- Nov 15 Applications: Global Climate Change: Science
Assignment: National Academy of Sciences, “What Do We Know about Climate Change,” download and read ch 2 from http://www.nap.edu/chapterlist.php?record_id=12781&type=pdf_chapter&free=1
If you have already studied the basic science, download and read ch. 5 from the NAS weblink. Also recommended and short: <http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-change/melting-of-the-arctic-will-accelerate-climate-change-within-20-years-2290780.html>
- Nov 17 Global Climate Change: Values and Behavior
Assignment: Leiserowicz, “Six Americas” CU Learn
- Nov 22, 24 Fall Break
- Nov 29 Global Climate Change: Policy Alternatives
Assignment: Brown, ch. 13. Pielke, “Decarbonization Policies” CU Learn
- Dec 1 Term Project Presentations
- Dec 6 Term Project Presentations
- Dec 8 Term Project Presentations
Bring bluebooks to class for final exam.
- Dec. 12 **Final Exam Monday 4:30-7:00 pm**

Standard CU Policies

1. Academic Dishonesty. Academic dishonesty undermines the mutual trust that is a prerequisite for an effective educational experience. Accordingly, any cheating is grounds for an automatic F, expulsion from the class, and referral to the Honor Council. Cheating specifically includes use of notes or outlines or copying others' work during exams, plagiarism, falsification of class attendance information, and misrepresentation of someone else's work or work from another course as your own. If you have any questions about the definition of plagiarism or the University of Colorado Honor Code, please consult <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/> and the section on "Avoiding plagiarism" at <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/Student.html>. **All quizzes, exams, and papers must have a signed Honor Code pledge; work submitted without the Pledge will not be graded. If you have questions about what is or is not permissible under the Honor Code, ask first.**

2. Students with Disabilities. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner, so that your needs may be addressed.

Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact: 303-492-8671, Willard 322, and <http://www.Colorado.EDU/disabilityservices>

3. Religious holidays. Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to reasonably and fairly deal with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. In this class, please see me if you have any conflicts or have questions about this policy. See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html

4. Appropriate Behavior. Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. 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 differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. See policies at <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html> and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code

5. Discrimination and Harassment. The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>

APPENDIX I. THE PROBLEM ORIENTATION: Any comprehensive policy analysis requires

Clarification of **GOALS**. What are our values and objectives? What do we want to achieve? Why should these values be given priority over other values in dealing with this

issue? What do those general values or principles mean in this particular context?

DESCRIPTION of past and present TRENDS with respect to those goals. Where are we in relation to where we want to be? What is the magnitude of the problem? Is the problem getting worse or getting better? Is it a problem or a crisis?

Analysis of **CONDITIONING FACTORS** affecting those trends. What are the causes of the problem? Why is the problem getting better or worse? What human/other actions make the trends move in desirable or undesirable directions?

PROJECTION of probable future trends. What are the probable future outcomes under current policies? Is the problem likely to get better/worse? What are the best case/worst case scenarios?

DESIGN and EVALUATION of ALTERNATIVES. What should be done? What policies will lead most effectively to the desired outcomes? What policies will be best for whom over the long run? Why is a given policy option better/worse than alternative policies?

APPENDIX II: THE DECISION PROCESS: Analyzing policymaking processes requires attention to the multiple types of activities likely to influence the ultimate outcomes, including

INTELLIGENCE: (aka Problem Definition) Gathering, interpreting, analyzing, and disseminating information about the policy problem and possible policy options.

PROMOTION: Building support for alternative problem definitions and policy options among relevant elites and publics.

PRESCRIPTION: (aka Policymaking) Making decisions as to which policy actions are authoritatively sanctioned by the policy body in question.

INVOCATION/APPLICATION: (aka Implementation/ Enforcement)
Tentatively/definitively applying the sanctioned norms to individual cases, i.e., characterizing concrete situations in terms of the policy prescription.

APPRAISAL: (aka Policy Evaluation) Assessing policy outcomes in terms of policy objectives and assigning formal and effective responsibility for those outcomes.

TERMINATION: Canceling a prescription and dealing with the claims of those who acted in good faith under than prescription, i.e., getting rid of an existing policy.