

EVPP 337- Environmental Policy Making in Developing Countries

Course and Contact Details

Course: EVPP 337-DL, East Africa (DL-Distance Learning)	Instructor: Dr. J. Neil Ransom
Semester: Spring 2021	Email: jransom@gmu.edu
Website (Link to Blackboard Learning Management System): https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu	Virtual Office Hours: M. & W. 9am-11pm or 8-10pm by appointment (email to schedule)

Course Description

The course consists of two main parts.

The first part, Session 1: Basic Concepts, will provide an overview of environmental policy making, climate change, and sustainable development. The course content includes lecture videos, readings, game play, documentaries, discussions, and assignments, which are all posted on the course website.

The second part, Session 2: East Africa, will focus on the key environmental challenges confronting the developing countries in the region including Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Uganda. Each county or pair of countries will focus on a specific environmental issue and related policies including overpopulation and deforestation, wildlife management areas (WMA), regional impacts of climate change, and biomass fuel and indoor air pollution. Students will learn about the environmental policy instruments and the institutions utilized by developing countries in East Africa to solve their environmental problems. Additionally, in the second part of the semester, you will write a multiple draft policy memo on an environmental issue in a low or medium-low-income country of your choice.

Learning Objectives

The course is designed to help students complete the following learning objectives by the end of the semester.

- Understand the basic concepts of environmental policy.
- Explore environmental issues in developing countries.
- Understand environmental policy instruments, institutions, and strategies in developing countries.
- Acquire excellent written communication skills.

Course Delivery

The course will be conducted 100% online. Please make sure your GMU email address is working, as you must use it for all communications with me and between students.

Next, make sure you can log into the GMU Blackboard Learning Management System website. You should be familiar with the skills required to navigate your way through the course no later than the beginning of the second week. Refer to the “Course Website Tutorial” video by clicking on the “Course Orientation” link on the main menu to view an instructor demonstration video that covers the way in which to navigate the course and use various technology tools.

The basic navigation path for the course is as follows.

1. Log into the GMU Blackboard Learning Management System
2. Select the course from the course list
3. Go through the “Main course menu” on the very left of the screen to find important headers and subheaders (e.g., “Welcome-Begin Here,” “Syllabus”) that will lead you to the relevant content

The course menu consists of three content areas:

- a. The “General Overview” contains general course materials (e.g., “Welcome-Begin Here,” “Syllabus,” “Schedule” etc.) right at the top in the “General Course Overview” Section. The link to “Virtual Office Hours” is listed there as well and you will be required during the first week to check in with me via the Virtual Office Hours link at the designated time.
- b. The “Course Content” Section contains links to Session 1 & 2, Writing Center, Discussion Board, and Assignments.
- c. Finally, “User Zone,” contains links to your grades, Blackboard Tools, and Help.

I have designed the schedule based on the time I feel is appropriate for each topic. You will find a lesson overview followed by pre-class readings, lecture videos, and documentaries. Although you’re free to go through the materials and complete the activities in the order of your choice (I would recommend moving in order from top to bottom), please adhere to the due dates for the assignments in the “Schedule” section on the main course menu.

The course is 100% online, and you are likely to have questions regarding the sequencing of activities or usage of numerous technology tools despite the instructions given. Do not hesitate to email me at jransom@gmu.edu for assistance! **Please do not wait until the final weeks of the course to ask for help, as it will greatly impede my ability to assist.**

Course Materials

All the course materials are available on course page on Blackboard. The materials include links to websites, documentaries, lecture videos, online games, and research papers in academic journals. **There is no standard textbook that you are required to purchase for this course.**

Assignments and Grading

There are three types of graded assignments and activities in this course:

1. Discussion posts: At the end of each lesson or reading unit, students will participate in a group discussion on the course Discussion Board in Blackboard. Discussion posts are an opportunity for students to demonstrate their mastery of the course material by linking the current discussion topic to the content and themes from the previous lessons.
2. Policy identification assignment: After completing the policy lesson in Session 1, students must submit a policy identification activity where they read an assigned policy memo and identify and record key information from the memo.
3. Synthesis papers (two total): At the end of the climate change and sustainable development lessons in Session 1, students will demonstrate their mastery of the course material by writing a two-page essay synthesizing the lesson content in relationship to the lesson objectives. Students must include references to the lesson content to receive full marks on their essays.
4. Policy memo (multi draft): The 2,000 to 2,250-word policy memo is the main graded assignment for this course and will help you achieve the 3,500 word-writing requirements for the course- a Global Affairs BS program. The assignments include:
 - Selecting a topic and country for your memo
 - Submitting a policy identification assignment
 - Submitting the first draft for review by the professor
 - Sharing a five-minute video presentation on your topic and peer review of fellow students’ videos
 - A 2,000 to 2,500-word final draft of your policy memo

Your final grade will be assigned as follows:

- Eight to ten discussion board posts + orientation assignments 30%
- Policy identification assignment & two synthesis papers 30%
- One policy memo 40%
 - Includes: Submitting topic (five points), policy identification activity (ten points), 1st draft of the memo (25 points), five-minute video presentation and peer-review (15 points), and a final draft of the policy memo (75 points).

You will find assignment instructions, due dates, and submission requirements at appropriate times throughout the course content. All due dates for major assignments are clearly written in the Course Schedule. **If discrepancies between due dates are found, please defer to the Course Schedule for the actual due date.**

Final Grade Calculation and Grading Scale

Your final grade will be calculated as follows: (total % grade for discussion posts x 30) + (total % policy identification assignments & synthesis paper grades x 30) + (total % policy memo grades x 40) = final grade/100

I will use the following grading scale for determining your final grade.

A	93 - 100%		C+	77 - 79%
A-	90 - 92%		C	73 - 76%
B+	87 - 89%		C-	70 - 72%
B	83 - 86%		D	60 - 69%
B-	80 - 82%		F	<60%

Late/Missed Assignments

Due to the writing-intensive nature of this course, I will enforce a strict late assignment submission policy. You will receive -2% per hour late up to -10% per day late (five hours late and 23.59 hours late both incur a -10% penalty). **However, I will make an exception for students with genuine medical or personal problems ONLY if they contact me no less than 72 hours before the due date.**

General Education Requirements and Learning Outcomes

All undergraduates seeking a baccalaureate degree at George Mason University must complete the University General Education requirements. Additional requirements for specific degree programs are in the [University Catalog](#) in each college or school chapter.

Writing Intensive Course Requirement

As part of the university's commitment to student writers in all undergraduate programs, at least one upper-division course in each major fulfills the "writing intensive" (WI) requirement. While other courses in the major may require written projects, teachers of the designated WI courses will devote class time to instruction on how to complete assignments successfully, assign and grade a minimum of 3500 words, provide constructive feedback on drafts, and allow revision of at least one graded assignment. See the description of each major for the specific course or courses that fulfill the WI requirement.

Required: an approved course in the major

EVPP 337 (Global Affairs)

Source: <http://provost.gmu.edu/gened/general-education-requirements/>

Technological Requirements

Since this course is completely online, you must take particular care to follow instructions to ensure you can access all the course content. You need a relatively stable computer with access to a reliable internet connection as a significant component of the course includes watching documentaries on relevant issues. Second, you must have a good speaker (whether embedded in your laptop/headphone or external) to hear my lecture videos. Third, you will also need a good microphone for me to understand you during an online meeting. And fourth, you need a word processor (Windows, Open office, your choice really) to complete the writing assignments. **All papers must be submitted in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF format through the appropriate submission form on the course Blackboard page.**

Plagiarism Statement

Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or information from another person without giving that person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes; a simple listing of books and articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in an academic setting. Student writers are often confused as to what should be cited. Some think that only direct quotations need to be credited. While direct quotations do need citations, so do paraphrases and summaries of opinions or information formerly unknown to the writers or which the writers did not discover themselves. Exceptions for this include information which can be obtained from a variety of sources, the writers' insights, or findings from their field research, and what has been termed common knowledge. What constitutes common knowledge can sometimes be precarious; what is common knowledge for one audience may not be so for another. In such situations, it is helpful, to keep the reader in mind and to think of citations as being "reader friendly." In other words, writers provide a citation for any piece of information that they think their readers might want to investigate further. Not only is this attitude considerate of readers, but it will also almost certainly ensure that writers will never be guilty of plagiarism. (Statement of English Department at George Mason University)

Plagiarism and the Internet

Copyright rules also apply to users of the Internet who cite from Internet sources. Information and graphics accessed electronically must also be cited, giving credit to the sources. This material includes but is not limited to email (do not cite or forward someone else's e-mail without permission), newsgroup material, information from Web sites, including graphics. Even if you give credit, you must get permission from the source to put any graphic that you did not create on your web page. Shareware graphics are not free. Freeware clipart is available for you to use freely. If the material does not say "free," assume it is not. Putting someone else's Internet material on your web page is stealing intellectual property. Making links to a site is, now, okay, but getting permission is strongly advised since many Web sites have their requirements for linking to their material. ([Virginia Montecino](#))

Source: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>

Honor Code

This course will be conducted by the GMU Honor Code, and all students are expected to abide by it. The GMU Honor Code, as found in the University Catalog, is as follows: To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

(catalog.gmu.edu/content.php?catoid=15&navoid=1039&returnto=search#Honor)

Details concerning the university's Honor System and Code can be found in the University Catalog (accessible online at the link above).

Students with Disabilities

Differently abled students should approach the instructor or the course coordinator through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474.

Where to Get Help: Students encountering difficulties in the course can use either approach the instructor or the Counseling Center at (703) 993-2380

Tentative schedule

A detailed schedule can be found on the "Schedule / Calendar" tab of the Blackboard course. You can also download a printable version there as well.