The Economics of Environmental Policy
EVPP 338
3 credits
Spring Semester, 2020

Source: *The Economist*.

INSTRUCTOR: Diego Valderrama.
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CLASSROOM: Innovation Hall 316.

CLASS MEETINGS: Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:00 PM to 1:15 PM.

OFFICE HOURS: Fridays, 2 to 4 PM, or by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to introduce non-economists to the economics of the environment and natural resource use. We will cover the topics of external costs and benefits, public goods, sustainability, natural resource management, non-market valuation, and behavioral economics and the environment. Topics will be presented in the context of specific applications and policies. Course meetings will be divided into lecture and discussion components, with the discussion following the lecture and providing a chance to examine examples and applications of material covered in the lecture.

TEXTBOOK: *Economics and the Environment*, *Eight Edition*. 2017. Eban Goodstein (Bard College) and Stephen Polasky (University of Minnesota). Wiley, Hoboken, NJ.

PREREQUISITES: Basic algebra skills.

COURSE GRADING: Grades in this course will be determined by the results of three lecture exams, iClicker quizzes, and class attendance as measured by iClicker participation quizzes. Weighting of these activities will be as follows:

Exam 1	25%
Exam 2	25%
Final Exam	25%
Average score of iClicker performance quizzes*	15%
Average score of iClicker participation quizzes**	10%
TOTAL	100%

* Highest 6 out of 8; two lowest scores dropped.
** Random questions asked during lectures.

Final scores in the course will be calculated based on the percentage grade earned on each of the course activities listed above, multiplied by the weighting listed for each activity. Letter grades will be assigned based on the final course scores as follows:

- A+ = 97-100%
- A = 93 - 96%
- A- = 90 - 92%
- B+ = 87 - 89%
- B = 83 - 86%
- B- = 80 - 82%
- C+ = 77 - 79%
- C = 73 - 76%
- C- = 70 - 72%
- D = 60 - 69%
- F = 0 - 59%

PLEASE NOTE THAT I DO NOT ROUND UP. FOR EXAMPLE, AN 89.99 IS A B+ AND IT WILL NOT BE ROUNDED UP TO AN A-.

***iClicker quizzes*:** Eight iClicker quizzes will be given throughout the semester. They will cover previously covered information to make sure students are up to date with course materials. The two lowest iClicker quiz grades will be dropped per student; therefore, **no make-up quizzes** will be allowed. Any missed iClicker quiz will be scored a "zero". The average score of the iClicker quizzes will be worth 15% of the final grade.

iClicker participation questions: These questions will be asked during lectures at random moments, and students will respond by using their iClickers. Grading will be based on participation only, not on the correctness of answers***. Thus, the more students attend class, the more they help their grade and vice versa.*** The total participation in these questions will be worth 10% of the final grade.

IMPORTANT: ***All students are required to have an iClicker remote device (not the phone app) to participate in iClicker quizzes and participation questions.*** The phone app is not reliable because it generates recording errors up to 25%, whereas the iClicker remote devices typically show 0% recording errors. Students must click on "Tools" in the course menu in Blackboard to register their iClicker within the first two weeks of the semester.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: GMU students, faculty and staff are bound by the GMU Honor Code. Adherence to the GMU Honor Code is expected of all students, specifically:

Members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

In all assignments and communications, plagiarism will not be tolerated. This applies equally to oral and written communications in the context of any evaluated (graded) course assignments. As stated in the Honor Code, infractions may result in invalidated credit for dishonorable work and lowered grade, including failure from the class, suspension or dismissal. Inquiries for clarification from the professor are welcome. For more information see the complete Honor Code in the university catalog.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES: If you have a documented learning disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with the Office of Disability Services (SUB I, Rm. 4205; 993-2474; http://ds.gmu.edu) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) give copies of your disability documentation to your instructors so we may discuss your accommodation needs.

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION: Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. I will not respond to messages sent from or send messages to a non-Mason email address.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT: George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth. An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected.

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE: Subject to changes.

Week	Date	Topic	*Economics and the Environment* Textbook
1	1/22	Course overview, Four Economic Questions about Climate Change	Ch 1
2	1/27	Ethics and Economics, Pollution and Resource Degradation as Externalities	Ch 2, 3
	1/29	The Efficiency Standard	Ch 4
3	2/3, 2/5	Measuring the Benefits of Environmental Protection	Ch 5
4	2/10	Measuring the Costs of Environmental Protection	Ch 6
	2/12	The Safety Standard	Ch 7
5	2/17	The Sustainability Standard	Ch 8
	2/19	Problem-Solving Session	
6	2/24	**EXAM 1**	
	2/26	Measuring Sustainability	Ch 9
7	3/2, 3/4	Natural Resources and Ecosystem Services	Ch 10
8	3/9, 3/11	**SPRING BREAK (NO CLASSES)**	
9	3/16, 3/18	**INSTRUCTOR'S FIELD TRIP (NO CLASSES)**	
10	3/23	Is More Really Better? Consumption, Welfare, and Behavior	Ch 11
	3/25	The Political Economy of Environmental Regulation	Ch 12
11	3/30	An Overview of Environmental Legislation / The Regulatory Record: Achievements and Obstacles	Ch 13, 14
	4/1	Problem-Solving Session	
12	4/6	**EXAM 2**	
	4/8	Incentive-Based Regulation: Theory	Ch 15
13	4/13, 4/15	Incentive-Based Regulation: Practice	Ch 16
14	4/20	Promoting Clean Technology: Theory	Ch 17
	4/22	Energy Policy and the Future	Ch 18
15	4/27	Poverty, Population and the Environment / Environmental Policy in Low-Income Countries	Ch 19, 20
	4/29	The Economics of Global Agreements	Ch 21
16	5/4	Problem-Solving Session	
17	5/11	**FINAL EXAM, 10:30 AM – 1:15 PM!**	