In the 1970s, our country and its leaders came together, with broad public support, to enact some of the most progressive and sweeping environmental policies in the world. Five decades later, the environment and natural resources represent a visible and, at times, a controversial component of U.S. public policy in the U.S. We have never been more divided on environmental policies than we are today. How did we arrive at this point? Where do we go from here? Can we return to a time of broad public and political consensus on environmental issues? To answer these questions, we need to take a step back and examine our country’s history as it relates to the environment and natural resources.

The purpose of this course is to evaluate our past historical relationship with the environment and natural resources, so we can develop more effective policies today and in the future. This course examines our country’s history from its earliest settlers to the present. The course will analyze the subject through multiple lenses, such as religion, geography, economics, science, infrastructure, technology, laws, gender, society, politics, and culture. Each of these topics offers a window into understanding environmental policy.

This course utilizes “authentic assessments” which refers to activities that provide realistic opportunities to make decisions, judgments, and innovations. Students will “do” environmental policy through simulated workplace exercises.