

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC POLICY
EVPP 641, Spring 2022

Place and time: Wednesdays 4:30-7:10 pm ONLINE (distance learning)
Instructor: Chris Kennedy, ckenned7@gmu.edu
Course website: Blackboard: log in at <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu>
Office hours: David King 3049 (Fairfax Campus), Wednesdays 1:15-3pm or by appointment (Fairfax or Arlington). In either case, please email first.

Required texts

1. Vig & Kraft. 2021. Environmental Policy: New Directions for the Twenty-First Century, Eleventh Edition.

Recommended texts

2. Weimer, D., and Vining, A. 2017. *Policy Analysis*, 6th edition. Longman.

Course description

Environmental Science and Public Policy is a graduate level introduction to broad aspects of (anthropocentric) environmental issues. The academic approach to this information is intended to be that of an environmental professional rather than that of an advocate or activist. The central focus of the course is an inquiry into the influence of human activities on the environment (and vice versa) and the methodologies we use to understand those effects. We consider topics as diverse as global population, wastewater treatment, environmental law, and genetic engineering, among others. As a class, we will attempt to rank order some of the threats posed by various environmental problems. However, a major goal of the course is for each student, individually, to develop their own understanding of these issues.

It is anticipated that successful students will also have achieved a level of professionalism in environmental science and environmental public policy issues such that they are confident of their own ability to investigate, understand, and critically evaluate the range of environmental issues. They will be conversant with a broad range of issues and, through their research paper, they should be relatively expert in at least one specific area of the environment.

This course does not require a prior high-level understanding of environmental science or policy.

Grading

Class participation:	10%
Class presentation on weekly topic:	15%
Midterm exam:	25%
Research Paper:	50%

Letter grade categories (no rounding): A+ 98-100; A 93-97; A- 90-92; B+ 88-89; B 83-87; B- 80-82; C 70-79; D 65-69; F <65.

Grading category details

Participation includes regular attendance and active participation. Simply showing up will not guarantee full marks; you are expected to read assigned readings and constructively contribute to class discussions. Each student will be required to **present a scientific paper** focused on a weekly topic. The **midterm exam** will be take-home and consist of questions based on topics and methods discussed in class. Additional details will be provided as the exam date nears. Finally, each student will be required to complete a research paper. Additional details will be provided during our first class.

Disability accommodations

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474, <http://ods.gmu.edu>. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS.

Academic integrity

I expect each student to submit his or her own work, and provide attribution for any sources used. Please make yourself familiar with the GMU Honor Code: <http://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/>. Be advised that matters related to plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are taken very seriously. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your work or the work of others, please see me. Remember: rewriting what others have already written is plagiarism. From the honor code: “[Plagiarism includes:] Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgment.” If you do not understand a topic, come and see me. We will both be much happier with the result.

Diversity

George Mason University celebrates a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion. Please see the Mason Diversity statement <http://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/professional-development/mason-diversity-statement>. I expect students to engage with others in a respectful manner and refrain from personal attacks. I fully expect there to be differing views on a variety of topics relevant to course topics, and all of you should be comfortable expressing your perspectives, and open to having those perspectives challenged in a respectful way. I will quote from Clark Kerr in 1961, who was president of the UC system at the time: “The University is not engaged in making ideas safe for students. It is engaged in making students safe for ideas. Thus it permits the freest expression of views before students, trusting to their good sense in passing judgment on these views. Only in this way can it best serve American democracy.”

Course schedule

Please check Blackboard frequently for additional material.

Week	Dates	Topic	Due
1	1/26	Introductions. Overview of class	–
2	2/2	Global issues	Readings: Global Issues folder; VK 14
3	2/9		
4	2/16	Environmental Law 1	Readings: Law folder; VK 1-3
5	2/23	Environmental Law 2	Readings: Law folder; VK 4-7
6	3/2	Environmental Economics	Readings: Econ Paper topic due
7	3/9	Environmental Toxicology	Readings: Toxicology Bibliography file due Midterm exam posted after class
-	3/16	NO CLASS	
8	3/23	Urban air quality issues; criteria air pollutants	Midterm exam due 11:59 pm Readings: Air
9	3/30	Water quality issues; criteria and emerging pollutants	TBD
10	4/6	Climate change science and policy	TBD
11	4/13	The precautionary principle and uncertainty	TBD
12	4/20	Environmental psychology and behavior change	TBD
13	4/27	Conflict and the environment	Readings: Conflict
14	5/4	Emerging environmental issues (LAST CLASS)	TBD
15	5/13	Complete and submit research paper	Paper due 7:15 pm