

POLITICAL SCIENCE 395
ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC POLICY
Jim Carter, Spring 2008

Textbooks: Layzar, Judith, The Environmental Case, 2nd edition

INTRODUCTION:

To “think globally and act locally” is one of the most ubiquitous slogans of the environmental movement. So popular in fact that even private sector corporations have used it for their own interest.

In this course we are going to take the suggestion seriously, modifying it to reflect, however, a more complete and appropriate scaling.

Environmental public policy is a broad area of concern that affects and influences government expenditures and practices within every agency and department of the government as well as having an effect on most private sector activities.

Environmental public policy ranges from the protection of endangered species to air and water pollution to population control to deforestation to global warming to acid rain to nuclear waste to the handling and treatment of household solid waste to the enjoyment of recreational and quality of life opportunities to the practice of home heating and cooling to the daily use of your automobile to your assurance of food safety, etc.....

What is a public policy? How does a public policy differ from a private policy? How are public policies made? Who makes them? What is the role of the national, state and local government in environmental policymaking? What are the agencies and institutions of national, state and local government that have primary responsibility for environmental public policymaking and what are their public policy “missions” as defined by law and practice? What are the most significant environmental public policies? How does one determine the significance of a public policy? How do we evaluate the costs of environmental public policies in relation to their benefits? How do we accurately and fairly measure the benefits and/or costs of environmental public policies? Under what conditions are current public policies likely to be maintained, modified, or abandoned? What values are enhanced or neglected by particular public policies? Who implements public policies and what difference does that make?

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course students will be offered the opportunity to develop intellectual skills and practices that will make it possible for them (1) to understand the current practices and procedures of U.S. environmental public policy-making, (2) to analyze and evaluate the environmental public policy making process itself at all levels of American government, (3) to analyze and evaluate the status of current environmental policy and practices in the U.S., as well as specific environmental policies, (4) to consider alternatives to current environmental policies, (5) to identify the actions necessary for maintaining or modifying existing environmental policies or creating new ones, and (5) to participate as an active and informed citizen in environmental policymaking.

COURSE GRADE AND COURSE WORK:

TESTS:

The grade in this course will be determined by scores on three tests and two research projects.

Each test will be worth 25% of the course grade. Each test will probably be a combination of essay and multiple-choice. Cumulatively the scores on the tests will equal to 75% of the grade in the course.

RESEARCH PROJECT:

Each student will choose one of the areas of environmental policy covered in the various textbook chapters and also listed on the syllabus. The student will provide two research projects based on a survey and analysis of the policy area chosen.

The two projects resulting from this work will be:

1. A direct and critical analysis of an official statement of a public policy that addresses some facet of the particular policy area chosen for study. In other words, if you choose public land management as your area of interest you might choose a public policy related to stream protection, forestry practices, recreational activities on public lands, endangered species, habitat protection, etc. to look at in particular. Remember, a public policy can appear in several forms. It may be a law, an executive order, a judicial decision, a bureaucratic rule, etc.

The final result of this work will be a typed, double-paced four page summary description, analysis, evaluation, and critique of the policy as it appears in its official statement.

2. The second project will consist of the identification of the sub-government that has jurisdiction over the policy. This will include the actual human beings that have legislative and executive authority for making and implementing the public policy, as well as those who attempt to participate with and influence the "policy makers" on a regular basis (lobbyists, interest groups).

These two projects together will constitute 25% of the grade in the course.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: See Academic policy Statement 800401. Any attendance policy in this class will be in accordance with that statement.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: See Academic Policy Statement 810213. Any actions taken with regard to academic dishonesty in this course will be in accordance with that statement.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT: SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. Note: no accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS AND HOLY DAYS: See University Policy 8161001. Any needs related to students religious requirements will be considered within the requirements of that statement.

INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION: Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT: The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link: <https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>.

Any actions taken with regard to student conduct will be in accordance with that statement of policy.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF COURSE WORK AND READINGS:

1. Introduction to the Study of Public Policy
Layzer, Ch. 1
2. Models of Public Policy; Intro. to Clean Air and Water
Layzer, Ch. 2
3. Subgovernments; Intro. to Hazardous and Toxic Waste
Layzer, Ch. 3-4
4. Environmental Justice
Layzer, Ch. 5
5. Introduction to Public Land Management; ANWR
Layzer, Ch. 6
6. Grazing Policy
Layzer, Ch. 7
7. Forestry
Layzer, Ch. 8
8. National Parks and Recreation Policy
Layzer, Ch. 9
9. Fisheries
Layzer, Ch. 10
10. Climate Change
Layzer, Ch. 11
11. Trade v. Environment

Layzer, Ch. 12

12. Backlash
Layzer, Ch. 13
13. Market Based
Layzer, Ch. 14
14. Ecosystems
Layzer, Ch. 15
15. Local Environments and Sprawl
Layzer, Ch. 16