

EES 489
Critical Issues In Environmental Policy
Fall 2006

Time: Thursdays – 12:30 to 3:15

Location: 101 C Deering

Instructor: Mark W. Anderson, Senior Instructor in Resource Economics and Policy;
Coordinator, Ecology and Environmental Sciences Program

Office: 305 Winslow Hall

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 8:00 to noon. Other times as available.

Course Purpose: This course, when coupled with EES 400, serves as the capstone course for Ecology and Environmental Sciences majors. The course is designed for students to demonstrate mastery of core skills from the program, including awareness of contemporary resource and environmental issues, critical thinking skills, and written and oral communications skills. In addition, a central goal of the course is to help you develop team building, group work, and peer evaluation skills, all of which are essential in environmental careers.

Text: Walter E. Oates, Ed. 2006. The RFF Reader in Environmental and Resource Policy. Washington, D.C.: RFF Press.

Grading: Letter grades (no +/- grades) will be assigned on roughly the following proportions:

-class participation	15%
-short writing assignments (including policy critique)	15%
-group project – group grade	35%
-group project – peer assessment grade	35%

- **Class Participation:** Each class session will include a class discussion of an assigned reading from the Cohen book. You should come to class having carefully read the assigned reading so that you are able to discuss, debate, and address the ideas in the text. Emphasis will be placed on relating these texts to materials from the EES curriculum and other courses you have taken. At the end of this syllabus is a participation rubric which I will use to assess your class participation. (That is, attendance is necessary but not sufficient for

participation.)

Additionally, groups will make weekly presentations on group progress. Participation includes active comment on and critique of group presentations.

Short Writing Assignments: Each week there is a reading assignment from the Oates text on environmental policy. For each reading assignment you will write a one to two page response. These are due at the beginning of each class. In these responses I expect you to relate the reading to other concepts and facts you have mastered in your academic career. These are essentially partial critiques of the reading based on what you have learned in your time at UMaine.

Group Project: On the first day of class you will be divided into small groups (project teams) to work on the development of policy paper. The policy paper will be a comprehensive position paper on a natural resource or environmental topic of interest to your group. The policy can be of local, state, national, or global perspective. You will prepare the paper as a recommendation for the adoption of a policy perspective as if it is to be given to a decision maker (government executive, legislator, organization board of directors, etc.).

Your group's policy position paper should include at a minimum the following elements (although not necessarily in this order or in this format):

- executive summary
- description of the policy issue area
- scientific background of the issue
- economic issues
- political issues
- alternative policy approaches
- recommended policy for adoption
- source materials

The product of your group's work will be a detailed position paper (typically 40 - 80 pages in length) and a formal presentation at the end of the semester. Examples of these project reports from 2003, 2004, and 2005 are on file on the bookcase in my outer office in 305 Winslow Hall. Each group is expected to present weekly written and oral updates on their progress. The rest of the class should be involved with critical commentary to assist the group in its efforts.

Each group's work will be evaluated on the quality of the position paper, the quality of the formal presentation, adherence to the schedule, and the effectiveness of your team work. In addition, within each group you will complete a self-evaluation and a confidential evaluation of the contributions of each of your team members to the overall work of the group. Part of your grade for the group project will be based on the evaluations by your group peers.

Late Work Policy: Short papers and group work are due on the date that is specified, either in the syllabus or on the paper assignments. Work not received on the date and time specified in the assignment will be considered one day late. Work received 24 hours after that will be considered two days late, and so on. For every day late, work will be assessed a one letter grade penalty off the grade the work earns before any penalty is assessed.

Course Expectations: What you can expect from me:

- ◆ that the requirements of the course are made clear;
- ◆ that I have thought about how what I ask you to read fits with what we do in class;
- ◆ that I will design course work that fairly evaluates whether you have learned and can apply the material from the course;
- ◆ to answer your questions in class and to be available outside of class as much as you need to meet your learning objectives;
- ◆ to offer course materials in ways accessible to students with various learning styles.

What I expect from you:

- ◆ that you will become familiar with the syllabus and take responsibility for knowing what you need to do in this class and when;
- ◆ that you will attend class;
- ◆ to read assignments before class sessions, to take good and sufficient class notes, and to relate your class notes to the reading assignments;
- ◆ to come to class prepared to discuss the reading assignments and to place them in the context of the material developed earlier in the semester. Attendance is necessary, but not sufficient, to meet the participation requirement of this course.
- ◆ to invest sufficient time throughout the semester to meet your learning objectives — the course is designed such that the average students will need to

spend six to nine hours outside of class each week to learn the material

Class Attendance Policy: You are expected to attend all class sessions and to be prepared to discuss the assigned readings for the day.

Class Assignments:

Class	Group Work	Reading Chapters
September 7	Organization	--
September 14	Topic Presentation Formal Project Proposal Due	
September 21	Team Organization Project Plan of Work Due	Chapters 1 & 2
September 28	Update	Chapters 5 & 6
October 5	Update	Chapters 9 & 11
October 12	Update Written Group Progress Report Due	Chapters 14 & 15
October 19	Update	Chapter 21
October 26	Update	Chapter 23
November 2	Update	Chapter 25
November 9	Update	Chapter 26 & 27
November 16	Update	Chapter 31 & 32
Monday, November 20 at noon	--	Draft Policy Paper Due
November 30	Update	Chapter 36 & 37
Monday, December 4 at noon	--	Individual Policy Critiques Due

December 7

Update

Chapters 41 & 42

December 14

Update

December 22

Final Position Papers and Peer Assessments Due

Oral presentations on policy papers will be scheduled during finals week.

Rubrics I will use to evaluate course work:

Paper grading rubric:

Category	Superior	Good	Adequate	Inadequate
Organization: How clear and logical was the structure of the paper?	4	3	2	1
Source Materials: Were sources credible, current, and complete? (beyond Google?)	4	3	2	1
Academic Integrity: How thoroughly were source materials cited?	4	3	2	1
Citation/References: How well was the style guide followed?	4	3	2	1
Argument: Were conclusions supported by fact and logic presented in the paper?	4	3	2	1
Application: How well were relevant theory and knowledge in the discipline applied?	4	3	2	1
Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation	4	3	2	1
Style	4	3	2	1

Paper Grade: _____

Comments:

Participation grading rubric:

Category	Superior	Good	Adequate	Inadequate
Arrives fully prepared -- has read and thought about assignments	4	3	2	1
Actively supports, engages, and listens to peers	4	3	2	1
Plays an active role in discussions	4	3	2	1
Comments advance the level and depth of the dialogue	4	3	2	1
Group dynamic and level of discussion are better because of student's presence	4	3	2	1
Comments are respectful of the ideas of others	4	3	2	1
Comments draw on materials beyond those assigned	4	3	2	1
Comments demonstrate increasing mastery of key concepts over course of semester	4	3	2	1

Participation Grade: _____

Comments:

Presentation grading rubric:

Category	Superior	Good	Adequate	Inadequate
Organization: How clear and logical was the structure of the presentation?	4	3	2	1
Materials: How appropriate to the subject matter were AV materials and technology used?	4	3	2	1
Academic Integrity: How thoroughly were source materials cited?	4	3	2	1
Argument: Were conclusions supported by fact and logic	4	3	2	1

presented in the presentation?				
Clarity and flow: Did the presentation flow in an understandable manner?	4	3	2	1
Professionalism: Was the appearance and demeanor of the presenter(s) professional?	4	3	2	1
Timing: Was presentation completed in assigned time?	4	3	2	1
In the end, did the presentation answer the “so what” question?	4	3	2	1

Presentation grade: _____