UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
Department of Political Science
Summer, 2007

POSC 436 Environmental Politics

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Course Objectives:

This course is designed to provide students with the basic tools to better formulate and articulate positions that drive environmental policies. We will work together to understand commonly used policy approaches for addressing environmental concerns. The course will introduce students to a number of environmental issues and discuss ways these issues can be assessed and addressed. We will explore the role of government in regulating the environmental and the roles of industry and individuals in protecting the environment. We will also discuss how to value the costs and benefits of environmental policies, examine economic issues, relate environmental considerations to energy issues and discuss equity issues as they relate to the environment. We will consider in particular the role of risk and uncertainty in policy-making decisions.

In the course we will utilize several key case studies in applying policy analysis tools for understanding how to reduce the impact of environmental problems. We will look at ground level ozone impacts in three places: Southern California, the San Joaquin valley, and Sequoia National Park. We will look at climate change issues and possible options of US policy with or without the Kyoto Protocol.

Course Requirements

Participation in discussions will be an important part of each class. Reading material in advance is required so that students can participate effectively in class discussions. Each student will be required to review and analyze one reading assignment and be prepared to discuss it in class. This assignment, combined with the quantity and quality of class participation throughout the semester will contribute a total of *25% toward the final grade*.

There will be 4 written assignments.

1) **Pollution Trends**: Pick a city or region and provide a 2-page overview of pollution trends. Has the situation been getting better or worse? *Portion of total grade: 15%*
2) **Project topic and description**: Choose a topic and submit a one-page description of proposed group project. *Portion of total grade: 15%*
3) **Costs and Benefits**: A 3-5 page literature review of the costs and benefits of your environmental issue. *Portion of total grade: 15%*
4) **Decision Memo to President or California Governor**: 5-8 page memo to the President or Governor laying out arguments related to your issue taking two positions – one from the perspective of the Council of Economic Advisors and one from the Council on Environmental Quality. *Portion of total grade: 30%*

Reading Materials

Texts:
Portnoy and Stavins, Public Policies for Environmental Protection

Rosenbaum, Environmental Politics and Policy

Lempert, Popper and Bankes, Shaping the Next One Hundred Years: New Methods for Quantitative, Long-Term Policy Analysis (free download from www.rand.org)

Other reading materials will be provided

Disability Services

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open early 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Schedule of Topics — Readings

1: Introduction, Background and Overview
- Roles of Business, Government and Nonprofits — *Portnoy Chps 1 & 2*
- History of environmental protection — *Rosenbaum Chp 1*
- Basic Principles
- Pollution control vs. pollution prevention

2 and 3: Overview of Environmental Economics
- Costs & Benefits: How well have we done in the past? — *Rosenbaum pp. 154-167*
- Measuring the costs — *Supplementary Readings*
- Valuing the benefits
- Deciding how much to protect the environment and
- What the Supreme Court said about cost-benefit analysis

4: Policy Instruments
- Regulatory options: command-control and market-based — *Portnoy Chp 3*
- Technology innovation and R&D — *Rosenbaum Chps 3 & 5*
- Other policy options
- Accommodating multiple policy objectives: environmental, economy, energy & equity

5: 2008: Candidate Positions, Politics and Policy

Rosenbaum Chp 2

6: Ground-Level ozone

What is it?
Why is it difficult? *Rosenbaum Chp 6*
What is its impact? *Portnoy Chp 4*

Ozone in Southern California
The dairy debate in San Joaquin Valley
How do we protect Sequoia National Park?

7: Environment and the economy

Relationship between environmental and economic growth *Supplementary Readings*
Environment and jobs
Kuznets curves and other relationships

8: Decision-making under uncertainty

Scenario analysis *Lempert Chps 1,2,3 & 4*
Assumption –based planning
Risks and exploratory analysis
Exploring the future

9 and 10: Climate Change

What why and what's happening today? *Portnoy Chp 5*
Kyoto and the COP process *Rosenbaum Chp 10*
The US Position (or lack thereof)
Position of the States – leading the way?
Role of industry and the climate exchange

11 and 12: Energy

Role of energy in the environment *Rosenbaum Chp 8*
Linking energy and environmental policy *Vig & Kraft Chp 3*
Energy security?
Fossil fuels
Renewable fuels
Energy efficiency

13: Oil, Politics and Drilling in ANWR

Oil issues – current and future *Rosenbaum Chp 9*
Policy and Politics
Debate over drilling in the Artic

14: Equity

Environmental justice *Rosenbaum Chp 4*
Intergeneration considerations
Developmental equity

Weeks 15: Final project presentations