

Environmental Policy

CIRP 5342/URPA 5317, Syllabus (version 1.0)

Richard Greene, Adjunct Professor, UT Arlington School of Urban & Public Affairs

E-mail	rgreene@uta.edu
Office	525 University Hall
Mobile phone	214-923-1961 (primary)
Office phone	817-272-2336
Office hours	As posted during the semester and by appointment

Course description

My approach to teaching Environmental Policy is centered around the reality that environmental initiatives by local government units, especially cities and counties, is perhaps the fastest growing area of the public sector in urban communities. From my experience as Regional Administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency, I can confirm that the federal government and the states are focusing on the development of partnerships with local government to achieve the objectives of protecting human health and the environment.

Thus, understanding the processes of policy formation and execution is vital to the management of urban life. As a former mayor of Arlington, I can also attest to the value of understanding how environmental policy can be implemented to best serve the public interests. From the essential and traditional work of improving the quality of our air, water and land resources to the challenges in the era of climate change, there has never been more demand and need for local government officials to prepare to meet those challenges.

I will relate theory to the actual practice of developing and implementing urban environmental policy and how the execution of environmental management systems practiced by local governments is connected to state and federal law, rules and regulations. We will also examine the collaboration among the government bodies, environmental interest groups, and corporate entities.

Importance of this course

The impact on the lives of the American people as a result of the formation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency in 1970, the new laws and attendant regulations that accompanied its creation, and subsequent expansion of those activities since, cannot be overstated. The way we live today has been significantly changed, the health and life span of the country's population has been greatly improved, new industries and economic opportunity have been launched and the very essence of the practice of American democracy is itself a remarkable case study of how our system of government works. We have recently entered an era where even more dramatic change is proposed by the legislative and executive branches of the federal government. Those proposals will be tested in the third branch (the judiciary) and final outcomes of all this may take decades to conclude. An understanding of how all of this has unfolded and what we may expect in the future is what we will attempt to know and understand. Taken all together the result is the very definition of environmental policy, its continued development and an understanding of how it stands today in our society.

Expected learning outcomes

At the conclusion of the course, you should be able to:

- Demonstrate a broad understanding of the role of the contemporary city in creating – and solving – environmental problems and the major challenges confronting urban environmental policy makers.
- Identify and summarize the major historical, political, legal, and social trajectories of contemporary environmental policy.
- Identify and summarize basic positions staked out by opposing parties in a wide range of environmental policy debates affecting urban areas.
- Identify some of the major challenges confronting environmental policy makers and how these challenges have shaped the landscape of environmental policy.
- Explain how basic obstacles to effective policy making are manifested in environmental policy making and how policy makers and interest groups have responded to these obstacles.
- Explain why and how environmental policy debates are rife with conflict between explicit or tacit assumptions about environmental uncertainty and “progress” and about the appropriate policy making roles of science, experts, corporations, and the lay public.
- Apply this knowledge by appraising specific environmental policy issues.

Grading

Evaluation will be based on:

Attendance, in-class participation (includes oral presentations)	25%
Mid-term exam	25%
Written assignments (5% mid term; 20% final)	25%
Final exam	25%

Attendance and in-class participation: This seminar course will revolve around in-class discussion. Students will be expected to attend all classes, read all assigned materials, and actively engage in discussion. *Note:* Students who wish to take notes during class time are welcome to do so and you may use your laptop computer for this purpose but for this purpose only. Surfing web sites or any other activity on the laptop is not permitted during class. No other electronic devices should be active during class time. Such activity is distracting to other students and I need your full attention if we are to accomplish the objectives and learning outcomes described above. I will know it if these guidelines are not followed and deductions will be made to this portion of your grade calculation.

Class research project – All students will participate in an ongoing, joint assessment project on “campus greening” activities and opportunities at UTA. Begin here: www.uta.edu/sustainability. A two-three page written report and in-class oral reports and discussion will provide an opportunity for evaluation of how this assignment was accomplished. The purpose of this assignment is two fold. First, UT Arlington students, especially those in the areas of local government and science studies, should have a

working knowledge of the sustainability initiatives of the university, the role of such initiatives in pursuing Tier One status, and the impact on the broader community of sustainability research and practice. Second, it offers an opportunity to consider the question of whether local environmental policy, ordinance and regulation could emerge from the university's sustainability initiatives. I will provide more specific instruction for this project. The written report is due on the day of the mid-term exam. Notes B-F (below).

Final paper/oral report – A five to six page paper on how environmental policy is being implemented through adopted environmental management systems in a city chosen by the student. Selection of the city should be accomplished by October 25 and the paper is due on the date of the final exam, December 13. See Important Notes B-F (below). Oral reports of the findings of this project will be presented during the class meetings on November 29 and December 6. Each student will have 15 minutes to describe the outcome of their study and evaluation of the city chosen for this project.

Texts

While I have not required that you purchase it for this class, I strongly recommend that you acquire a recently released best seller that is the most current and comprehensive presentation of the critical issues shaping the future of environmental protection practices in our country and throughout the world. The author, a three-time Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, recently appeared as a guest lecturer in a packed house at Texas Hall. My objective in recommending this book is to connect students with the “hottest topic” in current debate of environmental issues ultimately leading to the development of public policy, law and regulation. I will refer to the material in the book throughout the semester and may make assignments to review sections of the book for class discussion. The book is available for purchase at the UTA Bookstore, local bookstores and on line:

Thomas L. Friedman, *Hot, Flat and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution – and How it Can Renew America*: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2008 [ISBN 9780374166854]

Weekly presentations of the course topics

Each class session will be conducted with a visual presentation and will include the distribution of materials of printed and electronic media. Taken together, these materials will form the compendium of texts and serve as the database for study in the preparation for the mid-term and final examinations.

Various additional publications and materials I will distribute to students

We will make frequent use of case studies and analytical material. I will identify which study will be assigned for any upcoming week's class. Students should be diligent in reading and comprehending these cases as they represent the outcomes of the development of environmental policy and regulatory activities measured in terms of environmental benefit, cost savings (if any), and the resulting improvement in the quality of life for the people of the communities where the work has taken place. Students should be prepared to engage in discussion as part of in-class participation.

Other useful and recommended books

Gene Desfor and Roger Keil, *Nature and the City: Making Environmental Policy in Toronto and Los Angeles*, Tucson: University of Arizona, 2004 [ISBN 0816523738; the UTA library should have the volume.]

Thomas A. Easton, *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on Controversial Environmental Issues*, Guilford, CT: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin, 2006, 11th edition expanded. [ISBN 0073051403; UTA = GE170 .T35 2006; two copies at the library]

Charles E. Lindblom and E. J. Woodhouse, *The Policy-Making Process*, 3rd edition, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1993. [ISBN 0136823602; UTA = JK271.L52 1993; one copy at the library]

Norman J. Vig and Michael E. Kraft, eds., *Environmental Policy: New Directions for the Twenty-First Century*. 6th edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2005 [ISBN 1933116013; UTA = GE180 .E586 2006; at the library]

Worldwatch Institute, *State of the World 2007: Our Urban Future*, New York, Norton, 2007 [ISBN 9780393329320; UTA = RA566.7 .S73 2007; at the library; also available as downloadable PDF that includes features (e.g., satellite photos) not in the printed text: worldwatch.org/taxonomy/term/467]

Course schedule – key dates

Week 1	Introduction and overview – some definitions of “public policy”, background, history and examination of how environmental protection works, and the process of developing environmental public policy.
Week 8	Mid term examination (may occur a week earlier or later) mid term paper due
Week 14	Oral reports
Week 15	Oral reports
Week 16	Final class, final examination, final paper due

Course topics

I intend to address these kind of topics and others that are relevant to the objectives of this course from week to week, not necessarily in the order listed here - subject to revision, modification, overlapping, deletion and changes that will occur during the semester:

- The US takes on burgeoning environmental problems with the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency in 1970 through the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and Superfund (to deal with the land). Centerpiece of these new laws is Federalism – the States have primacy in enforcement and administration; setting up critical roles, responsibilities, and opportunities for cities.
- Local policy making linked to state, federal jurisdictions; I will present case study in how local government initiatives provided roadmap to successful development of federal mandate for clean air plan.

- The role of the states – critical to the participation of urban communities. We'll examine the structure, responsibilities, and work of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, who runs it, how the leaders are selected, policy, politics, and results.
- The role of regional and county government organizations. We'll examine the structure, responsibilities, and work of the Environmental Division of the North Central Texas Council of Governments – the gateway to cities' funding, participation, and leadership.
- Brownfields – turning contaminated property into economic opportunity. We'll see how this program works, look at several case studies, including the Victory project (American Airlines Arena, office towers, hotels, condominiums, etc.) in downtown Dallas – one of the most successful Brownfields projects in the country.
- The kinds of initiatives that are working in cities – green building ordinances, environmental management systems for public facilities, energy star, reduction of heat islands, low-impact development, reduction in air emissions, improvement of water and land quality, energy efficiency, recycling, water conservation, preservation of landfill space, etc.
- How environmental groups impact environmental protection law, policy, practice and implementation – from the extreme to the collaborative. We will look at the operations and roles of several national and Texas based environmental organizations and their special interests and focus.
- The impact of environmental law on economic development, jobs, and financial conditions in cities. This topic will take a look at how business and industry deals with government regulation. We will examine how long it takes move from operations and practices that pollute to means and methods of production that can be designed, converted, and re-tooled to achieve desirable environmental outcomes.
- How voluntary programs such as EPA's Performance Track, TCEQ's Clean Cities Texas, Blue Skyways, Sustainable Skylines, etc., are being carried out in local communities, urban centers, and across multi-county regional areas.
- Climate change, global warming, and reduction of greenhouse gasses. Is it possible to sort out all the issues in this national debate? What are the implications for cities if the federal government aggressively pursues GHG emission reductions? The answer lies in understanding where all the sources are in the urban setting.
- The role of cities in dealing with the environmental and human health impacts of natural disasters. We will look at preparations, training, exercises and coordination with state and federal officials in dealing with, responding to, and recovering from floods, tornadoes, wild fires, earthquakes, hurricanes, and droughts. Case studies abound, the most dramatic is the multi-state, multi-city devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.
- Why is all this so controversial? The development and implementation of environmental policy, law and regulation involves all three branches of the federal government. It takes a long time to get new measures implemented. The complexity and confusion involved makes it difficult for ordinary citizens to understand. We'll try to determine how to work this all out and, it will ultimately happen at the local level,

if it happens at all – beginning with who is elected, how politicians reach compromise, and what results are ultimately produced.

- Environmental justice (what's that?) and the grassroots.

Classroom conduct

Our class meets from 7 to 9:50 p.m. There will be a five-minute break approximately mid way through the class session. Students should be punctual, remain attentive and refrain from doing anything that distracts from the learning environment. Late arrival will negatively impact the attendance portion of grade determination.

Communication with students

Our primary means of communication shall be via your official UT Arlington email account and the use of the university's *Blackboard* resources – see details in item G below.

Important Notes

- A. *Preparation for class* – Students will be expected to read each week's material *thoroughly* and to *think through its relationship to material from previous weeks*.
- B. *Writing quality* – Written assignments and presentations for this class must be of professional quality at the graduate level. This means you *must carefully edit and proofread* all written work for typing, stylistic, spelling, and grammatical errors, and for clarity of thought. Consult *The Chicago Manual of Style* (Z253 .U69 2003) and Strunk & White's *The Elements of Style* (Reference & 5th floor, PE 1408 .S772 1979) as needed. Your bibliographical references must conform to *The Chicago Manual of Style* or some other bibliographic style (such as those of American Psychological Association or Modern Languages Association; talk to your advisor or to a reference librarian). You are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the services provided by UTA's English Writing Center (www.uta.edu/owl).
- C. *Academic Integrity* – It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures.

"Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts." (Regents' Rules and Regulations, Series 50101, Section 2.2)

- D. *Plagiarism* – Plagiarism in research is unethical and is prohibited by UTA (Regents' Rules and Regulations, Series 50101, Section 2.2). The university provides the resource of *SafeAssign*, an anti-plagiarism tool, which will be used to monitor written work. Novice researchers sometimes plagiarize because they do not know how and when to cite the work of another researcher. Basic examples of plagiarism include:

- word-for-word copying of sentences or paragraphs without quoting and citing the source;

- closely paraphrasing sentences or paragraphs without clearly citing the source; and
- using another person's ideas, work, data, or research without appropriate acknowledgment or citation of the source.

Many websites and books provide more information about and examples of plagiarism. See, for example:

Plagiarism Examples (University of Kentucky Department)
www.chem.uky.edu/courses/common/plagiarism.html#Examples

Acknowledging sources (University of Texas at Arlington Libraries)
<http://library.uta.edu/tutorials/Plagiarism/>

Avoiding Plagiarism (UC-Davis)
<http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/plagiarism.pdf>

- E. *Citing web resources* – The world wide web is a valuable resource for academic research, but the quality of materials it provides ranges from stellar to abysmal. You will be held accountable for the quality of any web material you use in your papers or class presentations. Use only materials that are appropriate for academic research; and use these materials in ways that are appropriate for the specific context. Guidelines for evaluating the quality of web documents can be found here:

Five criteria for evaluating Web pages
www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/webcrit.html

Evaluating quality on the net
www.hopetillman.com/findqual.html

Evaluating internet research sources
www.virtualsalt.com/evalu8it.htm

And, of course, remember that materials obtained on the web are also subject to rules regarding plagiarism. For guidelines on citation style, see *Chicago Manual of Style* (or other stylebook) or www.apastyle.org/elecref.html

- F. *Formatting papers* – Required formatting: *Page numbers*: top or bottom. *Margins*: top and bottom 1"; side 1.25". *Font*: Verdana 10 point or an equivalent 10 point font, you may also use Times New Roman 12 point – use caps and lower case, always avoid the use of all caps except in titles or headings. *Line spacing*: 1.0 or 1.5 lines (i.e., not double-spaced). *Paragraph spacing*: one line spaced, no extra spacing before or after. *Alignment*: left only. *Hint*: the format you are looking at is correct.

In the interest of reducing use of natural resources, I encourage you to print on both sides of the paper and use paper containing recycled fiber. No cover page, plastic cover, or other decoration, please.

- G. *Blackboard* – In addition to the distribution via email of notices and materials, we will use this facility to access information I will post for you including weekly presentations and other materials. www.uta.edu/blackboard/students
- H. *Americans with Disabilities Act* –The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation;

reference Public Law 92-112 - The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of federal legislation entitled *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens. As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability. Also, you may visit the Office for Students with Disabilities in room 102 of University Hall or call them at (817) 272-3364.

- I. *Student Support Services* – The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. These programs include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 for more information and appropriate referrals.
- J. *Electronic communication* – The University of Texas at Arlington has adopted MavMail as an official means of communication with students. Through the use of e-mail, UT Arlington is able to provide students with relevant and timely information. In particular, important information concerning registration, financial aid, payment of bills, and graduation may be sent to students through email. *This course will rely extensively on e-mail communication via your official UT-Arlington email address. Students are responsible for checking their email regularly.*
- K. *Drop policy* - Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/ses/fao>).