

Syllabus for PUBPL 481-001
Seminar in Environmental Policy
Fall 2021
TTh 3:05 pm to 4:20 pm, Olmsted E-252

Professor: Dr. Daniel J. Mallinson

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Class hashtag	#pubpl481
Course Webpage	Link

Course Description

As the Earth's population continues to grow rapidly and attention is increasingly drawn to the challenges of a warming planet, our relationship with our environment remains an important concern for all levels of governmental institutions: local, state, federal, and international. This course will explore the origins, growth, and evolution of the environmental movement, from early efforts at conservation through current debates surrounding climate change. We will also explore how research in political science and public policy helps us understand environmental politics. Thus, students will learn about government regulation, public opinion, agenda setting, punctuated equilibrium, formal and informal institutions, interest groups, and more. Students will also work in teams to develop their own case studies that can be used to teach about environmental policy. This course serves as a capstone seminar for Public Policy majors, thus it will draw on various courses in political science and public policy. That said, we will do so in a way that non-majors can understand.

Learning Goals and Objectives

- Goal 1: Students will gain factual knowledge about the environmental movement
 - Objective 1a: Students will learn the history of the environmental movement
 - Objective 1b: Students will gain the vocabulary necessary to discuss complex environmental policies, including terminology drawn from the physical sciences
- Goal 2: Students will critically examine how and why some policies emerge while others do not
 - Objective 2a: Students will learn about theories of the policy process, with specific application to environmental policy

- Objective 2b: Students will learn to identify how political institutions, behavior, and policy processes affect the success or failure of environmental policy
- Objective 2c: Students will critically evaluate how institutions and policy process theory apply to specific case studies
- Goal 3: Students will develop skills in writing, oral presentations, and teamwork
 - Objective 3a: Students will work in teams to write environmental case studies for submission to *Case Studies in the Environment*
 - Objective 3b: Students will present their cases to their peers in class

Methods for Learning and Teaching: This course will contain a mix of lecture, class discussion, and teamwork. It is vital for your own comprehension of the course material that you come to class prepared to discuss the readings and any relevant happenings in the news. I will regularly tweet news stories relevant to our class using the hashtag #pubpl481.

Reaching Our Goals

Attendance: Your attendance in class is always expected. Attending class will allow you to keep up with the course and provide for meaningful discussion as a class. I will be taking attendance in order to grade participation, but also as a way to get to know you. Please contact me via [e-mail](#) if you are unable to attend class. I will follow the University's attendance policy when it comes to excused absences. See <https://handbook.psu.edu/content/class-attendance>.

Preparation and Participation: I expect you to read the assigned material before class and be able to discuss what you read. Contributing to class discussion will make the course more interesting and will enhance your understanding of the material. Furthermore, it is helpful to keep up with current policy debates in the news, since they will be useful for reinforcing the concepts discussed in class.

Do Not Suffer in Silence: Please do not suffer in silence throughout the course if you are struggling. Instead, let me know — as soon as possible — what things are not making sense and we can work it out. If you are having a problem of any kind in the course, please talk to me about it as soon as possible.

Be Flexible: While the syllabus represents an agreement between us, I reserve the right to revise and modify it throughout the course, if it is necessary to achieve our goals. Further, the COVID-19 pandemic is not over and we may need to make many adjustments throughout the semester accordingly. Situations beyond either of our control can also emerge that require changes to the course. I will notify you right away when any changes are made.

E-mail Policy: I will work to respond to e-mails by the next business day. This means that e-mails sent on the weekends will be responded to by Monday.

Readings

The following book is required for the course:

Smith, Zachary A. 2018. *Environmental Policy Paradox*. Seventh Edition. New York, NY: Routledge. ISBN: 9781138653719.

Additional required readings that are not from the Smith book will be made available on Canvas.

Lecture Slides

I will be using lecture slides throughout the course. These will be uploaded to the course website (<https://sites.psu.edu/djmallinson/pubpl-481/>) and Canvas prior to each class period.

Assessing Your Progress Towards Our Goals

The following types of assessment will be used to track your progress towards meeting our course goals: short essays, case study, and participation.

Using the democratic classroom model, grading will be a little different than you are probably used to. We will be establishing a grading contract that will specify what level of work is required for each. I will now briefly describe each of the types of assessment we will be using in the course. We will use the first week of class to negotiate our final grading contract. When finalized, that grading contract will be come Appendix C of this syllabus.

Short Essay Assignments: The purpose of these assignments is to evaluate your understanding of the material we are learning in class. They are not intended to be long discourses, but short essays. All prompts and instructions for the these assignments can be found in Appendix A.

Case Study: Case studies are useful for studying policy topics and we will utilize many short case studies in the pursuit of meeting our course objectives. Thus, we, as a class, will work to produce our own case studies to help our own learning and, ideally, to help others learn. Given the small size of our course, you will be assigned to one of two teams. Each team will be tasked with developing a case study. There will be milestones throughout the course intended to keep your teams on track in producing their case study. To increase the rigor of this assignment, we use the publication guidelines of *Case Studies in the Environment* as

our guide for preparing the cases. If the cases are of sufficient quality, we will work to submit them to the journal. See Appendix B for more information on the case study assignment.

Make-Up Grades: Details on how to approach missed assignments will be included in our grading contract. I will be as flexible as I can be with accepting late work, though do not let yourself get too far behind and overwhelmed.

Illness: If you are not feeling well or if you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, DO NOT COME TO CLASS. I cannot stress this strongly enough. We are counting on you to help contain the spread of the virus (and other illnesses) on campus by self-isolating if you have a fever, feel unwell, or have been in contact with someone who has tested positive or is showing symptoms. Please contact me as soon as possible to determine how best to have you keep up with class.

Masks

Penn State University requires everyone to wear a face mask in all university buildings, including classrooms, regardless of vaccination status. ALL STUDENTS MUST wear a mask appropriately (i.e., covering both your mouth and nose) while you are indoors on campus. This is to protect your health and safety as well as the health and safety of your classmates, instructor, and the university community. Anyone attending class without a mask will be asked to put one on or leave. Instructors may end class if anyone present refuses to appropriately wear a mask for the duration of class. Students who refuse to wear masks appropriately may face disciplinary action for Code of Conduct violations. If you feel you cannot wear a mask during class, please speak with your adviser immediately about your options for altering your schedule.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is not limited to simply cheating on an exam or assignment. The following is quoted directly from the *PSU Faculty Senate Policies for Students* regarding academic integrity and academic dishonesty: “Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception and is an educational objective of this institution. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students.”

All University and Penn State Harrisburg policies regarding academic integrity/academic dishonesty apply to this course and the students enrolled in this course. Refer to the following URL for further details on the academic integrity policy of Penn State Harrisburg: <http://harrisburg.psu.edu/academics/academic-guidelines-and-policies>.

Each student in this course is expected to work entirely on her/his own while taking any exam, to complete assignments on her/his own effort without the assistance of others unless directed otherwise by the instructor, and to abide by University and Penn State Harrisburg policies about academic integrity and academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty can result in an assignment of “F” or “XF” as the final grade for the student.

Disability Access

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University’s educational programs. Every Penn State campus has a Student DisAbility Resources office. Student DisAbility Resources at Penn State Harrisburg is located in SEC 205. The Disability Services Coordinator, Alan Babcock, can be reached via email at aub15@psu.edu or phone 717-948-6025.

To receive consideration for accommodations, you must contact Student DisAbility Resources (SDR), participate in an intake interview, provide documentation of your disability, and complete a Self-Assessment. Additional information is available on the Disability Services website (<http://harrisburg.psu.edu/disability-services>). If the documentation supports requests for reasonable accommodations, SDR will provide you with an accommodations letter, which you will give to your professors. You will receive accommodations after you give your accommodations letters to your professors. You should share your accommodations letters with your professors as early in the semester as possible. Professors do not provide accommodations retroactively.

Counseling Services

Success in college depends heavily on your personal health and wellbeing. Please recognize that some stress and anxiety is a normal part of life and the college experience, and it can be compounded by unexpected setbacks or life changes outside the classroom. Penn State Harrisburg has a number of support options listed in this syllabus.

If you are experiencing issues that feel unmanageable, you reach the point that you have difficulty concentrating and/or feeling motivated, or have anxiety or feelings of depression that interfere with your ability to function, you may want to consider talking with someone in CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services). We have a range of services to help you navigate issues that are impacting your ability to be healthy, well, and productive. You can learn more about the confidential mental health services available on campus by visiting <https://harrisburg.psu.edu/> or by calling (717) 948-6025. CAPS is located on the 2nd floor of the Student Enrichment Center, Suite 205. You can access crisis services 24/7/365 by calling 1-877-229-6400 or by texting “LIONS” to 741741. Find us on Instagram or on Facebook.

Educational Equity

Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, harassment, and/or incivility due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity at the Report Bias site: <http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/statement>. Penn State's Code of Conduct can be found at the following [link](#). Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to our Penn State Harrisburg Office of Equity and Compliance, 717-948-6180 and in Olmsted E131.

Mandated Reporting

Penn State University is committed to fostering an environment free of harassment and discrimination. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in public and private educational institutions that receive Federal funds. The University has dedicated many resources to addressing suspected prohibited conduct under Title IX. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, and stalking, please know that help and supportive resources are available. Supportive resource information, such as access to confidential emotional support, academic, housing or workplace accommodations on our website, titleix.psu.edu.

Faculty members are not required to disclose information to the Title IX Coordinator. However, Penn State strongly encourages all members of the community to take appropriate action by providing support and encouraging those impacted by such incidents to submit a report to the Title IX Coordinator. You may also submit a report online by using the incident form found here: Office of Sexual Misconduct Prevention & Response Incident Report Form (maxient.com) If the University Title IX staff receives information about an incident, they will reach out to offer information about resources, rights, and procedural options available to you.

Penn State's Title IX Coordinator is: Chris Harris, Title IX Coordinator 328 Boucke Building University Park, PA 16802 (814) 863-0471 titleix@psu.edu

At Penn State Harrisburg, your point of contact is:

Penn State Harrisburg Title IX Office E131 Olmsted Building 717-948-6180

Other resources that are available include:

- Penn State Harrisburg Counseling and Psychological Services, SEC 205 - 717-948-6025

- Department of Safety & Police
 - Campus Police: 717-979-7976
 - Local Police: 717-543-2200 or 911
- YWCA Confidential Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Services: 1-800-654-1221 (available 24/7)
- Contact Helpline: 800-932-4616 (24-hour community crisis hotline)
- Pinnacle Health Harrisburg: 717-782-3131
- Penn State Harrisburg Student Health Services, 220 Capital Union Building: 717-948-61015
- Penn State Hotline: 800-560-1637 (Anonymous reporting)

In Case of Emergency In the event of a University-wide emergency, course requirements, classes, deadlines, and grading schemes are subject to changes that may include alternative delivery methods, alternative methods of interaction with the instructor, class materials, and/or classmates, and a revised semester calendar and/or grading scheme.

For more general information about the emergency situation, please refer to:

- Penn State Harrisburg's home page at <http://harrisburg.psu.edu/>
- PSUAlert (<http://psualert.psu.edu/psualert/>). This is a service designed to alert the Penn State community via text messages to cell phones when situations arise on campus that affect the ability of the campus - students, faculty and staff - to function normally. Everyone is encouraged to sign up to receive the text alerts.
- Messages will be placed at the 717-948-6000 campus phone number

In the case of a University-wide emergency, please refer to the following about changes in this course:

- Canvas: <https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2116052>
- Instructor's email: mallinson@psu.edu

Basic Needs Statement

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Office of Student Affairs (syw10@psu.edu, 717-948-6180) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable him to provide any resources that he may possess.

The Russell E. Horn Learning Center

For the fall 2021 semester, all Russell E. Horn Sr. Learning Center tutoring will be conducted in-person or via Zoom, whichever the student prefers. The Learning Center may have a tutor who can assist with the content of this course. An appointment is recommended. You can make an appointment in one of the three ways listed below.

Online: starfish.psu.edu

Via phone: 717-948-6475

Via email: PSHLearningCtr@psu.edu

The Learning Center can help you in a variety of ways:

Academic Success Coaches

Our professional coaches use individualized tools and learning strategies to help students with: Time management, organization, test-taking, study skills, as well as speech and presentation preparation and delivery.

Subject Area Tutoring

Courses including accounting, biological and behavioral science, computer science, economics, finance, mathematics, physical sciences, statistics, and some world languages are supported by peer and professional tutoring.

Writing

Our professional writing tutors can help students with the development of essays, argument papers, resumes, cover letters, scholarship applications and much more. We can help at any stage from brainstorming ideas, to citing sources, to polishing your final product.

If you have a request for tutoring help with a subject that is not in Starfish, send an email to PSHLearningCtr@psu.edu and we will try to find you an option.

Like us at facebook.com/RusselleEHornSrLearningCenter, follow us on Twitter @PSUHLC, and on Instagram @russellehornsrlearningcenter

Course Schedule

We will attempt to follow this schedule as closely as possible, but we may take more time on some concepts and less time on others. For this reason, a digital version of this syllabus can be found on [our course website](#). Slides used in class will also be posted on the online syllabus and Canvas before class. All changes to the schedule will be announced in class or via e-mail and the online syllabus will be constantly up-to-date. Required course readings are listed and due dates for assignments are in bold. Links to some additional readings are included in the syllabus on my website, others will be uploaded to Canvas. If you have trouble, please do not hesitate to [e-mail](#) me.

Week 1: Introductions

- August 24: Introduction to the class and each other
- August 26: The Case Study Approach
 - Burns, Wil. 2017. “[The Case for Case Studies in Confronting Environmental Issues](#).” *Case Studies in the Environment*. pp. 1-4.
 - “[Reverse Outlines: Take Apart Your Paper to Put It Back Together Right](#).”

Week 2: Policy and Science

- August 31: Theoretical Approaches to Studying Public Policy
 - Smith. Appendix A.
- September 2: Our Place in the Environment
 - Smith. Chapter 1.
 - **Reverse Outline Due**

Week 3: The Environmental Movement

- September 7: History
 - Smith. Chapter 2
 - Fears, Darryl and Steven Mufson. 2020. “[Liberal, Progressive – and Racist? The Sierra Club faces Its White-Supremacist History](#).” *The Washington Post*. July 22.

- September 9: Opinion and Framing
 - Smith. Chapter 2
 - **Policy Theories Essay Due**

Week 4: Regulation

- September 14: Team Workday
 - No In-class Meeting
 - **Case Study Topic Due**
- September 16: The Regulatory Environment
 - Smith. Chapter 3.
 - **Environmental Discourse Essay Due**

Week 5: Institutions

- September 21: Institutional Setting
 - Smith. Chapter 4.
- September 23: Political Setting
 - Smith. Chapter 4.
 - **Regulatory Environment Essay Due**

Week 6: Air Pollution

- September 28: Air Pollution
 - Smith. Chapter 5.
- September 30: Team Workday
 - No in-class meeting

Week 7: Water Policy

- October 5: Water Policy
 - Smith. Chapter 6.
- October 7: Water Policy
 - Smith. Chapter 6.

Week 8: Energy Policy

- October 12: Energy Policy
 - Smith. Chapter 7.
- October 14: Energy Policy
 - Listen to: Davies, Dave. 2021. "[US Faces Crossroads on Renewable Energy Future – Go Big or Go Local](#)." *NPR*. July 15.

Week 9: Toxic and Hazardous Waste

- October 19: Toxic and Hazardous Waste
 - Smith. Chapter 8.
 - **Draft Case Study Due**
- October 21: Environmental Racism
 - Bullard, Robert D. 1993. "[The Threat of Environmental Racism](#)." *Natural Resources & Environment* 7(3): 23-26, 55-56.
 - Berkovitz, Casey. 2020. "[Environmental Racism Has Left Black Communities Especially Vulnerable to COVID-19](#)." The Century Foundation. May 19.

Week 10: Land Management

- October 26: Urban Planning and Growth
 - Smith. Chapter 9.

- October 28: Non-Urban Management
 - Smith. Chapter 9.
 - **Air, Water, and Energy Policy Essay Due**

Week 11: International Issues

- November 2: International Issues
 - Smith. Chapter 10.
- November 4: International Management
 - Smith. Chapter 11.
 - **Land Management Essay Due**

Week 12: Climate Change

- November 9: The Paris Agreement
 - Dimitrov, Radoslav S. 2016. “[The Paris Agreement on Climate Change: Behind Closed Doors.](#)” *Global Environmental Politics* 16(3): 1-11.
- November 11: States Take the Lead
 - Bell, Andrew and Daniel J. Mallinson. 2021. “[Constraints on Policy Learning: Designing the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative in Pennsylvania.](#)” *Policy Design and Practice*.
 - **International Issues and Management Essay Due**

Week 13: Team Project Week

- November 16: Team Meeting
 - Meet as teams, I’ll be on [Zoom](#) for questions.
- November 18: Team Meeting
 - Meet as teams, I’ll be on [Zoom](#) for questions.
 - **Second Draft of Case Due**

Week 14: Thanksgiving Break

- November 23 and 25: No class

Week 15: Final Topics

- November 30: The Green New Deal
 - Chatzky, Andrew and Anshu Siripurapu. 2021. “[Envisioning a Green New Deal: A Global Comparison](#).” Council on Foreign Relations. February 1.
 - Meyer, Robinson. 2021. “[The Green New Deal Does Not, Strictly Speaking, Exist](#).” *The Atlantic*. July 13.
- December 2: Science and Policy
 - Carolan, Michael S. 2008. “[The Bright- and Blind-Spots of Science: Why Objective Knowledge is not Enough to Resolve Environmental Controversies](#).” *Critical Sociology* 34(5): 725-740.

Week 16: Presentations and Wrap Up

- December 7: Case Presentations
 - No Reading
- December 9: Wrapping things up
 - No Reading

Week 17: Finals Week

- Final Case Study, Reflection, and Team Survey Due December 14 by midnight

Appendices

A Short Essay Assignments

The purpose of these essays is to assess your grasp of the material we are covering in the course. Often you will be asked to apply theoretical material we are learning in class to different cases. Here are the guidelines for a successful paper:

1. Keep it short! The paper should be no more than three double spaced pages.
2. Keep it organized! Make clear and concise points so that you do not waste a lot of words explaining a single concept.
3. Keep it focused! Avoid tangents into unrelated policies, examples, or theories. Just answer the prompt.
4. Keep it precise! Make sure you are clear and correct in your use of terminology, particularly from theoretical and scientific material that we cover.

Each paper will be assessed based on those guidelines. There are six prompts for essays listed below. Three essays are required to successfully complete this course requirement. The first essay (policy theories) is mandatory, but you can choose your remaining two. This allows you flexibility for missing essays due to absence, lack of interest, or because you are satisfied with your other essays. It also allows you to complete an additional essay to increase your grade in the course. Each essay needs to be uploaded to Canvas before the start of class on the due date.

A.1 Policy Theories (Due September 9)

After describing five theoretical orientations (elite, pluralist, feminist, institutionalism, and incrementalism) towards understanding public policy, Smith makes the following statement: “we have concluded that no one theory alone adequately describes how public policy is made, but that all of them in combination are useful” (426). Briefly explain what each theory contributes toward a more complete understanding of how policies are formed. Put another way, how do they work together to fill in gaps in our understanding?

A.2 Environmental Discourse (Due September 16)

In the second half of Chapter 2, Smith presents John Dryzek's nine environmental discourses. The way that we frame a problem implies the necessary solution(s) to that problem. Thus, each of these discourses are potential frames through which people view any given environmental problem. I want you to briefly outline the solution(s) to the problem of the human contribution to global warming implied by each discourse. I do not expect you to know all of the ins and outs of global warming policy, but if you need to know the basics about how global warming works and its causes, check out the following link (<http://www.wired.co.uk/article/what-is-climate-change-definition-causes-effects>).

A.3 Regulatory Process (Due September 23)

You are a manager with the U.S. Forest Service. The timber industry needs the wood from the forests and environmentalists want to preserve the trees. Drawing from the four general approaches to regulating common pool resources make an argument for which approach you would take for managing the forests. Which option do you think would demonstrate the greatest success and why?

A.4 Air, Water, and Energy Policy (Due October 28)

For this essay, I want you to focus on one of the chapters regarding particular policy domains: air (chapter 5), water (chapter 6), and energy (chapter 7). I also want you to think back to the parts of chapter 4 that talk about interest groups. Speak to the following:

1. Who are the interests that were involved in your particular policy domain?
2. Define the type of each interest group (private economic vs. public noneconomic) and their particular policy desires/demands.
3. How were the groups involved throughout the policymaking cycle (1. agenda setting; 2. policy making; 3. implementation)?
4. Which groups were well resourced (think money, members, etc., that can be mobilized) and which were poorly resourced. How did these resources influence their effectiveness at achieving groups' policy demands?

A.5 Land Management (Due November 4)

Chapter 9 in Smith's book deals with three different types of land managed by governments: residential (urban, farmland, etc), federal, and wilderness. In what ways is the task of managing each different and in what ways is the task of management similar? It may help to think more broadly or conceptually about each type of land. What are the similarities and differences in what government has to do to manage living spaces (e.g., cities), federal properties, and wilderness areas?

A.6 International Environmental Issues and Management (Due November 11)

A common challenge in regulating international environmental problems — like climate change, ozone depletion, and oceanic pollution, among others — is the rift between developed and developing countries. The rifts tend to be over who is to blame for environmental degradation and thus who should pay for reducing the problem and any restoration efforts. Pick an international environmental issue presented in Chapter 10 (ozone, global warming, deforestation, or ocean pollution) and explain practical ways that countries can bridge the divide between the needs and interests of developed and developing countries.

B Case Study

Throughout the duration of our course you will be working on one of two teams to write an environmental case study.¹ Case studies are useful tools for teaching and learning about the policy process and politics. They should present a case of a broader human-environmental process, problem, or conflict. They are not about the specific case, per se, but the case should illuminate our understanding of a broader phenomena. You will notice that we work with a lot of short and long case studies during the class in order to help you better understand the course material and its application to real life policy problems.

For this assignment, your group will need to choose a case study topic, approved by me, and will do the research necessary to write a thorough, and ideally publishable, case study. We will use as our guide the web-based journal *Case Studies in the Environment*. This journal provides faculty, students, researchers, educators, professionals, and policymakers with case studies that help inform the study of environmental science and policy.

The assignment will be scaffolded, meaning you will work on it in stages throughout the course. The following is a description of each stage and what is expected.

B.1 Reverse Outline (Due September 2)

For this assignment, you will choose one of three example case studies from *Case Studies in the Environment*:

1. Place-specific: Analyzes local relationships, impacts, and conflicts ([Link](#));
2. Process-specific: Focuses on a system or other flows of a commodity, migrating animal, plant, or insect, or movement of water or air ([Link](#));
3. Problem-specific: Involves a multi-site issue concerning a policy ([Link](#))

and create a reverse outline that summarizes the case's goals, methods, evidence, and organization. This will help you think about the components you will need for your own case.

¹The structure of this assignment is partly mine and partly based on [Amanda McMillan Lequieu's approach](#).

Organize the reverse outline as follows:

1. Author, title, and date of the CSE article you are outlining.
2. A one-paragraph summary of the paper (150-300 words) including one sentence that states the argument of the paper.
3. A three paragraph discussion of the paper's organization. Answer each of the following questions in one paragraph:
 - (a) How did this paper present its argument?
 - (b) Why might the authors have made certain organizational choices?
 - (c) What worked, what didn't work in this paper?

B.2 Case Study Topic Selection (Due September 14)

Before choosing a topic as a group, read the [Author Guidelines](#) document posted on Canvas very carefully. This provides instructions from the journal on how to structure your case study. Then, browse through the cases in the website. Look at what types of cases people have already written. Look at what information they included. Then, brainstorm potential topics. It might be best to start broad (e.g., nuclear power) and then narrow down to a specific case (e.g., the potential closure of Three Mile Island). I would like you report your specific case to me by September 14. Feel free to bounce ideas off of me beforehand. The topic can be a local issue, state issue, federal issue, or international issue. It would be great to use Pennsylvania cases, but that is not strictly required. Here are some potential ideas, but do not limit yourselves to these:

- Protest, debate, and problems with the construction of the Mariner East 2 pipeline or Atlantic Sunrise pipeline
- Fracking in Pennsylvania (severance tax, impacts of drilling, comparison to politics and policy in New York, etc)
- Pennsylvania's Environmental Rights Amendment
- The politics surrounding the potential closure of Three Mile Island and its relation to the broader politics of nuclear power
- The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative
- Evolution of Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards in Pennsylvania

- Act 129 of 2009

In addition to your topic, I would like a brief paragraph on how you think you will approach the case. For example, will it be place-, process-, or problem-specific? Will you examine a particular time period? Just give me a sense of what you are thinking.

B.3 Rough Drafts of the Case Study (Due October 19 and November 18)

Using the Article Case Template posted on Canvas, I would like each group to submit two full drafts of their case. Make them as polished as possible, but also know that this is not the final product. Each will allow me to provide feedback on what is and is not effective about the draft. Use already published case studies as a guide for how to write yours and what to include about the case. Also, make sure that the case teaches us something about environmental policy and politics. Use the material we are learning in class to inform your case. Be sure to follow the guidelines in the [Author Guidelines](#) document closely when preparing the draft.

B.4 Case Study Group Presentation (Due December 7)

During this class session, each group will teach us through their case. Create a 15 minute presentation that follows the outline of the case and lead a 5 minute discussion of your discussion questions at the end of the case.

B.5 Final Case Study (Due December 14)

Your final case study is due by 11:59 pm on the Tuesday of Finals week. At this point, with all of the feedback during the semester, I am expecting a VERY polished final manuscript. Again, the final product needs to use the Article Template and follow the [Author Guidelines](#) posted on Canvas. After grades are entered, I will do the rest of the work in terms of preparing and submitting the case studies.

Elements of a case study that will be marked complete, per the grading contract:

1. Systematically and accurately analyzes multiple dimensions of a human-environment interaction

2. Defines and meaningfully engages with at least one theory we have learned in PUBPL 481
3. Consistently builds a logical argument towards a clear conclusion
4. Explicitly shows how your case is a “case of” a broader human-environmental process, problem, or conflict
5. Defines all key terms
6. Page-length: 8-10 pages
7. Citations: Consistent and accurate
8. Writing style: Very polished
9. Formatting: Follows the formatting instructions for CSE

B.6 Reflection Essay (Due December 14)

I would like you to write reflection answering the following questions:².

- List the major steps that your team went through in producing the research paper, presentation, and brief
- What is the most important thing you learned in this project?
- What do you wish you had spent more time on or done differently?
- What part of the project did you do your best work on?
- What was the most enjoyable part of the project?
- What was the least enjoyable part of this project?
- How could your teacher change this project to make it better next time?

Essays that thoughtfully reflect on each question and not only answer the what questions, but explain why the student feels the way they do will receive credit. These should be no *shorter* than two pages.

²H/T to the Buck Institute for Education for these questions: https://www.bie.org/object/document/self_reflection_on_project_work

C Grading Contract

I want you to stop for a moment and think about a new skill that you want to learn. Perhaps it is fly fishing, dancing, or soccer. Let's say you sign up for a contract course at a local recreation center to learn that skill. You would attend classes, practice outside of class, and get feedback from your instructor and even from your peers. Going into the class, and throughout, you would decide what you wanted to get out of it and how much effort you want to put in to achieve that result. Part of that calculus is probably based on what you want to do with the new skill after the class. I took a photography class many years ago that was like this. I was just an amateur photographer who wanted to learn more. What if I had been an aspiring freelancer, though? Would my approach have been different? One last question, why are there no grades in classes like these? How do grades affect our learning in the classroom? In both settings you receive feedback from your instructor, but in the contract course you also likely receive more feedback from your peers who are also not involved in grading your work.

There are two common criticisms of grades. First, that grading tends to lead students to work simply in pursuit of a specific grade. Instead of deciding the level of knowledge they want to take away from the class, the class becomes a game where the main objective is to figure out what the instructor wants so that they will give you an A. There has been a substantial amount of research showing that grades can inhibit student learning and motivation (Kohn 2011). I want to ensure that your focus is not simply on getting a particular grade, but on what you want to substantively get out of this class. Your willingness to put effort into the class is a direct contributor to what you can get out of it.

Grades also encourage students to play it safe in class. But taking risks is the best way to push ourselves and the subject we are studying forward. I am going to ask you to do original work in this class, including original research. I am also not expecting you to be perfect right away at everything we do. This is a learning process, but typical grading conveys the message that no mistakes can be made or else you will lose that A. I want you to take risks in this class. To try new things and even fail but fail productively. Use those failures to learn and grow.

In this course, we will strive to create a community of compassion, where each of us is learning from and helping to teach the other. We will develop a caring environment where you will teach and serve each other. In fact, teaching others is the [highest form of learning](#). As a class we will benefit from each of your individual strengths in a way that is mutually supportive and beneficial for all our learning. You will be partners in teaching and learning in this course, not simply recipients of my "wisdom." This means that I may not always be the one commenting on your work or evaluating you. Further, while I will provide a final grade for the course, I will not be grading all your individual assignments.

Grades do serve their purpose. They communicate to others (e.g., future employers) how strongly you performed in a course of studies. That said, grades are NOT the only metric of success and they also do not define who you are as a person. Each of you has great value that far supersedes whatever grade you receive in my class or any other. But even with its flaws, a course grade is used as one signal of competence and success.

In this course we will use what is called contract grading. This means that we will negotiate a contract that establishes what is necessary to achieve different grades in the course. Another key aspect of contract grading is that you will not be given a letter grade on each individual assignment. I will give you feedback regarding whether the assignment is acceptable for meeting the standard you are aiming for or it needs additional revision or copyedits to meet that standard. This is currently a draft contract that provides a starting point for our negotiation. Once we finalize the contract, it is possible for either me or you as a class to initiate a renegotiation should circumstances change throughout the semester.

The contract will begin with brief descriptions of what we expect from each other during the course. It will then describe the baseline grading standard of a B+, followed by what additional activities can be undertaken to raise a grade above a B+, and finally what circumstances result in a grade less than a B+. It will be up to you to decide which standard you set for yourself this semester, and the consequent effort required to meet that standard. Be real with yourself. Do not aim for an A if you are not willing to do that work.

What You Can Expect of Me

I will be available each week for office hours, but I am happy to meet outside of them. Just drop me an email to set up an appointment.

I will provide clear expectations for all assignments and will respond to your questions within 24 hours.

I will provide immediate notice both in class and in Canvas regarding any changes to the syllabus, assignments, readings, or class sessions. The [Course Homepage](#) will be constantly up to date with what is required for each class session.

I will participate in class activities with good faith, interacting with others in appropriate and productive ways.

If I mark an assignment as “revisions” or “edits” and you think it is “complete,” I will explain my reasoning and you will have an opportunity to fix any mistakes and receive full credit for the assignment. Revisions and edits must be submitted within one week of receiving my feedback.

I will answer any questions you have about the feedback I provide on your assignments and I will be as clear and prompt in providing that feedback as possible.

I will be constructive in my feedback.

Earning a “B+”

You will be guaranteed a B+ in this course if you meet the following conditions:

- **Class Engagement**

- **You agree to fully participate in 85% of our class sessions (22 of 26).** This is more than simply attending class. It means contributing to discussion.
- I will of course excuse any absences for school-related activities and illness. But you need to provide me a reason for your absence and make up any work that you missed in class. Each excused absence will be approved on a case-by-case basis.

- **Team Engagement.** You agree to be an active contributor to your team’s semester-long project. Everyone has different skills and abilities and your team is hurt if yours are missing. Not contributing also places a greater portion of the labor on your teammates’ shoulders, which is not fair. Skipping team work sessions and not contributing to each team assignment will hurt your contract.
- **Lateness.** You agree to come to class a few minutes early. Coming late 1-2 times is understandable, things happen. But a habit of lateness is a problem and is disruptive to the class.
- **Respect.** We will be discussing challenging topics in this class, so you are expected to always be respectful of your peers and myself in your interactions. This does not mean not speaking your mind, but it means doing so in a kind and respectful manner.
- **Late/Incomplete Work.** You are expected to hand your work in on time and to the specifications laid out in the assignment instructions. If anything is unclear in my instructions, you are expected to ask me to clarify. Late or incomplete work is defined as work handed in up to 48 hours after the due date and time. After 48 hours your work is considered “missed” and will be considered a stronger mark against your contract. Turning in late work can not only hurt your academic progress in the class, but it can also hurt your fellow students who may be depending on your work.
- **Ignored Work.** Work that is simply not completed by the end of the semester is considered ignored and will have substantial implications for your contracted grade.

- **All Work/Labor needs to meet the following:**
 - **Complete and on time:** You agree to complete all your work on time and to meet the expectations set forth in each assignment.
 - **Revisions.** When you are asked to revise an assignment, you agree to follow my instructions and to substantially revise your thinking and work. You will not just correct or lightly touch up your assignment.
 - **Editing.** When you are asked to edit an assignment, you will thoroughly proof-read the assignment and correct grammatical and punctuation errors. If you need help with this, you will reach out to the Writing Center for help.

Knowing Where You Stand

It is quite easy to keep track of how you are doing in class when using contract grading. If you are completing your work on time and participating in class, you will have a B+.

Improving Your Contracted Grade

Earning a B+ in this class is essentially a function of your behavior and labor. If you do the work, on time, and to specification, you will receive a B+. To receive a higher grade, you will need to complete more labor that improves your learning outcomes, but labor that also supports the class in its learning. Remember that this is a collective learning enterprise. It is not just about you. Performing better than average in a course is thus not only about what you do, but how well you contribute to the class experience for all of us. For each of the following, you can improve your contracted grade by one letter. Meaning, you will have to complete 2 to receive an A in the course. You cannot receive more than one letter increase for each. Meaning, you cannot just write two extra essays to receive an A. You must pick two of these activities. The exception is the third category. I will allow two items from the third category.

- **Extra Essay Assignment.** Completing an additional essay will help you improve your writing, critical thinking, and argumentation skills.
- **Teach Through a Case.** For this you will pick a case study from *Case Studies in the Environment* that is related to the topic of one of our class sessions. This must be done at least one week prior to the relevant class. Students will be asked to read over the case material. During that class, you will lead the class through a 15 minute discussion of the case. Please let me know by the end of the third week of class whether you would like to teach a case, so I can plan appropriately. After the class, you will write a 500 word reflection on what you learned from the process of teaching your case.
- **Do some other labor that benefits the class.** This could be reading an article or watching a movie/documentary that is relevant to the class and writing us a report on

it. It could be attending an event or other experience that is relevant to the class and reporting on it. It could be interviewing someone working in environmental policy and reporting on it. If you have an idea for this, please come to me early so we can plan it out. We will work together to make sure the amount of labor is like the other items above.

Note that you can also raise your grade with these if you are working on a contract below a B+. For instance, if you are working on a C contract, you can raise your grade to a C+ with one of the above activities, a B- with two, and a B with three.

The Main Components of Each Grade Contract

	# Non-engaged Days	# of Late Assignments	#of Missed Assignments	# Ignored Assignments
A (4.0)	5	2	1	0
B (3.0)	5	2	1	0
C (2.0)	7	3	2	0
D (1.0)	9	4	3	1
F (0.0)	10	4	4	2

Gimme/Plea. I, as the administrator of the contract, will decide in consultation with each student whether a gimme is warranted for an assignment. The student must come to me as soon as possible to discuss the situation, preferably before they break the contract so that I can make fair and equitable arrangements for completing the assignment. It is important for these instances to be fair and equitable toward the other students in the class, but also recognizing relevant University policies. It is necessary to recognize that this contract is a social contract between all of us as a class, thus any extensions due to a plea must be fair. They cannot simply be a means to shirk labor that is required for the entire class. This is not an out clause for not fulfilling part of the contract, it is a means to address unforeseen circumstances that can affect our ability to complete our labor. Typically, a gimmie is used only once in a semester.

Exemplary Work. If by our final class, you miss no classes, have no late or missed assignments, and do not use a gimmie during the semester, I will raise your final course grade one letter, just like the extra labor assignments listed above. This is meant to reward students who demonstrate the fullest effort and exemplary citizenship in the course.

By staying in this course and participating in it, you accept and agree to abide by this contract. I also agree to abide by the contract and administer it fairly and equitably.

Finalized and Agreed August 26, 2021