

PSC 285: Environmental Politics
Spring 2025 / TR noon-1:50pm / KBB 214

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Office Hours: Wednesday Noon-3p, Thursday 10a-noon

Objective:

Politics is about who gets what, when, and how. This course explores the ways in which environmental policies benefit some while harming others. Students explore the ways particular policies designed to promote environmental protections impact different groups. We also explore how a lack of environmental protections has consequences not just for flora and fauna, but for humans. Students will learn to perform a cost/benefit analysis of environmental policies that takes into account residents of the impacted area and the world.

Student Learning Outcomes:

This course is designed such that students who have immersed themselves in the readings and lectures, attended discussion sections regularly, completed all assignments thoughtfully, studied for the exam, and participated fully in the course in general should be able to do the following by the end of the course:

- SLO1: The student will understand the way political scientists frame environmental issues in the discipline.
- SLO2: The student will be able to perform a policy analysis of environmental issues.
- SLO3: The student will be able to identify best practices in common pool resource management.
- SLO4: The student will be evaluate issues of environmental justice.

Requirements:

Though it may be altered slightly and/or clarified by professorial edict either in class or via email, consider this syllabus a tentative agreement between you and your professor that lists both what you can expect from class and what is expected of you. Check it regularly. You are expected to read everything assigned on the syllabus, which averages between 50 and 100 pages a week. Perhaps more importantly in this class, you are also expected to play around with the concepts covered until you know them! You are expected to attend and pay attention to every lecture. Visiting me on occasion during office hours to discuss issues raised in class and/or project topics will not hurt either. If you do these things, you will do very well in the course. If you do not do

these things, you will not do so well in the course. Though this class is certainly manageable for curious and conscientious students, for students used to putting in a minimal amount of work at the last minute and achieving good results, it can be a brutal experience. Consider this fair warning up front. You will be evaluated in this class based on your performance in four areas. These areas, along with their relative weights, are as follows:

Participation (10%) – Eight times throughout the semester 1) a pop quiz on that day's assigned reading, 2) an in-class exercise, or 3) an opportunity to engage in discussion is graded. These participation checks are unannounced and designed to measure whether you are in class, prepared, and engaged. Only your five highest scores count. Because you get to drop your lowest three participation grades, make-up opportunities are NOT offered.

Reading Presentation (10%) – During weeks 3, 4, 6, and 12 there are class periods where students present reading material. Though you have a great deal of flexibility in what these presentations look like, these presentations have three graded components: 1) a 1-sheet summary of the material to be used as a study guide, 2) a brief lecture on the reading's *most important* contribution to the topic, and 3) a short video prompt that provides an example (not a summary) of the most important topic to prompt discussion. Both the summary and slides should be submitted prior to the assigned class via SpartanLearn. These presentations are not recitations of everything in the chapter. You have to add value! A reading presentation will be modeled during Week 1 and a grading rubric is available on SpartanLearn. Individual reading presentations should not be substantially longer than 15 minutes. Group reading presentations should be about double that. We may not have time to tolerate massive technical difficulties or prolonged set-ups so it is important to test your presentation and be ready for it to work from the classroom computer. Missed reading presentations are extremely disruptive to the course. Therefore late unexcused reading presentations are not accepted. If you have a well-documented excused absence, you may submit an MP4 video presentation to be shared with the class via SpartanLearn as a make-up. This MP4 must be received no later than a week after your scheduled presentation and will be graded using the same rubric as in-class reading presentations.

Environmental Politics Projects (30%) – As a class we work on three relatively short (less than 10 typed pages) research projects: 1) UT Environmental Policy Brief, 2) Tampa Bay Green Space Field Notebook, and 3) Global Environmental Justice Poster. You may produce these assignments as an individual or as part of a group. There are strengths and weaknesses to both approaches so you should weigh them before making a choice at each of the "Foundations of" assignment discussions. We go over these assignments extensively in class and there are outlines and grading rubrics available on SpartanLearn. In order to do well, you must be thorough in your research, thoughtful in your analysis, and demonstrate learning from the course. These are NOT satisficing exercises, they are your opportunity to apply what we have learned in the course using common outputs of practitioners of political science to explore campus, local, and global environmental

issues. As you know about these assignments well in advance and have over two weeks between the time we go over them in class and their due date, excused late projects are rare and only allowed with prompt presentation of ample documentation demonstrating extreme incapacitation for a lengthy period of time making completion impossible. Unexcused late projects are penalized at a rate of 10 points per day.

Exams (50%) – These are three opportunities to demonstrate mastery of concepts covered in the readings, lectures, discussions, and projects. It is in a multiple choice and essay format. Essays call for you to not only answer the questions, but do so in a way that is thorough, thoughtful, and well-documented in terms of what we have covered in the class. There are no review sheets. Exams are administered in class and require a laptop. They are cumulative in that they may call on any material we have covered up to that point, but they deal primarily with content covered since the previous exam. Excused late or early exams are only given in extreme circumstances and only with acceptable documentation. Unexcused late exams are penalized at a rate of 10 points per day. If you miss the exam, it is your responsibility to contact me as soon as possible to schedule a make-up exam. Failure to schedule a make-up promptly results in forfeiture of the opportunity.

Important Due Dates:*

Environmental Politics Projects	
UT Environmental Policy Brief	Sunday 16 February
Tampa Bay Green Space Field Notebook	Sunday 30 March
Global Environmental Justice Poster	Sunday 27 April
Exams	
#1	Tuesday 18 February
#2	Tuesday 1 April
#3	Thursday 1 May
Participation	all semester
Reading Presentation	variable as assigned in Week 2

* Assignments due on Sunday are due by 11:59pm. Assignments due on class days are due at the beginning of class.

Grading:

The course letter grade will be determined according to the following scale:

<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Quality Points</i>	<i>Numeric Scale*</i>
A	4.0	93 and above
AB	3.5	88-92
B	3.0	83-87
BC	2.5	78-82
C	2.0	73-77
CD	1.5	68-72
D	1.0	60-67
F	0.0	Below 60

*Numbers round up at .5 and above. They round down below .5.

Required Texts:

Cohen Cohen, Steven. 2014. *Understanding Environmental Policy*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Dauvergne Dauvergne, Peter. 2016. *Environmentalism of the Rich*. Cambridge, MA: MIT press.

Ostrom Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

☞ Article or chapter available through SpartanLearn links.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The course schedule is subject to change at the professor's sole discretion. Any changes will be announced in class, via email, and/or via SpartanLearn.

Week 1 (January 21-24)

Tuesday Introduction
Readings: ☞ syllabus

Thursday What are Environmental Politics?
Readings: ☞ Brick, Philip. 2004. "The Greening of Political Science: Growth Pains and New Directions." *Perspectives on Politics* 2(2): 337-346; and ☞ Cronon, William. 1995. "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." In *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. New York, NY: WW Norton, 69–90.

Week 2 (January 27-31)

Tuesday Foundations for our UT Environmental Policy Brief
Readings: **Cohen** chs 1 and 2

Thursday Applying Cohen to Energy Policy

Week 3 (February 3-7)

Tuesday Q&A with Campus Environmental Activists

Thursday Applying Policy Framework: Congestion Charges and E-Waste Disposal (Presentation Opportunity #1/2 and #3/4)
Readings: **Cohen** chs 3 and 4

Week 4 (February 10-14)

Tuesday Applying Policy Framework: Hydrofracking and Climate Change (Presentation Opportunity #5/6 and #7/8)
Readings: **Cohen** chs 5 and 6

Thursday Comparing Notes: UT Environmental Policy Brief Check-In
Readings: **Cohen** chs 7 and 8
UT Environmental Policy Brief Due on Sunday 16 February

Week 5 (February 17-21)

Tuesday **Exam #1**

Thursday Green Spaces and Common Pool Resource Management

Readings: **Ostrom** chs 1 and 2

Week 6 (February 24-28)

Tuesday Ostrom: Sustainable CPR Management and Institutional Change (Presentation Opportunity #9/10 and #11/12)

Readings: **Ostrom** chs 3 and 4

Thursday Ostrom: Institutional Failure and Framework for Analysis (Presentation Opportunity #13/14 and #15/16)

Readings: **Ostrom** chs 5 and 6

Week 7 (March 3-7)

Tuesday Foundations for Tampa Bay Green Space Field Notebook

Readings: ✓ US Geological Survey. 2016. Completing America's Inventory of Public Parks and Protected Areas. Washington, DC: USGS; ✓ Hostetler, Mark E. and Martin B. Main. 2017. Florida Monitoring Program: Point Count Method to Survey Birds. UF IFAS: Gainesville, FL; ✓ Putnam, Robert. 2001. "Social Capital: Measurement and Consequences." Canadian Journal of Policy Research 2(1): 41-51 and ✓ Alkire, Sabina and Andy Sumner. 2013. "Multidimensional Poverty and the Post-2015 MDGs." Development 56(1): 46-51.

Thursday Into a Green Space, Part I

***** Spring Break (March 10 – 14) *****

Week 8 (March 17-21)

Tuesday Into a Green Space, Part II

Thursday Florida Wildlife Corridor through a CPR Lens

Week 9 (March 24-28)

Tuesday Q&A with Tampa Bay Region Land Managers

Thursday Comparing Notes: Tampa Bay Green Space Field Notebook Check-In
Tampa Bay Green Space Field Notebook Due on Sunday 30 March

Week 10 (March 31-April 4)

Tuesday **Exam #2**

Thursday Environmentalism of the Poor and Environmentalism of the Rich

Readings: ✓ Guha, Ramchandra, and J. Martinez-Alier, eds. 1997. "The Environmentalism of the Poor." In *Varieties of Environmentalism: Essays North and South*. London, UK: Earthscan and **Dauvergne** ch 1.

***** 31 March Last Day to Withdraw *****

Week 11 (April 7-11)

Tuesday Exploring the Costs and Benefits of Consumption

Thursday Foundations for Global Environmental Justice Poster

Readings: 🗨️ Packer, George. 2002. "How Susie Bayer's T-Shirt Ended Up on Yusuf Mama's Back." *The New York Times*; 🗨️ Person, Chris. 2023. "My New Favorite Game Is Finding out Where Stuff Is Made." *The Verge*; and 🗨️ Smits, Jeroen. 2016. "Global Data Lab: A Resource for Subnational Development Indicators from Household Surveys." *World Bank Blog*.

Week 12 (April 14-18)

Tuesday Environmentalism of the Rich: Global Unsustainability (Presentation Opportunity #17, #18, #19, #20, and #21)

Readings: **Dauvergne** chs 2-6

Thursday Environmentalism of the Rich: Global Environmentalism (Presentation Opportunity #22, #23, #24, #25, and #26)

Readings: **Dauvergne** chs 7-11

Week 13 (April 21-25)

Tuesday Q&A with Global Environmental Justice Activists

Thursday Comparing Notes: Global Environmental Justice Poster Check-In

Readings: **Dauvergne** ch 12

Global Environmental Justice Poster Due on Sunday 27 April

Week 14 (April 28-May 2)

Tuesday Culminating Conversation on Environmental Politics

Readings: 🗨️ Wallace-Wells, David. 2022. "Beyond Catastrophe: A New Climate Reality Is Coming Into View." *The New York Times*.

Thursday **Exam #3**

***** Feedback on Environmental Politics Projects and Exams *****

***** from 1:30pm-3:30pm on Thursday 8 May *****

UT Policies:

There are a number of policies that apply to every course taken at UT. These include policies on syllabus alterations, Title IX and reporting of sexual misconduct, ADA compliance, campus closure, academic integrity, attendance, and classroom disruptions. You should familiarize yourself with them all, both required and recommended. Each of these policies is in effect for this course. In lieu of replicating them all here, below is a link where you can read the most updated policies in their entirety.

<https://www.ut.edu/academics/center-for-teaching-and-learning/required-syllabus-disclosures>

Class Rules, Etiquette, and Advice:

I like my job a lot. There are few things I can imagine doing more satisfying than providing inquisitive minds with an atmosphere conducive to thinking more critically about their own assumptions and the world in which we live. The image of students leaving my classroom just a bit more prepared to make their society better is sustaining. Following is a list of policies and practices designed to help you make the most out of the course and improve the classroom experience for both of us.

DO take care of your mental health – There is a mental health crisis among college students. A recent study observed 44% of students reported feeling symptoms of depression, 37% reported anxiety disorders, and 15% reported having seriously considered suicide in the past year.¹ If at some point during your time at UTampa you begin to feel out of control for any reason you should realize that you are not alone and there is help available to you. Your professors are happy to discuss problems you are having with course content, but most of us are not trained mental health professionals. There are, however, dedicated mental health counselors available to you through UTampa’s Health and Counseling Center located in the Dickey Health and Wellness Center directly behind Austin Hall. The best time to deal with mental health issues is when they arise and not after your personal and academic life have hit rock bottom. The Health Center’s email is counseling@ut.edu and their phone numbers are 813-253-6250 (during business hours) and 833-755-0484 (outside of business hours for emergencies).

DO read the assigned texts – The amount and content of the reading assignments are well within the realm of reasonable for a class at this level. I have looked at syllabi from many different institutions of higher learning to come confidently to this conclusion. Do the assigned readings before each class and you will get the most out of the lectures. Though there are some things covered in the assigned readings that will not be covered in lecture, and vice versa, the lectures and readings build off each other. I will not hesitate to pull exam questions from readings not covered in class and from lectures not covered in the readings.

DO engage in class discussions thoughtfully – This classroom is a collaborative learning environment that necessitates regular, in-person attendance. There will be lots of opportunities for you to contribute to conversations in the classroom. Most of my lectures have a built-in component for student input because I think it is important that you not only read and hear the information, but have to reconstitute and challenge it. I am also delighted to entertain questions when you have them and follow tangents that you would like to explore. Class periods when students are engaged and contributing seem to go by much faster than class periods when students are checked out. Students who regularly contribute to the classroom conversation do significantly better than students who do

¹ Kim North Shine, “College Students’ Anxiety, Depression Higher than Ever, but so Are Efforts to Receive Care,” University of Michigan News, March 9, 2023, <https://news.umich.edu/college-students-anxiety-depression-higher-than-ever-but-so-are-efforts-to-receive-care/>.

not on exams.² So pretend the information we are covering is really interesting and jump at the opportunity to challenge the material. After a while, you will find that you do not have to pretend anymore. If you are shy this is good practice for you. Use the class to build your confidence and public speaking skills.³ For these reasons, ongoing remote or hybrid attendance for individual students is incompatible with this course's curriculum.

DO take responsibility for missed classes – There are an infinite number of reasons students miss class. On exam and presentation days, you owe me an excuse if you want to avoid a late penalty. For all other class days, you do not need to ask permission to miss, nor do you owe me an explanation. You do not even need to send me an email explaining your absence. The lectures and discussions you miss, however, are testable material that may show up on an exam. I do NOT provide individualized make-up lectures to students who miss a class. It is not unusual for a handful of students to miss each class and the expectation that each will receive a personalized lecture is unreasonable. I do NOT answer questions similar to “did I miss anything important?” Answering such questions implies that a two-hour lecture/discussion can be boiled down into an email or a few-minute recitation and gives the false impression to many students that content not covered in the recap will not be on the exam. What should you do if you miss a class? First, don't make it a habit. Every semester a few students miss more than an occasional class and it rarely works out well for them grade-wise. You get a handful of dropped participation grades, but the supply is not limitless. Second, make connections with your colleagues, especially those who take good notes. When you miss, ask them to share. If you expect your colleagues to be helpful in times of need, it behooves you to return the favor. Do the readings, go through the Powerpoint slides I upload as a courtesy to students and your colleague's notes, and write down any questions you have about the content therein. Feel free to drop by during office hours to ask those questions.

DO know the university policy on “excused” absences – I do not take roll so the only time you need an excused absence is when there is an exam or required meeting. The UT catalog has a detailed section on excused absences. It falls under the heading “Class Attendance and Participation” in the Academic Policies and Procedures section. There are no excuses for late SpartanLearn submitted assignments. You know about them well in advance and a last-minute issue should not affect your ability to turn in the assignment. Excuses for missed exams, presentations, or meetings are granted following university procedures. The best way to be granted an excused absence is with prior approval. If you will miss an exam or presentation due to a previously scheduled event, let me know at least two weeks in advance and you will usually be allowed an early exam or presentation. In the event that prior approval is not possible, you must provide acceptable documentation detailing the reasons for your excuse as soon as possible. Be thorough with this documentation as the burden of proving an absence is excusable falls on the student. For each assignment listed in this syllabus, there is a policy regarding late penalties and dropped grades. Many of these policies grant an exception for “excused” absences. Whether an absence is “excused” or not is up to the discretion of your professor based on the guidelines outlined above. Participation grades come with a generous drop policy. Students can miss a week and a half of classes and even if they are unlucky and there are participation checks on all those days, earn a perfect score in participation. Due to this fact, there are no make-ups and excuses are unnecessary.

² Alice S. N. Kim et al., “Understanding the Impact of Attendance and Participation on Academic Achievement,” *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology* 6, no. 4 (2020): 272–84, <https://doi.org/10.1037/stl0000151>.

³ Katy Y. Y. Tam, Wijnand A. P. Van Tilburg, and Christian S. Chan, “Whatever Will Bore, Will Bore: The Mere Anticipation of Boredom Exacerbates Its Occurrence in Lectures,” *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 93, no. 1 (2023): 198–210, <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12549>.

DO visit me during office hours – If you have a question about something we covered in class, need feedback on an assignment, want to discuss something you discovered outside of class that you think connects to course content in an interesting way, or just want to chat FEEL FREE to drop by office hours. I keep at least five hours per week and these hours are for you. You are not pestering me or taking me away from something more important. It is nice to talk with students outside of our regular classroom setting.

DO NOT use your laptop or telephone in class – Research consistently shows that students who use electronic devices in the classroom are more distracted and distract those around them.⁴ To help combat the temptation for distraction, laptops and telephones should be stored out of sight during class time. Individual exceptions to this policy are rare, require more than a preference for digital notetaking, and must be pre-approved by the professor. Exception requests must be made in writing no later than the end of the first month of the semester or within a week of a change in your status. In an emergency or if directed to do so as part of a classroom assignment, this rule is suspended.

DO NOT offload your education to AI - You may use AI chatbots to help brainstorm an idea or check your grammar. You should note, however, that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, plagiarized, or otherwise problematic. Overuse of AI will also stifle your own independent thinking, creativity, and development as a scholar. You may NOT submit any work generated by an AI chatbot as your own. If you include material generated by AI, it should be quoted and cited like any other reference material. Uncited material that reads like it was written by AI will receive no credit.⁵

DO NOT video or audio record class without permission – Because of the chilling effect it may have on class discussions, as a rule I do not want students audio/video recording the class. If, for documented reasons of accessibility, your learning will be negatively impacted by this policy it may be waived by professor permission. Ask. In cases where permission is granted, any recordings permitted in this class can only be used for the student’s personal educational use. Students are not permitted to copy, publish, or redistribute audio or video recordings of any portion of the class session to individuals who are not students in the course or academic program without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded. Distribution without permission may be a violation of educational privacy law, known as FERPA, as well as certain copyright laws. Any recordings made by the professor or university for this course are the property of the professor and/or the university.⁶

DO NOT send me an email unless it’s absolutely necessary – With several classes and nearly 100 students a semester emails are a burden. If even ten percent of students decide this rule does not apply to them, my Inbox will be full in no time with business better dealt with offline. While I know email seems convenient from the student point of view because it is more instantly gratifying and relatively labor free, I have found the method of communication a poor way to convey the complex concepts we deal with in class and for general points of inquiry it is inefficient as emails regularly get lost in my Inbox. So how can you decide if an email must be sent to me? I would encourage you to ask yourself the following three questions:

- 1) Can I find the answer on the syllabus, in a text, or online?

⁴ Pam A. Mueller and Daniel M. Oppenheimer, “The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking,” *Psychological Science* 25, no. 6 (June 1, 2014): 1159–68, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797614524581>.

⁵ Adapted from <https://x.com/HollyLynchez/status/1614980625374580738>

⁶ Adapted from https://teaching.temple.edu/sites/teaching/files/resource/pdf/Statement%20on%20recordings_netiquette.pdf

2) Is it something one of my colleagues in class can answer?

3) Can it wait until next class or office hours?

If you answer any of these questions in the affirmative, PLEASE fight against the temptation to hit send. If you answer all of the questions in the negative, feel free to send the email. Make sure, however, to send it from your @spartans.ut.edu email account and keep in mind that I don't check email every day.

DO NOT ask if it is on the exam – I do not give out study guides. This is a university class and when I attended university ages ago study guides, like the iPod and indoor plumbing, were not yet invented. This experience taught me that learning things the readings and lectures cover that are not on the exam can be just as important and enlightening as learning things that are on the exam. Anything in the readings, lectures, or discussions is fair game for an exam. Things covered extensively across readings, lectures, and discussions are more likely to show up on the exam.

DO NOT ask for extra credit – Rarely do I give out extra credit opportunities. When I do, the opportunity is initiated by me and open to all students in class. I have never given an extra credit assignment to a student who initiates the request. Giving out extra credit opportunities to select students makes grades for the course an unreliable measure of student success and your goal should be to master the material assigned on the syllabus.

DO understand what your grade represents – I assume all students who enter my class want to take away a greater understanding of the slice of the world we are studying and that the grade they receive is but a formal, and somewhat abstract and imprecise, reflection of the knowledge they have gained. The average student in my courses typically earns a B (3.0). Grades represent both effort and skill so students that put in more effort than average and/or are more skilled than average will do better than this, whereas students who put in less effort than average and/or are less skilled will do worse. It is not easy to earn an A in my course, but several do. On the other hand, it is even more difficult to earn an F in my course but a few students every semester put in nearly no effort and/or do not have the skills necessary for a college-level course in Political Science. I have given failing marks to students whom I think are wonderful people and given A grades to students of whom I am not so fond. Grades are not personal statements on your character, they are a professional opinion of the work you submit.

DO learn how to question grades respectfully – I do my best to communicate expectations and make sure my comments on graded assignments pinpoint areas where you did well and areas where you needed to put in some more work. There will, however, occasionally be questions about the grade you receive. I will NOT change a grade or let you resubmit an assignment simply because you want a better grade. If, however, you think I made a mistake I will consider changing a grade ONLY after the following conditions have been met: 1) You must wait at least 24 hours but no more than two weeks after your grade is submitted to SpartanLearn to file a complaint and 2) You must submit in writing (*typed* and *printed* out) a detailed explanation of why you think you deserve a different grade. I will review your submission and give you my final decision within a week of receipt at which time I will consider the “negotiation” complete and any further appeals on the issue will be directed to the university Grade Appeal procedure.