

# Environmental Health Policy

Public Health 232 / Political Science 229 , Fall 2017

Tuesday, Thursday: 12:30-1:45 PM

Location: Meliora 206

**Instructor:** Katrina Smith Korfmacher, PhD  
Associate Professor of Environmental Medicine, Public Health Sciences, & Community Health; Director,  
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**Office hours:** Tue & Thu 2-3 PM location TBA (Professor Korfmacher)

**Course Description:** Public health professionals, researchers, and community groups recognize that the physical environment has significant impacts on health. This course focuses on the skills, tools, and approaches needed to address the root causes of environmental health problems through policy processes. This is an advanced reading and writing-intensive course that expects students have foundational knowledge in public health, policy, and/or environmental science. Students will develop their understanding of the U.S. environmental policy system, environmental health issues, and problem-solving frameworks. Emphasizing local perspectives on environmental justice in the U.S., the course will include in-depth case studies of lead poisoning, health impacts of global transportation systems, and urban land use, among others. Each issue will be examined in the context of federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and relevant stakeholders, systems and strategies. Students will conduct a major independent policy research and writing project on an issue of their choice. This course is designed to introduce students to the development, structure, and implementation of environmental health policy at local, national, and global scales.

**Prerequisites:** Not open to freshman; Prerequisites: PH 101 or PH 116, PH 102; or permission of instructor

**Learning Objectives:** Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Describe the origins of the U.S. environmental federal policy framework as it relates to public health;
- Demonstrate a problem orientation by identifying trends, conditions, and interests Be able to **map the policy context** of an environmental health problem in terms agencies, policies and stakeholders
- Describe health hazards of goods movement (air), built environment (land use), and lead (housing);
- Develop and discuss multiple potential approaches to manage environmental health problems;
- Analyze the distributive nature of policy alternatives with respect to environmental justice and health disparities
- Communicate a position on real-world environmental health issues in policy memo and oral format.

**Student Evaluation:** The grade for the course will be determined by the following:

- Midterm Exam: 20%
- Policy memos: 50% (10% for first three; 20% for policy research memo)
- Second Exam: 20%
- Class Participation: 10%

**Readings:**

**Required Textbook:** Environmental Health Law (Carruth and Goldstein, 2013).

Daily readings from the text and additional sources will be indicated on Blackboard.

All readings should be completed BEFORE the class period for which they are assigned

**Policy memos:** You will write four policy memos. The first three policy memos (2 page maximum) relate to the major case studies presented in class; the fourth is a longer (5-10 page) 'policy brief' based on your independent research. Detailed instructions will be provided for each memo. Policy memos are challenging to write effectively: consult me or the Writing Center for help well in advance of deadlines and if in doubt, submit a draft.

**Assignments and events:** short exercises, maps, and research questions will be assigned to help you prepare for class. These will not be graded but their timely and quality completion will be considered **part of your participation grade**. When out-of-class events/speakers are assigned, let me know ASAP if you cannot attend so we can work together to find an alternative way for you to prepare to contribute to class.

**Class Participation:** in addition to attending every class and several outside events, you are expected to contribute to group learning through active, prepared, thoughtful, and respectful engagement in class discussions and exercises. This is encouraged by including “participation” as part of the final grade. Remember that there are multiple ways to participate and that quality matters more than quantity; please see me if you have questions or concerns. If you must miss a class, notify me as soon as you are aware of the situation (or as soon as possible after, if it is an emergency). YOU are responsible for connecting with other students to get notes/materials/updates.

**Technology:** Except when requested by the instructor for a particular class, **do NOT use computers, tablets or phones during lectures**. If you need to take notes in class on a keyboard or to refer to readings, please email or see me to discuss this; in this case, you will be expected to disconnect from the internet during class.

**Extensions:** If a situation arises which makes you unable to complete an assignment on time, you may request an extension if you meet one of the two criteria listed below. Barring an excused extension from the professor, **late assignments will be marked down 10% for every 24-hour period**. Some assignments may have a different policy, i.e. they may not be accepted at all after the due date; this will be specified when the assignment is given. You MAY be granted an extension IF you contact the professor at least 24 hours before the day/time the assignment is due (or as soon as the situation arises, if within 24 hours) by email or in person AND

- The situation was unforeseeable (i.e., family emergency, severe illness) – not that you have three tests on the same day, a sports event, or a long-weekend trip.
- You provide documentation of illness or other extenuating circumstance

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** Students and faculty at the University must agree to adhere to high standards of academic honesty in all of the work that we do. Incoming University of Rochester students must read and sign an academic honesty policy statement to indicate that they understand the general principles upon which our work is based. The College Board on Academic Honesty website gives further information on our policies and procedures: [www.rochester.edu/college/honesty](http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty). I take violations of academic honesty very seriously. Suspected violations will be pursued vigorously following the College’s procedures for academic dishonesty. Forms of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Plagiarism: representing someone else’s work or writing as your own. *When in doubt, cite the source of your information, and never use someone else’s text directly in your work without putting it in quotes and fully citing the source.*
- Cheating: using unauthorized information or sources for an assignment or exam.
- Assisting others in academic dishonesty,
- Falsifying information.
- Using your work from another course or project as work in this class.

You are encouraged to discuss course readings and assignments with your fellow students. However, all written work must be done independently and not in collaboration with another. In order to make appropriate help available for your essays, I encourage you to consult with me and with the College Writing Center. All graded work will require citations and “Works Cited” following the MLA format.

**EXPECT CHANGES:** the syllabus (readings, topics, assignments, and due dates) may change depending on the class progress, interests, and opportunities that arise. You are responsible for knowing about announcements made in class or communicated via Blackboard or email (remember to get details from a classmate if you miss class!).

**Class Schedule:**

#	Date	Topic	Assignments
1	8/31	Introduction to the course and the U.S. policy system	
2	9/5	CASE I: Goods movement in southern California	
3	9/7	The Clean Air Act: When, Why, and How	
4	9/12a	The Clean Air Act: Troubles with Trucks	
5	9/14	Public responses to air pollution and health: Perspectives from China and LA	
6	9/19	Goods movement and NEPA: from China Shipping to BNSF	
7	9/21	Local responses to goods movement health impacts	
8	9/26	Ports, policies, and environmental justice- THE what, why, and how of THE Impact Project	Memo 1 due
9	9/28	CASE II: Health, equity, and the built environment in Duluth, Minnesota	
10	10/3	Local land use planning and zoning	
11	10/5	Health Impact Assessments: Bringing health into non-health policies	
	10/10	NO CLASS- FALL BREAK	
12	10/12	Mid-term Exam	MID TERM EXAM
13	10/17	Superfund, RCRA, and Brownfields Redevelopment (Terry NOTO)	
14	10/19	Brownfields redevelopment and health equity in Duluth	
15	10/24	CASE III: Lead poisoning prevention	Memo 2 due
16	10/26	Lead litigation: Why don't we just sue them?	
17	10/31	Federal frameworks, local gaps	
18	11/23	Local lead poisoning prevention efforts	
19	11/7	Rochester's local lead law	
20	11/9	Flint, drinking water, and the limits to local control	
21	11/14	Occupational health, policy, and lead: OSHA, RRP and occupational lead exposure in Nigeria	Memo 3 due
22	11/16	Agriculture, pesticides, and farmworker health: WNY farmworker justice	

#	Date	Topic	Assignments
23	11/21	Guest lecture: Dr. Karl Korfmacher – Fracking, air quality, and health in rural Pennsylvania: Maps, models, and policy	
	11/23	<i>NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING</i>	
24	11/28	Research memo presentations	
25	11/30	Research memo presentations	
26	12/5	Chemicals policy reform: Local laws, CPSC, and TSCA	
27	12/7	Guest Lecture: Dr. Nancy Chin. Policy responses to severe weather events response and adaptation in Ladakh, India	
28	12/12	Global climate change and local adaptation policies in the U.S.	Memo 4 (Policy Research Brief) due
	<b>12/19</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM (7:15 PM)</b>	

\*Readings/assignments to be completed / submitted PRIOR TO class on this date