

# Environmental Health Policy

Public Health 232 / Political Science 229, Spring 2022

Mon/Wed 12:30-1:45 PM

Location: ZOOM/Wilmot 116

UPDATED 1/15/22

**Instructor:** Katrina Smith Korfmacher, PhD  
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**Office hours:** by appointment

**Course Description:** Public health professionals, researchers, and community groups recognize that the physical environment impacts health and contributes significantly to health disparities. 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, transportation systems, and urban land use, with a particular focus on the implications of climate change. Students will conduct a major independent policy research and writing project and a series of real-world policy memos.

**Prerequisites:** Not open to freshmen; Prerequisites: PHLT 101 or PHLT 116; or permission of instructor (based on academic or applied background in environmental science and/or public policy)

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

1. Describe the U.S. environmental federal policy framework as it relates to public health;
2. Articulate the importance of local/state policy strategies for environmental health protection
3. Demonstrate a problem orientation to env. health issues by identifying trends, conditions, and interests
4. Be able to map the policy context of an environmental health problem in terms agencies, policies and stakeholders
5. Describe the environmental health externalities of at least three specific issues (e.g. global trade (air), built environment (land use), and lead (housing);
6. Develop and discuss multiple potential systems approaches to manage environmental health problems;
7. Analyze the distributive nature of policy alternatives with respect to environmental justice and health disparities
8. Communicate their position on real-world environmental health issues in policy memo and oral format.

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

- Two exams: (midterm and final, in-class, 15% each)
- Three policy memos: 30% (10% each for first two policy memos; 20% for final policy brief)
- Poster: 5%
- Short assignments: 24% (approximately 12 weekly assignments, 2 points each)
- Class Participation: 11%

**Readings:**

- Required Textbook: Environmental Health Law (Carruth and Goldstein, 2013). (UR library owns e-book).
- 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

**Exams:** The exams will give you feedback on your comprehension of the substance of environmental health policies. Two exams; each worth 15% (30% total). These are planned to be given in-class (mid-term) and during designated exam period. Expected to be multiple choice/short answer, but format may change due to remote testing needs.

**Policy memos:** You will write three policy memos. The first two 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! Consult me or the Writing Center for help well in advance of deadlines ([writing.rochester.edu/tutoring/index.html](http://writing.rochester.edu/tutoring/index.html)). You are encouraged to submit a draft for instructor feedback (by email one week prior to final deadline).

**Short assignments:** Approximately one per week as noted on Blackboard. Most must be uploaded by 5PM Sunday (points: 2 is complete, 1 if incomplete or late, 0 if not completed). May relate to readings, constitute applied exercises, out of class events, or progress on your policy brief.

**Poster:** You will have the opportunity to share your research with your classmates and interested others in a "poster session." We will discuss presentation options; low tech is fine!

**Extended class and out-of-class activities:** This course follows the College credit hour policy for four-credit courses (meets two times weekly = three hours per week plus independent out-of-class activities for an average of one academic hour per week). Out of class activities include independent and group exercises, data collection, mapping activities, etc. We will have 3-4 "extended sessions" (11:40-1:45). Please let me know NOW if you anticipate a schedule conflict.

**Class Participation:** in addition to attending every class, 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 a significant part of your grade. There are multiple ways to participate. 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), preferably well before the class you will miss. YOU are responsible for connecting with other students to get notes and making up for missed work.

**Technology use in class:** Except when requested by the instructor for a particular class, **do NOT use computers, tablets or phones during in-person classes**. If you need to take notes in class on a keyboard or use assistive technology, please email or see me to let me know; you will be expected to disconnect from the internet during class. **For remote classes**, you are expected to be fully present via ZOOM, with video enabled if your circumstances allow.

**Late Work:** Work is on its due date (on or before time due as indicated on Blackboard). Barring an extension from the professor, **late assignments will be marked down 10% for every 24-hour period past the due date**. Due to the pandemic, we are providing one 24 hour extension without penalty or explanation over the course of the semester (i.e. due to travel, testing, exposure concerns, supporting needs, etc.). Exceptions: some assignments may not be accepted at all after the due date; this will be specified when the assignment is given.

**Extensions:** If a situation arises which makes you unable to complete an assignment on time, you may request an extension IF YOU MEET BOTH OF THE TWO CRITERIA listed here. You may be granted an extension IF 1) you contact the professor at least 24 hours before the time the assignment is due (or as soon as the situation arises, if within 24 hours) by email or in person; AND 2) The situation was unforeseeable (i.e., family emergency, severe illness) – (e.g. NOT that you have three tests on the same day, an event, or a long-weekend trip).

**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...as well as any surprises the pandemic has in store for us! In general, deadlines for major assignments will not change, but some topics or events may. You are responsible for announcements made in class or communicated via Blackboard or email (remember to get details from a classmate if you miss class!). I will send you a Blackboard Announcement of syllabus or other changes; sign up to receive those!

**RECORDING, ZOOM AND REMOTE LEARNING:** Following University guidelines, all classes will be held remote by Zoom through at least January 28. You are expected to participate fully and synchronously unless unable due to travel or illness. Please notify me in advance if you will not be able to attend class (whether by zoom or in person). You no doubt have plenty of experience with remote learning, but please review: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>. *Zoom classes* will be recorded and posted to Blackboard (please let me know if adding auto-transcription is helpful). If you give me advance notice of class absence and note that this would be helpful, I will do my best to record *in-person classes* and/or to provide a remote (zoom) participation option. Open and timely communication will help me help you! I respect your privacy and trust that you will do your very best to attend in person unless there are illness concerns.

**TECHNOLOGY NEEDS/REQUIREMENTS:**

Requirements are those of a "standard" online course. Students will need a laptop with a webcam, 8GB of memory and 256GB of local storage. This should allow you to use Blackboard, library resources, and the web (to access journals, articles, etc.), and to have the ability to watch Zoom lectures (synchronously and asynchronously).

**STATEMENT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The University is committed to protecting the health and safety of the entire community – students, faculty and staff. For this reason, it is mandatory that everyone wear a mask in University buildings and observe appropriate social distancing, including classrooms. We will follow current mask guidance for in person classes. As of January 2022, this means KN-95, N-95 or double masking. Make sure to **wear a mask appropriately (e.g. over nose and mouth) if you are attending class in person, and you must do this for every class session and for the entire duration of each class session.** If you fail to do this, you will be politely reminded of the requirement and then asked to leave if you do not comply.

**Class Schedule:**

#	Date	Topic	Assignments due
1	1/12	Introduction to the course and the U.S. policy system	
2	1/17	The Clean Air Act: An Introduction	
3	1/24	CASE I: Goods movement in southern California	
4	1/26	Introduction to memo-writing	
5	1/31	(IN PERSON!) The Clean Air Act: Troubles with Trucks	[PRACTICE MEMO]
6	2/2	Goods movement and NEPA: from China Shipping to BNSF	
7	2/7	Ports, policies, and environmental justice - THE Impact Project	
8	2/9	Cap, Trade, and EJ in CA	
9	2/14	CASE II: Health, equity, and the built environment in Duluth, MN	MEMO 1 DUE
10	2/16	Local land use planning and zoning	
11	2/21	Health Impact Assessments: Bringing health into non-health policies	
12	2/23	Superfund, RCRA, and Brownfields Redevelopment	
13	2/28	MID TERM EXAM	MID TERM EXAM
14	3/2	Tree Equity	
		SPRING BREAK (3/5-3/13)	
15	3/14	Brownfields in Duluth	
16	3/16	CASE III: Lead poisoning prevention in Rochester, NY	
17	3/21	Local lead poisoning prevention efforts	MEMO 2 DUE
18	3/23	Federal frameworks, local gaps	
19	3/28	Rochester's local lead law	
20	3/30	Climate Teach-In: Special Joint Session with EES 103 11:40-1:45	<b>DOUBLE SESSION</b>
21	4/4	Safe Drinking Water Act	
22	4/6	Lead and drinking water	
23	4/11	Occupational Health and OSHA	
24	4/13	Agriculture, pesticides, and farmworker health	
25	4/18	Chemicals Policy framework	
26	4/20	DOUBLE SESSION: Policy Brief Presentations (11:40-1:45)	DOUBLE SESSION
27	4/24	Consumer products	
28	4/26	Climate change and local adaptation policies in the U.S; evaluations	POLICY BRIEF DUE
	<b>TBA</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	FINAL EXAM

\*Readings/assignments to be completed / submitted ON OR BEFORE TO THE assigned date/time, 10%/day penalty