

Environmental Health Policy
Public Health 232 / Political Science 229, Spring 2024
Tu/Th 12:30-1:45 PM
Location: Morey Hall Room 205
SYLLABUS – UPDATED 1/27/24

Instructor: Katrina Smith Korfmacher, PhD
Professor of Environmental Medicine, Public Health Sciences, & Community Health; Director,
Community Engagement Core, Environmental Health Sciences Center
katrina_korfmacher@urmc.rochester.edu

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 builds on students' 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, urban land use, and the implications of climate change for environmental justice. Students will integrate what they learn into a series of real-world policy memos on various topics.

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 quality), 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) (30%)
- Three policy memos: 35% (10% each for first two policy memos; 15% for final policy brief)
- Housing, Health and Env. Justice reflection: 4%
- Short assignments: 16% (8 short assignments, 2 points each)
- Class Participation: 15%

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 (2 mid-terms).

Policy memos: You will write three policy memos (35% total). The first two policy memos (2 page maximum, 10% each) relate to the major case studies presented in class; the third is a slightly longer (3-5 page, 15%) 'policy brief' on a piece of pending state legislation. 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). You are encouraged to submit a draft for instructor feedback (by email one week prior to final deadline).

Short assignments: Approximately 8 (2% each, total 16%) as noted on Blackboard. Most must be uploaded by 5PM Sunday (points: 2 is complete, 1 if incomplete or late (if submitted by 5/5/24), 0 if not completed). These may relate to readings, constitute applied exercises, out of class events, or progress on your policy brief.

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 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, attending community events, etc. We have a special opportunity to participate in an on-campus Housing, Health, and Environmental Justice workshop **9-4 on May 1**. Please let me know NOW if you anticipate a schedule conflict so we can work together to find a suitable alternative. There will also be a final reflection (1-2 pages, 4%) based on the workshop.

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 (15%). 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.

Zoom: This is an IN PERSON class. However, from time to time (unexpected emergency, illness, remote speaker) we may need to use zoom - so keep this link handy! If you have such an emergency and need to miss a class, let me know in advance if you would like to participate remotely and/or have a recording so I can activate zoom in our room! <https://rochester.zoom.us/j/99393391657> Please review: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>. When someone lets me know they are sick, I will try to record and post via Panopto to Blackboard (please let me know if adding auto-transcription is helpful).

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**. **If any remote classes are held**, 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 memos will be marked down 10% for every 24-hour period past the due date; Short assignments are 50% off (1 point) if late (and submitted before 5PM 5/5/24)**.

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 THESE TWO CRITERIA: 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 sports event, performance or a long-weekend trip).

Artificial Intelligence: Students are strongly discouraged, but not forbidden, from using AI-powered tools, like ChatGPT, to summarize readings or to write drafts of papers. The use of these tools undermines the learning objectives of this

course—to develop the ability to read with precision, to think clearly, and to respond to prompts with clearly argued papers grounded in evidence from the sources provided. Use of these tools will, as well, make it much harder for students to complete required assignments and could trigger an academic honesty violation.

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. 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 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 others. **All written work will require citations and “Works Cited” following the MLA format.** See me if you have any questions about references.

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 world has in store for us! In general, deadlines for major assignments will not change, but 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; make sure to sign up to receive those!

TECHNOLOGY NEEDS/REQUIREMENTS:

Requirements are those of a “standard” course. Students will need a laptop with a webcam (in case of remote classes) that allows 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). Most assignments submitted as Word documents.

DISABILITIES

The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources. The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can reach the Office of Disability Resources at: disability@rochester.edu; (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall; www.rochester.edu/college/disability.

INCLUSION:

I am committed to inclusion, and welcome students of all backgrounds and abilities. Services and reasonable accommodations are available to students who discuss them with me in advance. Some topics or discussions may be upsetting to certain students. Please feel free to let me know if there are circumstances affecting your ability to participate in class or your full participation in this course.

Class Schedule: AS OF 1/27/24 – CHECK BLACKBOARD FOR UPDATES!

#	Date	Topic	Assignments due
1	1/18	Introduction to the course and the U.S. policy system	
2	1/23	The Clean Air Act: An Introduction	SA #1 (1/21)
3	1/25	CASE I: Mobile sources of air pollution in S. California	
4	1/30	The Clean Air Act: Troubles with Trucks	SA #2 (1/28)
5	2/1	Introduction to problem framing and memo-writing	
6	2/6	Goods movement and NEPA: from China Shipping to BNSF	SA #3 (2/3) mini-memo
7	2/8	Ports, policies, and environmental justice - THE Impact Project	
8	2/13	CASE II: Health, equity, and the built environment in Duluth, MN	SA #4 (2/11) pre-memo
9	2/15	Local government's role in environmental public health	
10	2/20	GUEST LECTURE: Prof. Molly McNulty - Chevron: Then and Now	MEMO 1 DUE 2/18
11	2/22	Intro to land use and planning	
12	2/27	Health Impact Assessments	SA #5 (due 2/25)
13	2/29	Superfund, RCRA, and brownfields; exam review	
14	3/5	IN CLASS EXAM (Mid-term exam #1)	EXAM IN CLASS
15	3/7	CASE III: Lead poisoning prevention in Rochester and beyond	
		SPRING BREAK (3/9-3/17)	
16	3/19	GUEST LECTURE: Mitch Gruber, Foodlink/Rochester City Council	No SA (spring break)
17	3/21	Local lead poisoning prevention efforts (Brookton hearing)	
18	3/26	GUEST LECTURE: Eve Gartner, EarthJustice	SA #6 (due 3/24)
19	3/28	Federal laws, local gaps	
20	4/2	Safe Drinking Water Act and lead	3/30 MEMO 2 DUE
21	4/4	Occupational health and lead	
22	4/9	CASE IV: Climate change and health in New York	SA #7 (due 4/7)
23	4/11	GUEST LECTURE: Claire Henri, Climate Solutions Accelerator	
24	4/16	Occupational Health, heat, and climate change	SA #8 (due 4/15 – OOC)
25	4/18	Agriculture, pesticides, and farmworker health in NYS	
26	4/23	Tree Equity; exam review	No SA (exam prep)
27	4/25	IN CLASS EXAM (Mid-term exam #2)	EXAM IN CLASS
28	4/30	Class wrap-up and preparation for workshop	
	5/1	[Health, Housing, and Environmental Justice Workshop]	ALL DAY EVENT (9-5)
	5/5	FINAL DEADLINE, 5PM (all late work and final memo)	MEMO #3 DUE

*Readings/assignments to be completed / submitted ON OR BEFORE TO THE assigned date/time