

**ENVS 217: Environmental Policy**  
**Prof. Sally Geislar**  
**Fall 2019**

**Course Schedule Information**

Number: ENVS 217  
Class Meets: MW 12:30-1:45P  
Room: Madaleva 305  
Website: Available in Blackboard

**Instructor Contact Information**

Office & Hours: Spes Unica 352  
Mon 10:30-11:30 || Tues 1-3pm ||  
Wed 10:30-11:30 & 2-3pm  
E-mail: sgeislar@saintmarys.edu  
\*\*Please allow up to one 24 hour business  
day for email replies

**Course Description**

Virtually every action that a person takes on a daily basis affects the global environment on which all life depends. Although individual decisions about how to treat the environment matter to the health of the global environment and the life that depends on it, the collective decisions that guide and constrain individual decisions often have far greater impact. These decisions, made through action or inaction by governments, comprise environmental public policy.

This course introduces the processes by which policy is made at local, state, national (i.e., U.S.), and international levels of government with attention to the special challenges of creating sound environmental policy. Together we will examine the strengths and weaknesses of policies currently in place and explore proposals for new policy solutions for the most pressing environmental problems of our times.

*Empowering students by preparing them to intervene constructively in the environmental policy process is a primary goal of this course.*

This course is designed to provide students experience in thinking and writing about policies on a breadth of environmental topics as well as in-depth engagement with an environmental policy issue. Students' written work in this course is intended for an audience of legislators, environmental organizations, and the public in taking action on environmental issues. Students will also be prepared to take action on an environmental policy issue of their choice.

**Learning Outcomes**

*Sophia Program: LO1 Knowledge Acquisition and Integration of Learning.*

Students completing this course will:

- demonstrate understanding of basic social science concepts, models, and theories pertaining to one or more of the following: 1) human behavior; 2) political systems and institutions; 3) economic systems and institutions; and 4) social systems and institutions.
- use social science concepts and theories to explain, in the language of the discipline, one or more of the following: 1) human behavior; 2) political systems and institutions; 3) economic systems and institutions; and 4) social systems and institutions.
- demonstrate the ability to use the tools of a specific social science to address the issues that face her as a citizen.

*Sophia Program: LO3 Engagement Outcomes.*

Students completing this course will:

- assess social conditions and discern human needs. (A)
- be able to respond as an agent of change. (B)

*Environmental Studies Major.*

This is a required course for the Environmental Studies major. Students completing this course will:

- Understand and analyze the human actions underlying environmental problems.
- Identify and analyze connections between the natural environment and social justice concerns due to the unequal impact of environmental challenges on groups, for example, as distinguished by genus, race, ethnicity, gender, class, culture, sexuality, or geography.
- Articulate the historical forces shaping cultural conceptions of nature.
- Understand the interplay between local and global scales of sustainability within natural and human systems.
- Integrate knowledge and skills from multiple disciplines to evaluate environmental challenges and potential solutions.
- Develop community, management, and leadership skills necessary for advocacy on environmental challenges.

**Required Texts**

Birkland, Thomas A. 2015. *An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Routledge. ISBN: 978-0765646620

Rosenbaum, Walter A. 2016. *Environmental Politics and Policy*. 10<sup>th</sup> ed. CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1506345376.

Mason & Lang. 2017. *Sustainable Diets: How ecological nutrition can transform consumption and the food system*. Routledge. ISBN: 978-0-415-74472-0

**Statement re Disabilities**

If you have had documented academic adjustments (accommodations) in the past, or think you may be eligible for them presently, you should contact Ms. Iris Giamo in the Disabilities Resource Office (DRO), Madeleva 103C, by email ([igiamo@saintmarys.edu](mailto:igiamo@saintmarys.edu)) for an appointment to address this matter. The DRO is responsible for coordinating academic accommodations each semester and will issue a letter of documentation to your faculty for the current semester. I must receive a letter of eligibility from the DRO on your behalf in order to honor any requests for such accommodations. Securing reasonable accommodations requires timely action on the part of the student. Please contact me for an appointment to discuss how we will implement your accommodations.

## Graded Course Components

The grades for assignments will be weighted as follows:

Course Deliverable	Subtotal (%)	Total (%)
<i>Course Engagement</i>		<b>30</b>
Early-term Office Hour Visit	3	
Mid-term Office Hour Visit	2	
Discussion Questions	12	
Informed In-class Participation	13	
<i>Policy Memo</i>		<b>15</b>
Policy Memo (Pick 1 Topic: A-G)	15	
<i>Policy Analysis Paper</i>		<b>35</b>
Problem Statement	2	
Policy Brief	15	
White Paper	18	
<i>Policy Advocacy Action &amp; Reflection</i>		<b>20</b>
Select Advocacy Action	2	
Advocacy Action & Reflection	18	
Total		<b>100</b>

## Attendance

While I expect full and engaged attendance, I will not take daily attendance for this course. Nevertheless, I find it good practice to list the College's excused absence policy (as of 08/07/2019) here: "In the case of an excused absence, a student is entitled to make up any major assignments that were missed. Students receive excused absences when seriously ill and certified by a doctor; weddings or funerals in the student's family; and participation in varsity sports, college music or dance group, or an ROTC activity."

If plan to or unexpectedly miss a class, it is your responsibility to ensure that you submit any assignments (including discussion questions), obtain any information you missed, and that you have a clear understanding of the reading for that day. Your first step should be to reach out to fellow classmates for support, and always feel free to come to the professor's office hours to discuss course issues.

## Changes to Course Readings or Schedule

This syllabus is a "living document" and is subject to change. Any changes to course readings and or schedule will be made in advance via Blackboard and students will be notified via their Saint Mary's email account, so please check this account at least once a day.

## Cancellation of Class Meetings

If I have to cancel class on short notice, I will notify students via e-mail. If I am not present when class begins, students should wait 15 minutes. If I do not arrive after 15 minutes and no one

brings a message about my late arrival, students should consider class canceled. I have never had to put this policy into practice and don't anticipate doing so now, but the point of having such a policy is to provide an orderly way to deal with contingencies if they arise.

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic Integrity is vital to the fundamental purposes of research and education. If you value your own education, you will diligently uphold the principles of Academic Integrity. A violation of Academic Integrity (including misrepresenting the work or ideas of others as your own or cheating on an exam) is grounds for failure on the assignment, and notice must be given to the Academic Affairs Office. A second offense will result in failure of the course and additional penalties as determined by the College up to and including expulsion from the College. Early in the course, we will review the principles of Academic Integrity to ensure we all have a shared understanding of their application. In the meantime, I encourage you to review the College's Statement of Academic Honesty at <https://www.saintmarys.edu/portal/first-year/policies>. It explains the standards of our community and the conduct required of both students and faculty to maintain those standards.

### **Policy Regarding Late Submissions**

Students will have a ten minute grace period for each assignment submission after which point the assignment will be considered late. The penalty for turning in an assignment late will be a one-third of a letter-grade deduction on that assignment for each 24 hour period after the grace period. For example, if your assignment is 11 minutes late, the maximum grade you could possibly earn is A rather than an A+, if it is 24 hours and 11 minutes late, A- is your maximum potential grade.

**\*\*It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the document they submit is the correct document, in a readable format that is accessible to the professor, and that it has uploaded correctly. If the wrong document (or a mal-formatted document) is uploaded to Blackboard it will be treated as if no paper had been turned in and late penalties will accrue accordingly.**

### **Assignments**

All assignments are **due at prior to class time on Blackboard** on the day they are listed "Due".

*NOTE: Some assignments will also be brought to class.*

Unless otherwise instructed, assignments should be submitted in a Word document, 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins, double-spaced with no extra spaces between paragraphs. Your name, email, course, and assignment name should be included on every document you submit.

More detailed assignment prompts will be distributed for writing assignments found below. For due dates, please refer to the schedule of classes below or the Blackboard Calendar. Deliverables should be submitted to Blackboard before class on the day they are listed as due (see schedule at end of this document).

### **Course Engagement (30%)**

**Two Office Hour Visits (3% & 2%).** This assignment asks students to visit me in office hours at two points in the semester: once in the early part of the term and once at the midway part. This gives me a chance to get to know you and for both of us to reflect on your progress.

**Discussion Questions (12%).** These assignments must be completed prior to class on the due date and are intended to prepare the student for in-class discussion.

**Informed In-class Participation (13%).** Class meetings for this course will typically include a mix of lecture, general discussion, and group work. *I expect regular, informed, and engaged participation by all students in the class.* For your participation to be meaningful for yourself and others, it is essential that you complete readings before class, attend class regularly, and contribute to discussion and group work.

### **Policy Memos (Pick 1: A-G) (15%)**

*700-1000 words single spaced*

**DUE on Relevant Policy Topic Day** A policy memo is a concise summary of a particular issue, the policy options to deal with it, and some recommendations on the best option. Students will write a policy memo on one of the policy topics covered in the latter portion of the course. Students should select a policy issue different than that addressed in their White Paper and the related Policy Brief described below.

### **Policy Analysis Paper (35%)**

**Problem Statement (2%) DUE Mon Sept 9th** Students will submit a 250-350 word description of the policy problem that they plan to examine for the Policy Brief and Policy White Paper. Students must choose a policy issue that differs from the topic they choose for their Policy Memo (A-G). Briefly summarize the topic, the issue at hand, relevant policies (existing or proposed), who is affected by this issue (why should we care?).

**Policy Brief (15%) DUE Oct 16th** Policy briefs are intended to inform a non-specialist target audience (e.g., law-maker). Students will write a policy brief (2000-2500 words single-spaced) in which they provide background information outlining a policy problem related to a topic of their choosing. The Brief will include a description of policy options, but will not take a position on which policy approach is best.

**Policy White Paper (18%). DUE at Scheduled Finals Time** Students will write a 4000-5000 word single-spaced White Paper intended to inform (and in some cases, persuade) policy-makers in making a decision on the policy topic of the students' choosing. This paper should build on information gathered and presented in the Policy Brief by including analysis of the several different policy options (including the status quo, i.e., do nothing), the relevant stakeholders involved, and your recommendation for action.

**Environmental Policy Advocacy Action & Reflection (20%)**

The purpose of this assignment is to enable the student to participate in the policy arena and observe firsthand the various influences on the policy process.

***Advocacy Action Selection (2%) DUE Mon Sept 23rd*** Submit a brief statement (approximately 150-250 words) indicating which environmental policy advocacy action you plan to complete from the list below. Follow the assignment prompt regarding details to include in your problem statement based on your action selection.

***Action and Reflection (18%) DUE Wed Dec 11th*** Students will select and participate in one of the listed policy experiences, and submit a 500-700 word reflection of their experience. For full credit, students should be prepared to discuss their experiences on the last day of classes.

1. Students may interview a city, county, state, or national legislator from the district in which the students reside. Students should identify an issue relevant to the legislator about which they have an opinion. In the interview, students should present their own perspectives on the issue to the legislator, and provide evidence in support for their position.
2. Students may participate in a day of action (with professor preapproval) organized by an environmental organization or lobby group. I will provide a list of suggested organizations, though the student may also request approval to participate in an event or with an organization not on this list. This assignment will give students a hands-on experience with a different dimension of the legislative process.
3. Students may draft and submit an op-ed piece for a local or national paper on an environmental topic of interest and concern to the student. In the piece students should voice recommendations for change based on evidence.

**Schedule of Readings and Assignments appears on the following pages.**

### Schedule of Readings and Assignments

All listed readings that are not drawn from the course's three required texts (Birkland, Rosenbaum, and Mason & Lang) will be available on Blackboard.

Week   Date		Lecture Activity / Topic	Reading Assignment	DUE
1	(M) 26-Aug	Intro to the Course and Environmental Thinking		
	(W) 28-Aug	What is Policy?	<b>No Class Meeting:</b> Read Birkland Ch 1	
2	(M) 2-Sep	Why Environmental Policy, and a Brief History	The Brundtland Report, Overview and Ch 1 pp. 5-39; Rosenbaum Ch 1, pp. 7-25	
	(W) 4-Sep	The Commons	Hardin, pp 1243-1248; Ostrom, pp 8-21	
<b>Policy Process and Power</b>				
3	(M) 9-Sep	Elements of Policy Making System, Federal Policy	Birkland Ch 2; Rosenbaum Ch 3	<b>White Paper Problem Statement</b>
	(W) 11-Sep	State and Local Governments	Rabe 2008, pp. 105-128; Homsy & Warner 2014 pp. 46-66	<b>1st Office Visit</b>
4	(M) 16-Sep	International Environmental Governance	DeCanio 2003, pp.1-23; Victor pp. 124-132; Keohane & Oppenheimer pp. 133-141	
	(W) 18-Sep	Unofficial Actors, Types of Knowledge	Birkland Ch 5; Berkes et al., pp. 1251-1262	
5	(M) 23-Sep	Agenda Setting & Power	Birkland Ch 6	<b>Select Advocacy Action</b>
	(W) 25-Sep	Policy Types	Birkland Ch 7	
<b>Policy Tools</b>				
6	(M) 30-Sep	Risk Assessment & Environmental Justice	Rosenbaum Ch 4; Agyeman et al. 2016, pp. 321-336	
	(W) 2-Oct	Cost Benefit Analysis and Market Approaches	Rosenbaum Ch 5; Rabe 2016 pp.103-119	
7	(M) 7-Oct	<b>Policy Brief Workshop</b>	In-Class Exercise, Readings TBD	<b>Draft Brief</b>
	(W) 9-Oct	Behavioral Science in Policy	Carrico et al. 2015, pp. 177-179; Dietz et al. 2009, pp.18452-18456, Hukkinen 2016, pp. 329-	
8	(M) 14-Oct	Collaborative Governance	Emerson et al. 2015, pp. 1-29; Bodin 2017, pp. 1-10; Case Study Website	
	(W) 16-Oct	Decision Making & Policy Analysis	Birkland Ch 8	<b>Policy Brief &amp; 2nd Office Visit</b>

9	(M) 21-Oct	Fall Break: No Class		
	(W) 23-Oct	Fall Break: No Class		
<b>Policy Analysis</b>				
10	(M) 28-Oct	Policy Design and Tools	Birkland Ch 9	
	(W) 30-Oct	Policy Implementation	Birkland Ch 10	
<b>Policy Topics</b>				
11	(M) 4-Nov	Policy Topic: Public Lands	Rosenbaum Ch 9; Sax Experpts	<b>Memo A</b>
	(W) 6-Nov	Policy Topic: Air Quality	Rosenbaum Ch 6, pp. 198-218	<b>Memo B</b>
12	(M) 11-Nov	Policy Topic: Water Quality	Rosenbaum Ch 6, pp. 219-37; Sunderland et al. 2019, pp.131-47; Cordner et al. 2019, pp.157-	<b>Memo C</b>
	(W) 13-Nov	Policy Topic: Energy	Rosenbaum Ch 8	<b>Memo D</b>
13	(M) 18-Nov	Policy Topic: Waste	Gupt & Sahay 2015, pp. 595-610; EC 2015 pp. 2-21; de Man & Friege 2016, pp. 93-5	<b>Memo E</b>
	(W) 20-Nov	Policy Topic: Climate Policy	IPCC Report, UN SDGs, Green New Deal,	<b>Memo F</b>
14	(M) 25-Nov	Policy Topic: Food I	Mason and Lang, Intro, Ch 1 & 2	<b>Memo G</b>
	(W) 27-Nov	Thanksgiving Break		
15	(M) 2-Dec	Policy Topic: Food II	Mason and Lang, Ch 4, 5, & 7	<b>Policy Advocacy Action</b>
	(W) 4-Dec	Policy Topic: Food III	Mason and Lang, Ch 8 & 9	
16	(M) 9-Dec	<b>White Paper Workshop</b>	In-Class Exercise, Readings TBD	<b>Draft White Paper</b>
	(W) 11-Dec	Course Wrap Up	Discuss Policy Advocacy Actions	<b>Policy Action Reflection</b>
17			White Paper is due during the scheduled exam time for this course.	<b>White Paper</b>
<b>Good Luck on Exams!</b>				