GOVT 361-02
Introduction to Environmental Policy
Fall 2018

Draft Syllabus 08/16/2018

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

Professor: Jessica Srikantia, PhD
Email: jhpieper@gmu.edu
Office: Arlington Campus, Founder’s Hall, Suite 663
Office hours: Wednesday 11-12 and by appointment
Office Tel: 703-993-2272
Cell number will be provided to all students on first day of class

Class Meetings:
Tuesdays 7:20-10pm
Robinson Hall, B106

OVERVIEW
We live in a time of undeniable and interrelated challenges. Our globalizing systems and way of life are no longer sustainable by the life support systems on which we depend for our survival. We are facing the sixth mass extinction – this one caused by our own hands – and severe degradation in water quality and availability, soil, food quality and distribution, and biodiversity, along with resource depletion, habitat destruction, climate chaos, pollution and contamination on industrial scales, desertification, and related phenomena such as economic exploitation, slavery, war and pestilence. There are systematic and demonstrated patterns in terms of who bears the greatest burdens and who accumulates the greatest advantages from the operative systems. Existing policies have been based on the worldview and framework that created these problems in the first place. Fundamental change will require new ways of seeing, being, acting and relating. Marginalized voices reveal effaced externalities and alternative pathways and possibilities. Perspectives such as ecofeminism teach us the interrelationships among our treatment of the earth, other species, each other, and ourselves, as well as new possibilities. This course begins by supporting each of us in finding a place of peace, well-being and balance from which we can begin to become present to the difficult realities of our current situation and begin the work of healing our relationships, including with ourselves, each other, and the earth. From there, the course examines interconnected dimensions and contexts for understanding our current realities and the systems, policies and practices that have created or exacerbated these realities even while ostensibly designed to ameliorate them. Finally, the course empowers students to connect with new sources of inspiration, vision and power to co-create new realities and a new world based on values of mutual flourishing, authentic sustainability, relational responsibility, and valuing and dignity of all people and of all life and ecological systems in all of their myriad forms.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

I. Knowledge and Understanding
- Understand systems thinking and its importance for environmental issues and policy
- Analyze dynamics of complex systems and the role of context, perspective, social location and structural power dynamics in shaping diverse experiences and interpretations of the "same" events/interventions/etc.
- Excavate both intended and unintended effects of policies
- Understand diverse current environmental issues and their interrelationships
- Recognize the role of worldview/cosmovision and deep assumptions/mental models in shaping how we think and act regarding the environment, and acknowledge diverse worldviews and their differential effects
- Identify some possible pathways for transformation of environmental and sustainability challenges
II. Professional Development
- Recognizing policy effects, including unintended consequences
- Understanding context and its importance in policy considerations
- Developing listening, learning and dialogue across differences
- Developing competence working within complex systems

III. Skills
- Presentation and oral skills
- Writing skills
- Self-awareness
- Policy analysis with reference to issues of sustainability and ecology
- Systems thinking
- Working with and in complexity
- Cultivating creativity and vision

READINGS
Books: (feel free to get any edition as long as you take responsibility for bridging differences yourself)

Required:
Macy, J & Johnstone, C. (2012). Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We’re in without Going Crazy

Highly recommended (would have been required except for cost considerations):

Additional articles, book chapters, videos, and other materials:
Articles, book chapters and other materials to be assigned. The syllabus to be emailed to the class/posted on blackboard will list these materials by class date and topic.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

The course requirements include the following (fuller descriptions of assignments will be handed out in class at appropriate times):

1) Engagement in class, preparation, and mutual support of classmates
2) Group presentations and/or learning activities (each week is a different group, with different groups presenting for a and b, below:
   a. on the readings: 5%
   b. on an environmental policy issue of your choice: 15%
3) Reading response discussion posting prior to class: 10%
4) Reading response annotated bibliography 20%
5) Reflection and exploration journal (or reflection paper) 15%
6) Midterm paper on an issue related to ecology and policy, addressing it from multiple different angles and perspectives and social locations: 5%
7) Final paper and presentation expanding and deepening the work from the midterm paper and situating it in a broader context of the course as a whole and interrelated issues: 30%

Dr. Jessica Srikantia, GOVT 361-002, Introduction to Environmental Policy, Fall 2018, p. 2
Please note that full attendance and participation in class meetings is essential. **Missing more than two class periods lowers your OVERALL grade** by 1/3 for EACH missed class after the first two (e.g., for three missed classes an A- becomes a B+, a B+ becomes a B, etc; for four missed classes, an A- becomes a B, etc.). Two instances of coming substantively late or leaving early count as a missed class. In special cases as appropriate, mutually agreed, additional assignments may be able to function as make-up work for some of the point deductions.

*Cell phones, text messaging devices, email, web-browsing, computers and so on are NOT permitted to be used in class,* unless being used publicly to support the collective class work or for officially approved special needs. If you must use your text messaging device, etc. for an emergency, please take it outside of the classroom. Violations of this policy will result in point deductions.

**CREATING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN OUR CLASSROOM**

As part of creating a valuable learning experience for everyone in the classroom, let’s attend to the quality of how we talk with each other, support our own and each other’s learning, and help each other (including helping me!) when we forget. This includes: An emphasis on inquiry rather than advocacy in class conversations, support for multiple different forms of interaction and participation guided by a foundation of mutual valuing and respect, and practicing ways of being in class that are less well developed for you. For example, let’s go beyond the content of what we want to contribute, by attending actively to how we are listening to and conversing with each other in class. Let’s focus on the quality of listening, efforts to build on the contributions of others and on the substance of the readings, asking questions, reflection, thoughtfulness of comments, and other contributions made to the creation of a mutual learning space. Let’s all try to work on whatever is hardest for us: For those who speak up often, try focusing on receptive listening; for those who rarely speak, try to add your voice even when it’s not comfortable. Most of all, let’s each of us take responsibility for creating a caring and respectful space where everyone is truly heard and valued. From this foundation, class discussions will promote your ability to understand, contextualize and interpret class materials and the world around you.

**GENERAL INFORMATION ON ASSIGNMENTS**

**ASSIGNMENTS: GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

*The quality of your work will be evaluated on the following:*

- Engagement with the materials and the course, including scope and depth of use of materials and sources
- Depth of reflection, especially self-reflection
- Depth of insight, analysis and understanding
- Clarity and richness of expression
- Demonstration of your personal learning and your effort to stretch yourself beyond previous experiences and underlying assumptions

Please single space all papers, submit by email at least 3 hrs before class begins if due on class days, and please bring hard copies to class (please don’t make special trips to drop off hard copies on days we do not have class – emailing by the deadline and bringing hardcopies to the next class period will be fine)

**Hygiene factors that are assumed and that will detract from your grade if not fulfilled:**

- Writing quality: Your writing should be at a quality appropriate to higher education, so please leave enough time for multiple rounds of editing and crafting, as well as final proof-reading. I recommend the Writing Center for help in taking your writing to the next level. Please proof-read all of your submissions and make liberal use of the Writing Center. I reserve the right to return papers unread if they do not meet appropriate standards of writing and editing quality.

*Dr. Jessica Srikantia, GOVT 361-002, Introduction to Environmental Policy, Fall 2018, p. 3*
• Citing sources: Be sure to cite all of your sources appropriately. Include a bibliography in your papers. Please read the sections on plagiarism (below and on the GMU website), and if you are at all unclear or uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism please talk with me.
• If you anticipate needing more time for assignments please discuss with me in advance.
• Thoughtfulness and engagement: Accurate and thoughtful use of course readings and concepts; conceptual coherence, grounding and clarity of posited relationships; accuracy and relevance of evidence.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

GMU Writing Center. I would encourage you to make use of the GMU Writing Center while you’re here (regardless of how well you write), since getting feedback on writing is often a great learning opportunity and one that’s harder to come by once you leave school. The writing center info can be found online at http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/. For updated information please check for their hours on their website.

New Voices in Public Policy is a journal designed to disseminate student work in SPGIA to a broader audience. It is reviewed by a combined panel of students and faculty. You may self-submit online at: http://journals.gmu.edu/index.php/newvoices If you would like me to consider nominating your course paper for publication in New Voices in Public Policy you may let me know.

SPECIAL NEEDS: If you are a student with special needs that require academic accommodations, please see me and contact Disability Services at 993-2474 or www.ds.gmu.edu as early as possible. All academic accommodations must be arranged through Disability Services and must be prospective rather than retrospective.

Class Meetings and Missed Classes. If you find you have to miss class, please communicate with me immediately. Please see the missed class policy above. Missing more than two classes during the semester will lower your grade by 1/3 for each missed class after the first two, except under exceptional circumstances, in which case you will need to complete additional assignments designed to help you assimilate the information and classroom experiences you have missed. Missing substantial portions of two classes counts as one missed class (arriving very late or leaving substantively early). I am willing to work with you through difficult situations, especially when you can alert me in advance or as soon as possible, to make it possible to complete the course successfully.

Honor Code: GMU has an honor code and all students are required to know and abide by it. The information is located at: http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/

PLAGIARISM: All submitted work must be your own, and it is imperative that you accurately cite all sources in your work.

- GMU has an official university policy on plagiarism that can be found at: http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/
- Please note that violations of plagiarism policies can result in expulsion from the university.
- Note that ignorance of the policies is not a defense, so please familiarize yourself with what plagiarism is and how to ensure that you don’t commit it. If you have any questions about what constitutes the appropriate use and citation of sources, please talk with me.
- To quote from GMU’s policy as emailed to me on 3/20/08 by the SPP office:
"The profession of scholarship and the intellectual life of a university as well as the field of public policy inquiry depend fundamentally on a foundation of trust. Thus any act of plagiarism strikes at the heart of the meaning of the university and the purpose of the School of Public Policy. It constitutes a serious breach of professional ethics and it is unacceptable.

"Plagiarism is the use of another’s words or ideas presented as one’s own. It includes, among other things, the use of specific words, ideas, or frameworks that are the product of another’s work. Honesty and thoroughness in citing sources is essential to professional accountability and personal responsibility. Appropriate citation is necessary so that arguments, evidence, and claims can be critically examined.

"Plagiarism is wrong because of the injustice it does to the person whose ideas are stolen. But it is also wrong because it constitutes lying to one’s professional colleagues. From a prudential perspective, it is shortsighted and self-defeating, and it can ruin a professional career.

"The faculty of the School of Public Policy takes plagiarism seriously and has adopted a zero tolerance policy. Any plagiarized assignment will receive an automatic grade of “F.” This may lead to failure for the course, resulting in dismissal from the University. This dismissal will be noted on the student’s transcript. For foreign students who are on a university-sponsored visa (eg. F-1, J-1 or J-2), dismissal also results in the revocation of their visa.

"To help enforce the SPP policy on plagiarism, all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit student’s work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. The SPP policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace it or substitute for it.”

Note that most cases of plagiarism are unintentional, but are plagiarism nonetheless and carry all the consequences. Here are a few tips to help you avoid making such a serious mistake:

- As a rough guide, if you use three or more consecutive words from a source, use direct quotation marks around the text and cite it (see a style manual for citation guidelines). Direct quotations must be enclosed in quotation marks, with references to the corresponding source and page number(s). Images, data and charts must also be cited and referenced.
- If you use ideas, data, or other material from a source but put it in your own words (paraphrasing), then you must reference the source materials with in-text citations.
- All direct quotations and all paraphrased ideas and data need to be cited in the text where they appear (can be with footnotes, endnotes, or in-text parentheses depending on your manual of style), with a bibliographic entry at the end.
- These requirements apply to all forms of submission or presentations (including oral presentations), and all kinds of sources, including material drawn from the internet.
- IN YOUR NOTES AND ALL WRITING/PRESENTATIONS, to protect yourself from unintentional plagiarism, ALWAYS 1) take the time when copying notes to put quotation marks around direct quotations (and then copy the quoted material accurately – you can use ellipses (…) to skip parts of the quotation and brackets ([ ]) to change specific words such as replacing “He” with “[The informant]” to clarify references, etc.); 2) clearly distinguish direct quotations from paraphrases in your notes so that it’s clear what is your language and what isn’t; 3) clearly distinguish paraphrases of others’ ideas and data from your own original ideas and data so it’s clear in your notes what are your original ideas and what is drawn from others – this is easy to forget over time.
- In sum, always make clear which language and ideas come from which sources, vs. which are your own original ideas, & cite all direct quotations & all paraphrases clearly, fully & appropriately.