

# SOSC 2330: ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS AND POLICY

## Tentative Course Syllabus for Summer 2024-25

### Instructor:

Prof. James K. WONG, Division of Social Science and Division of Public Policy

### Course Description

This course introduces students to the political dimensions of environmental policy. It explores how various political actors and institutions interact with each other in shaping environmental policy. The course is divided into two parts. First, it presents the normative and ideational foundations for environmental politics and discusses the major forms of collective action. Second, it analyzes the government's policy responses to environmental ideas and activism in the context of capitalist political economy. Students will benefit from the ability to think politically about the environment, which is essential for successful environmental policymaking in practice.

### Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Knowledge: (a) Explain the key ideas and issues in environmental politics; and (b) analyze the roles and impacts of actors and institutions in environmental collective action and policy making.
2. Skills: Apply concepts and theories to evaluate the debates in environmental politics and policy.
3. Attitude: Exercise independent and critical judgements as well as formulate and communicate arguments effectively.

### Class Schedule (Subject to Minor Revisions)

| Class / Date | Topic   | Class / Date | Topic  |
|--------------|---|--------------|--|
| 1 / Jun 16   | Introduction  | 8 / July 2   | Module 3 – Policy: Environmental Policy Change, Principles, Valuation, and Instruments |
| 2 / Jun 18   | Module 1 – Ideas: Environmental Philosophy and Green Political Thought                | 9 / July 4   |  |
| 3 / Jun 20   |   | 10 / July 7  |  |
| 4 / Jun 23   | Module 2 – Activism: Green Parties, Environmental Groups, and Environmental Movements | 11 / July 9  | TEST 2<br>Consultation: Policy Position Paper  |
| 5 / Jun 25   |   | 12 / July 11 |  |
| 6 / Jun 27   |   |              |  |
| 7 / Jun 30   | TEST 1<br>Consultation: Policy Position Paper   |              |  |

*Note: Class schedule and topics may be adjusted to facilitate students' learning.*

### Assessment and Grading (Subject to Minor Revisions)

1. **Test 1 (30%):** The test consists of multiple choice and short answer/essay questions. The syllabus includes topics covered in Modules 1 and 2. It will take place during the class period on June 30. This assessment aligns with ILOs 1(a), 1(b), 2, and 3.
2. **Test 2 (45%):** The test consists of multiple choice and short answer/essay questions. The syllabus includes topics covered in Modules 1, 2, and 3. It will take place during the class period on July 11. This assessment aligns with ILOs 1(a), 1(b), 2, and 3.
3. **Policy Position Paper (25%):** Each student will individually write a policy position paper. The word limit is 1,500 words. The due date is after Test 2 (TBC). This assessment aligns with ILOs 1(a), 1(b), 2, and 3.

*Remark:* This course will be assessed using **criterion-referencing**. The rubrics for the major assessment tasks are provided at the end of this syllabus, outlining the criteria used for evaluation.

### Final Grade Descriptors

| Grades    | Short Description     | Elaboration on Subject Grading Description  |
|-----------|-----------------------|---|
| A+, A, A- | Excellent Performance | Demonstrates excellent attainment of knowledge, skills and attitude in relation to the political dimensions of environmental policy.    |
| B+, B     | Good Performance      | Demonstrates good attainment of knowledge, skills and attitude in relation to the political dimensions of environmental policy.         |
| B-, C+, C | Marginal Performance  | Demonstrates adequate attainment of knowledge, skills and attitude in relation to the political dimensions of environmental policy.     |
| F         | Failure               | Demonstrates insufficient attainment of knowledge, skills and attitude in relation to the political dimensions of environmental policy. |

### Course AI Policy

The use of generative AI tools is permitted for open-book assignments. However, students should understand that generative AI tools should only be used as *tools* and should NOT be a substitute for students' own work. Students must certify that the work submitted in their assignments is their own original work, except where they have acknowledged the use of external sources or assistance, including generative AI tools.

### Communication and Feedback

Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be communicated via Canvas within two weeks of submission. Feedback on assignments will include comments and suggestions for further improvement. Students who have further questions about the feedback, including scores, should consult the Instructor OR Teaching Assistant within five working days after the feedback is received.

### Resubmission Policy

Students who are unable to submit any of the assessed tasks should contact the Instructor or Teaching Assistant within five working days after the respective deadlines to discuss arrangements for resubmission.

### Required Texts and Materials

- Neil Carter (2018) *The Politics of the Environment: Ideas, Activism, Policy* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [NB: Essential text for the entire course; [e-book](#) available for 2<sup>nd</sup> edition].
- James Connelly, Graham Smith, David Benson, and Clare Saunders (2012) *Politics and the Environment: From Theory to Practice* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition), Abingdon: Routledge [NB: Useful reference for the entire course, especially case studies].

### Academic Honesty

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity policy. Students are expected to uphold HKUST's Academic Honor Code and to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. The University has zero tolerance of academic misconduct. Please refer to [Academic Integrity | HKUST – Academic Registry](#) for the University's definition of plagiarism and ways to avoid cheating and plagiarism.

### Additional Resources

- Andrew Dobson (2016) *Environmental Politics: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford

University Press.

- John McCormick (2018) *Environmental Politics and Policy*, London: Palgrave. [e-book]
- Michael Kraft (2021) *Environmental Policy and Politics* (8<sup>th</sup> edition), New York/Abingdon: Routledge.
- Timothy Doyle, Doug McEachern, and Sherilyn MacGregor (2016) *Environment and Politics* (4<sup>th</sup> edition), Abingdon: Routledge. [e-book]
- John Dryzek and David Schlosberg (eds.) (2005) *Debating the Earth: The Environmental Politics Reader* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), Oxford: Oxford University Press.

### Grading Rubric for Tests 1 and 2 (Subject to Minor Revisions)

| Excellent Performance   | Good Performance   | Marginal Performance  | Failure  |
|---|--|---|--|
| The questions are answered accurately and/or justified with reasonable explanations. There is a logical and coherent elaboration with good use of language. | Only some of the questions are answered accurately and/or justified. The explanations are generally reasonable, but they are not substantiated well and/or there lacks sufficient clarity. There is room for enhancement in terms of logic, coherence, and/or use of language. | Only a very few questions are answered accurately. The explanations are unclear or do not make sense. There is significant room for enhancement in terms of logic, coherence, and/or use of language. | Most of the questions are answered inaccurately or the answers are not relevant to the questions. The answers are unsatisfactory in terms of logic, coherence, and/or use of language. |

### Grading Rubric for Policy Position Paper (Subject to Minor Revisions)

| Excellent Performance  | Good Performance  | Marginal Performance   | Failure   |
|--|---|--|---|
| The paper has a sensible interpretation of the topic. There is a logical argument substantiated by appropriate examples and/or evidence. There is application of relevant concepts and/or theories. The paper is well-structured and coherent. There is good use of language. The presentation is clear. | The paper demonstrates the attainment of only some of the desired attributes (as for excellent performance) while some attributes are not yet attained. For the attributes attained, there is room for enhancement. | The paper demonstrates only minimal attainment of the desired attributes (as for excellent performance). For the attributes attained, there is significant room for enhancement. | The paper is inadequate, demonstrating very limited attainment of the desired attributes. |

Last revised: October 31, 2024