

SOSC 2330: ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS AND POLICY

Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, 14:00 – 17:20, Room 5620 (lifts 31-32)

Instructor	Teaching Assistant
Prof. James K. WONG (jameskalei@ust.hk) Room 3370 (lifts 13-15), Academic Building Office hours: By e-mail appointment	Mr. Roy HO (psrho@ust.hk) Room 2359 (lifts 13-15) Office hours: By e-mail appointment

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.

Common Core Competencies (CCCs)

Students will have the opportunity to develop their problem-solving skills and social responsibility in the following domains: Application of critical thinking (PS02) and collaboration (SR02).

Class Schedule

WEEK	ONLINE LECTURE	MONDAY CLASS	WEDNESDAY CLASS	FRIDAY CLASS
Module 1 – Ideas: Environmental Philosophy and Green Political Thought				
1	Lectures 1-3	Class 1 [July 14]	*Consultations*	Class 2 [July 18]
Module 2 – Activism: Environmental Groups and Movements				
2	Lectures 4-5	*Consultations*	Class 3 [July 23]	Class 4 [July 25]
Module 3 – Policy: Environmental Policy Change, Valuation, and Instruments				
3	Lectures 6-8	Class 5 [July 28] – TEST 1 & Project Advising	*Consultations*	Class 6 [Aug 1]
4		Class 7 [Aug 4]	Class 8 [Aug 6] – TEST 2 & Project Advising	Class 9 [Aug 8] – Project Presentations

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

Assessment and Grading

Assignment / Weighting		Requirements
Test 1 & Test 2 <i>Alignment with ILOs: 1(a), 1(b), 2 & 3</i>	40% Test 1 & 30% Test 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The two tests are closed-book tests. For each test, Part I contains multiple-choice and true-or-false questions, and Part II contains structured questions. Test 1 is scheduled for July 28 (Mon), covering materials for Modules 1 and 2 only. Test 2 is scheduled for Aug 6 (Wed), covering materials for Module 3 only. In each test, each student is allowed to bring an information sheet of ONE double-sided A4 paper. The information sheet will be collected by the end of each test. Students must complete the tests in person. In case of medical/family emergencies or unavoidable duties, students must present appropriate evidence to request 'make-up' arrangements.
Group Project <i>Alignment with ILOs: 1(a), 1(b), 2 & 3</i>	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will form into groups. Each group will be assigned ONE environmental issue in Hong Kong. They will prepare a policy brief to recommend a policy alternative to address the environmental issue. <p><i>Deliverable 1: Presentation (5%)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On August 8 (Fri), students will deliver a presentation on their policy briefs, answer questions from peers and instructor/TA, and offer feedback on peers' presentations. <p><i>Deliverable 2: Policy Brief (15%)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will write a policy brief in about 8-10 pages (excluding references and appendices), taking into consideration the feedback from peers and instructor/TA. The written policy brief should be submitted by 23:59, August 11 (Mon).
Canvas MC Quizzes <i>Alignment with ILOs: 1(a), 1(b) & 2</i>	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are open-book quizzes. Before completing each quiz, students should watch the online lecture videos as assigned. Students will complete a total of 8 quizzes. Each quiz contains 5 questions, and each question is worth 0.25 point. <u>Only ONE attempt is allowed for each quiz.</u> Students should complete the quizzes by the following deadlines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quizzes 1-5: <u>14:00, July 28 (Mon)</u> Quizzes 6-8: <u>14:00, Aug 6 (Wed)</u>

Remarks:

- (1) A maximum of 5 points of **attendance and participation bonus** will be awarded to students who contribute actively to the course. Attendance will be taken on an ad hoc basis, and a maximum of 3 points will be awarded. For participation, 2 points will be awarded 'by default' as active participation is assumed for this blended learning course. However, points will be deducted if there is evidence of inactive participation.

- (2) For late submission, no submission or no show, **mark penalty** will apply. For confirmed cases of plagiarism, cheating and abuse of generative AI tools, sanctions will be imposed.
- (3) For the group project, each team should submit detailed **division of labor**. The score of each individual student may be adjusted based on the division and quality of labor.
- (4) 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. Assessment marks for individual assessed tasks will be released within **10 working days of the due date**.

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* (3rd edition), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press [NB: Essential text for the entire course; e-book available for 2nd edition].
- James Connelly, Graham Smith, David Benson, and Clare Saunders (2012) *Politics and the Environment: From Theory to Practice* (3rd 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* (8th edition), New York/Abingdon: Routledge.
- Timothy Doyle, Doug McEachern, and Sherilyn MacGregor (2016) *Environment and Politics* (4th edition), Abingdon: Routledge. **[e-book]**
- John Dryzek and David Schlosberg (eds.) (2005) *Debating the Earth: The Environmental Politics Reader* (2nd edition), Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Last revised: July 3, 2025

Appendix: Grading Rubrics

Grading Rubric for Tests 1 and 2

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 Group Project

Excellent Performance	Good Performance	Marginal Performance	Failure
The policy brief has a sensible interpretation of the environmental issue. There is a logical argument substantiated by appropriate evidence and/or examples. There is application of relevant concepts and/or theories in the analysis of policy alternatives. The policy brief is well-structured and coherent. There is good use of language. The presentation is clear.	The policy brief 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 policy brief demonstrates only minimal attainment of the desired attributes (as for excellent performance). For the attributes attained, there is significant room for enhancement.	The policy brief is inadequate, demonstrating very limited attainment of the desired attributes.