

ECO 106
Environmental Economics
TTh 2-3:15pm
Rogick 202

Instructor

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Wednesday, 1pm to 2pm; and by appointment

Course Description

This course examines the political economy of environmental degradation and environmental protection. Environmental degradation includes both pollution and natural resource depletion. Environmental protection includes both government and non-government efforts to combat environmental degradation and to invest in “natural capital”. In addition to the classical economic question of how scarce resources are allocated among competing ends (for example, a cleaner environment versus more consumer goods), the course explores the political-economy question of how resources are allocated among competing individuals, groups, and classes in society.

Course Objectives

1. To gain an understanding of environmental economics from three perspectives: neo-classical environmental economics; ecological economics; and political economy.
2. To gain an understanding of the introductory economics most relevant to the economic analysis of environmental issues, and, therefore, to economics in general.
3. To examine the economic consequences of human actions as they relate to the environment.
4. To examine the relationships among human beings as they impact on environmental protection and degradation.
5. To foster student’s ability to articulate these issues and analyses in both written and spoken word.

Required Texts (available at the CNR bookstore and on reserve in the Gill Library)

- Harris, Jonathan M. (2002) *Environmental and Natural Resource Economics: A Contemporary Approach*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Other Required Readings

- See course schedule below. Additional readings will be available either on E-Reserves or on Angel.

Assignments

1. Homework: There will be ten homework assignments. Due dates are listed in the course schedule below. Homework assignments will be posted on Angel. Homework is due at the beginning of the class in which it is due. Late homework will be accepted for half credit. (5 points each; 50 points total)
2. News Summary: Each student will summarize three environmental news articles in class. Students will sign up for three days when they are responsible for summarizing a news article. All articles must come from the *New York Times* unless you request and receive permission from the instructor for using another periodical before making your presentation. You must submit copies of the articles to the instructor on the day of your presentation. Each presentation should last for approximately 5 minutes and should include both a summary of the article and an explanation of how the article relates to our class. (5 points each; 15 points total)
3. Group Projects: Students will work together in groups of 2 to 3 to prepare a presentation that will take place in the last month of classes. Students will sign up for their groups. Your presentation must demonstrate that you have understood the material of the course; you must combine what you have learned in class with your on research on a specific environmental topic. Presentations will be graded based on how well you demonstrate the knowledge that you have gained in this course, the quality of the content, the quality of any visual aids or handouts, how well the material is presented, and creativity in presentation and content. Significant research and reading is expected. Presentation should be approximately 75 minutes in length and activities that involve some class participation are encouraged. You may assign a short article or book excerpt for the class to read in advance. Your group must also turn in two outlines of your presentation – a one-page outline on February 14 and a 3 to 5-page outline on March 13 – as well as a final detailed outline, due on the day of your presentation, including all material covered in your presentation, explanations of any activities, duplicates of any handouts or slides, a brief explanation of the ways in which each group member contributed to the project, and a bibliography of all sources. (25 points)
4. Class participation is required. This includes not only attendance but also active participation: asking questions, responding to questions from the instructor, or, during class discussion, giving your opinion. (10 points)

Final grades will be assigned as follows: 92-100 = A; 90-91 = A-; 88-89 = B+; 82-87 = B; 80-81 = B-; 78-79 = C+; 72-77 = C; 70-71 = C-; 68-69 = D+; 62-67 = D; 60-61 = D-; <60 = F

Course Schedule

Tuesday, January 22: Introductions

Thursday, January 24: Three Approaches to Environmental Economics

Read: Harris Ch. 1

Tuesday, January 29: Introduction to Climate Change

Read: Boyce, Ch.1 “Stealing the Commons” (on e-reserves)

Read: E3 Climate Taskforce Briefs, at least p.1-2 (on Angel)

Thursday, January 31: Focus the Nation

Tuesday, February 5: Growth, Resource Use, and Inequality

Read: Harris Ch. 2

Due: Homework #1 (posted on Angel)

Thursday, February 7: Growth, Resource Use, and Inequality (continued)

Read: “The Afterlife of Cellphones,” *New York Times* 1-11-08 (on e-reserves)

Tuesday, February 12: Supply and Demand Basics

Read: Riddell et al. Chapter 8, “The Theory of Markets” (on e-reserves)

Due: Homework #2 (posted on Angel)

Thursday, February 14: Supply and Demand Basics (continued)

Due: First presentation outline due (see instructions above)

Tuesday, February 19: Supply and Demand Basics (continued)

Due: Homework #3 (posted on Angel)

Thursday, February 21: Externalities and Property Rights

Read: Harris Ch.3

Tuesday, February 26: Externalities and Property Rights (continued)

Read: Summers Memo (on e-reserves)

Due: Homework #4 (posted on Angel)

Thursday, February 28: Externalities and Property Rights (continued)

Tuesday, March 4: The Commons and Public Goods

Read: Harris Ch.5

Due: Homework #5 (posted on Angel)

Thursday, March 6: The Commons and Public Goods (continued)

Read: Barnes, “Sharing the Wealth of the Commons” in *Real World Micro*, Chapter 7.2

Tuesday, March 11: Cost-Benefit Analysis

Read: Harris Ch.6, p.93-98

Due: Homework #6 (posted on Angel)

Thursday, March 13: Cost-Benefit Analysis (continued)

Read: Heinzerling and Ackerman, "Pricing the Priceless" in *Real World Micro*, Chapter 7.3

Due: Second presentation outline due

Spring Break

☼ **Tuesday, March 25: Follow your Monday Schedule**

Thursday, March 27: The Discount Rate

Read: Harris Ch.6, p.99-118

Tuesday, April 1: The Discount Rate and Climate Change

Due: Homework #7 (posted on Angel)

Thursday, April 3: Green Accounting

Read: Harris Ch.8

Tuesday, April 8: Natural Assets

Read: Boyce and Pastor booklet on Natural Assets (on Angel)

Due: Homework #8 (posted on Angel)

☼ **Thursday, April 10: No class, unless we've had a snow day**

Tuesday, April 15: Population and the Environment

Read: Harris Ch.10

Due: Homework #9 (posted on Angel)

Thursday, April 17: Population and the Environment (continued)

Read: Hartman "Introduction," p.xv-xxi, and "Security and Survival," p.3-12 (on e-reserves)

Tuesday, April 22: Pollution: Analysis and Policy

Read: Chapter 16

Due: Homework #10 (posted on Angel)

Thursday, April 24: Pollution: Analysis and Policy (continued)

Tuesday, April 29: Group Presentation

Read: TBA

Thursday, May 1: Group Presentation

Read: TBA

Tuesday, May 6: Group Presentation

Read: TBA

Thursday, May 8: Group Presentation

Read: TBA

Guidelines for the Avoidance of Plagiarism

Plagiarize: “to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one’s own : use (a created production) without crediting the source : to commit literary theft : present as new or original an idea or product derived from an existing source.” *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1977), p. 877.

To avoid plagiarism:

1. Use your **own words**.
2. Put any direct quotations from others in **quotation marks**.
3. **Cite** (in the text or footnotes) sources for all direct quotations and for paraphrased material.
4. Include a complete **bibliography**, with author, year, title, and either name, volume and issue of publication, or name and location of publisher.

Using the worldwide web:

1. *NEVER use cut-and-paste to splice material from other sources (e.g. the web) into your paper without quotation marks and attribution.*
2. Do not use whole paragraphs of material directly taken from the web, even with quotation marks and attribution. Direct quotations should be brief – a phrase, a sentence or two – and placed in quotation marks with attribution to the source.
3. References to material from the worldwide web should include the title of the web document, the author (if available), the name of the organization/website, the document’s complete url ([www.address](#)), and the date when this information was posted. This information can appear in a footnote; or you can put a brief citation in the text (“title of