

Global Hybrid Classroom
School of High Studies of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (CBAE/UFRJ)

Course Syllabus

Course

Environmental Governance and Sustainability

Professor

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Course Description

The defense of the environment is a responsibility explicitly attributed to state entities in the 1970s and 1980s in the context of significant transformations of the State. Nowadays, environmental policy is one of the most contentious and challenging policy areas at national and global levels.

Understanding the role of the State and other critical actors in environmental defense is essential for the design, implementation, and evaluation of environmental programs and projects. The ability to analyze environmental policy draws from the knowledge of its philosophical foundations, its specificities as a public policy, institutional boundaries, methods, and policy tools.

Environmental governance and sustainability is an interdisciplinary field. Understanding environmental issues and policy solutions depends on integrated knowledge of various disciplines, particularly sociology, economics, anthropology, political science, and environmental sciences.

The course has an interdisciplinary approach, drawing from the discipline of public policy. This body of scholarship informs the understanding of the policy cycle, coalitions, and characteristics of the environmental field.

The course aims to systematize and expand students' knowledge about the role of the State and other critical actors in environmental policy using the governance theory approach. The principles, responsibilities, strategies, and policy instruments will be presented and debated through exhibitions, debates, readings, and case studies.

Students are offered opportunities to analyze environmental policy and governance problems in their country/region by studying the ecological agenda issues particularly significant at global and national levels, such as climate change, water governance, and biodiversity conservation. Students will be encouraged to share their unique knowledge and experiences.

LEARNING GOALS

By the end of the course, students will have a firm understanding of environmental governance, be able to deal with the basic concepts and analytical categories related to environmental policy and governance, recognize vital actors and issues in environmental arenas, recognize the main policy tools and strategies, analyze social-environmental problems and policy responses, analyze various real-world responses to promote better practice in managing the UN goals on addressing environmental degradation.

Credits

02 (two) credits

Duration

Thirty (30) hours, distributed over ten (10) weeks. It corresponds to three hours of class time weekly.

Classroom strategies

The course is organized into four sections: (i) introduction, (ii) environmental governance and sustainability, (iii) decentralization and federalism, and (iv) policy tools and strategies. Students will be offered online lectures, a primary bibliography, case studies, group and individual activities, suggestions for optional readings, videos, and podcasts.

Students will participate in online and offline activities like discussion forums, case studies, and individual and group research exercises.

Assessment

Attendance, participation in the activities, individual and group work, presentations and reports.

Contents

Classes	Contents
1	Section 1 - INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE, SUSTAINABILITY, POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE. Introduction to the Course. The environment as a public policy subject: origins and drivers of environmental problems. Collective action problems.
2	Environment and sustainability: concepts and policy definitions. Economic, social, and environmental aspects. The debate on sustainable development. The UN Sustainable Development Indicators (SDGs).
3	Policy, politics, governance: theoretical references.
4	Section 2: ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY, GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY The characteristics of the environmental policy.
5	The principles of the environmental policy: precautionary principle, preventive principle, sustainability, equity, public participation, and good faith.
6	The environmental agenda: overview, part I The protection of forests, fauna and flora. Soil, land, air and water.
7	The environmental agenda: overview, part II Climate change, biodiversity conservation, water governance, desertification.
8	Secton 3: ENVIRONMENT, DECENTRALIZATION AND FEDERALISIM Decentralization and environmental policy: local actors and subnational governments. Theoretical and political issues.
9	Policentrism, federalism and environmental policy. Environmental federalism: theoretical and political issues. Environmental protection in federative countries.
10	Section 4: ENVIRONMENTAL TOOLS AND STRATEGIES Policy tools and governance: concepts, strategies, cases.

Course Literature

Readings will consist of academic articles, elected chapters from books, institutional documents and media articles. Each class has a basic bibliography and complementary readings. Reading references include:

Bardach, E.; Patashnik, E. (2016). A practical guide for policy analysis. The eightfold path for more effective problem solving. London: Sage, 5th ed.

Bornemann, B., Knappe, H., & Nanz, P. e. (2022). The Routledge handbook of democracy and sustainability. Oxon; New York: Routledge.

Dobson, A. (2016). Environmental politics. A very short introduction. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dobson, A. (1998) Justice and the environment. Conceptions of environmental sustainability and theories of distributive justice. New York: Oxford University Press.

Dryzek, J. S.; Pickering, J. (2019). The politics of the Anthropocene. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Evans, P. (2002) Livable cities? Urban struggles for livelihood and sustainability. Berkeley: University of California Press

Fiorino, D. (2018). A good life on. Finite Earth. The political economy of green growth. New York: Oxford University Press.

Fowler, L. (2020) Environmental federalism - old legacies and new challenges. New York: Routledge.

Kapucu, N.; Liou K. T. (ed). (2014). Disaster and development. Examining global issues and cases. London: Springer.

Lafferty, W.; Meadowcroft, J. (1996) Democracy and the environment: problems and prospects. Cheltenham; Lyme: Edward Elgar, 1996

Paehlke, R. & Torgerson, D. (ed.). (2005). Managing Leviathan: environmental politics and the Administrative State. 2nd. Edition revised. NY: Broadview Press.

United Nations Environment Programme (2019). Global Environmental Outlook: healthy Planet, Healthy People - GEO-6. New York: Cambridge University Press.

UN-Water; Unesco. (2023). Partnerships and cooperation for water. The United Nations World Water Development Report 2023. Paris, Unesco.

Vig, N.; Kraft, M. (ed.) (2022) Environmental policy: new directions for the twenty-first century. 10. ed. California: Sage Publications

Villamayor-Tomas, S.; Muradian, R. (2023). The Barcelona School of Ecological Economics and Political Ecology. A companion in honour of Joan Martinez-Allier. Studies in Ecological Economics. Springer Cham.

World Meteorological Organization (2021). 2021 state of climate services. Water. Geneva: World Meteorological Organization.