INTRODUCTION AND COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course examines the political feasibility of adopting and implementing policies designed to promote environmental protection. It draws heavily from the discipline of political science in examining environmental politics and how this body of scholarship informs our understanding of policy feasibility. The course will focus primarily on the experience of the United States at both federal and sub-federal levels of government but will periodically address experience beyond American boundaries. This semester will unfold as we observe the early stages of implementing major new federal policies adopted over the past two years, some of the most significant environmental legislation in more than three decades.

The course will consider a range of environmental policy issues but focus primarily on questions related to climate change mitigation. This will include careful study of the political viability of a range of alternative policy tools, including market-based policies such as carbon taxes and cap-and-trade programs, regulatory instruments such as performance standards, and subsidy programs for industry and individual citizens. Much of the analysis will be concentrated on the American federal level, but with consideration of ongoing roles played at the state and local levels and emerging evidence on best practices. There will also be some examination of non-American political systems and their environmental policies, creating opportunities for cross-national comparisons.

Several units in this offering of 563/686 will weigh economic analysis of the most desirable policy based on efficiency grounds against questions addressing what is possible in political terms in large democratic systems such as the United States. It will
routinely examine historic and enduring impediments to policy formation but also consider exceptional cases of adoption, endurance, and performance over time, including the arena of climate change. Climate analysis will consider the politics of addressing both long-lived climate pollutants such as carbon dioxide and short-lived climate pollutants such as methane and hydrofluorocarbons. By considering both policy adoption and implementation, it will allow exploration of policy durability and impact measures of environmental quality and equity. It will be divided into three primary units, each capped with the completion of a major writing assignment and class debates over key findings.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

All students will be expected to complete three major written assignments during the term and contribute constructively to class deliberations. Take-home essay questions will be assigned for each of the major sections of the course. Each will involve completion of an essay of approximately six (double-spaced) pages in response to a memo that outlines a particular environmental politics and policy challenge or opportunity. Each essay will be worth 100 points toward the final grade. Essays that are not turned in at the required date will be reduced ten points for each day of delay in submission. Dates for receipt and submission of assignments are set forth in the syllabus. Each paper will be reviewed and returned within one week of its submission with written comments and a grade.

In addition, 50 points toward the final grade will be based on contribution to class discourse. There will be considerable opportunities to participate in class deliberations. These will include regular classes as well as a series of special sessions devoted to class debate over essay findings. Evaluation of class participation will be based on quality of discourse and overall contribution to our deliberations rather than sheer engagement frequency. Material will frequently be presented in class that is not available in assigned readings or any published form. Students are responsible for all material presented in class and assigned in required readings. Laptop computer use is allowed, with the expectation that any use is respectful of other students. The final grade will be determined on the total points acquired through the various opportunities noted below:

Three Papers: 100 points per paper for total of 300 points
Class Engagement: 50 points
Total: 350 points

The grade scale for the class is as follows:

98-100: A+
94-97: A
90-93: A-
87-89: B+
84-86: B  
80-83: B-  
77-79: C+  
74-77: C  
70-73: C-

All evaluation and grading will be completed by the instructor; no graduate student instructor, teaching assistant, or grader has been assigned in this course to evaluate student performance. The three primary grading criteria that each essay will be measured against include: 1) Presence of a structured argument that responds to the assignment; 2) Ability to include and apply relevant course concepts to the issues at hand; and 3) Ability to advance a compelling case for a particular policy proposal or political analysis. Eighty percent of the total grade will be based on substantive content and the remaining twenty percent on stylistic clarity and quality. Students are advised to make the case for their own understanding of the best approach to a particular issue, rather than attempt to assimilate any presumed position of the instructor.

Most of our class sessions will take place in person, albeit mindful of University and Ford School public health guidelines as well as inevitable Winter weather uncertainties in Michigan. This version of the course will also see the restoration of a long-standing course tradition that was interrupted in recent semesters due to the pandemic and a sabbatical, a dinner in my home. Participation in this event is not mandatory and is intended to provide added opportunity for social engagement beyond the classroom. More details on the timing and formal for this event will be forthcoming.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN AND FORD SCHOOL POLICIES

This course has been designed through consultation with all applicable Ford School and University of Michigan policies, including those addressing diversity, inclusivity, accommodations for students with disabilities, and student mental health and well-being. For a review of many of these policies, please see http://fordschool.umich.edu/academics/expectations.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities. If you believe you need an accommodation for a disability, please reach out to the U-M Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office to help determine appropriate academic accommodations and how to communicate about your accommodations with your professor. Any information you provide will be treated as private and confidential.

Student Mental Health and Well-Being Resources. The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. We acknowledged that a variety of issues, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, and depression, directly impact students’ academic performance.
If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available.

Kristen Carney, LMSW, is an embedded counselor within the Ford School. She is available to meet with Ford School students in person or via remote access using Zoom. You may reach her at kristca@umich.edu. In addition, you may access other counselors and urgent services at Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 734.764.8312 and https://caps.umich.edu/ or University Health Services (UHS) at 734.764.8320 and https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs. Students may also use the Crisis Text Line (text ‘4UMICH’ to 741741) to be connected to a trained crisis volunteer. You can find additional resources both on and off campus through CAPS or UHS.

**Ford School Public Health Protection Policy.** In order to participate in any in-person aspects of this course—including meeting with other students to study or work on a team project—you must follow all the public safety measures mandated by the State of Michigan, Washtenaw County, the University of Michigan, and the Ford School. It is expected that you will protect and enhance the health of everyone in the Ford School community by staying home and following self-isolation guidelines if you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, or are awaiting a test result because of symptoms. If you do not have a verified COVID-19 vaccine report in the U-M vaccination report system, you are required to participate in weekly testing if you intend to come to campus for any reasons.

**Ford School Inclusivity Statement.** Members of the Ford School community represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. We are committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. While working together to build this community, we ask all members to:

--Share their unique experiences, values, and beliefs
--Be open to the views of others
--Honor the uniqueness of their colleagues
--Appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other
--Value one another’s opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
--Use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in Ford classes and across the UM community
--Keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal or professional nature

**Academic Integrity:** The Ford School academic community, like all communities, functions best when its members treat one another with honesty, fairness, respect, and trust. We hold all members of our community to high standards of scholarship and integrity. To accomplish its mission of providing an optimal educational environmental and developing leaders of society, the Ford School promotes the assumption of personal responsibility and integrity and prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and misconduct.
Academic dishonesty may be understood as any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or any other members of the university community. Plagiarism involves representing the words, ideas, or work of others as one’s own in writing or presentations and failing to give full and proper credit to the original source. Conduct, without regard to motive, that violates the academic integrity and ethical standards will result in serious consequences and disciplinary action. The Ford School’s policy of academic integrity can be found in its MPP/MPA, BA, and PhD program handbooks. Additional information regarding academic dishonesty, plagiarism, and misconduct and their consequences is available at: http://www.rackham.umich.edu/current-students/policies/academic-policies/section11#112

Use of Technology: Students should follow instructions from their instructor as to acceptable use of technology in the classroom, including laptops, in each course. All course materials (including slides, assignments, handouts, pre-recorded lectures, or recordings of class) are to be considered confidential material and are not to be shared in full or part with anyone outside of the course participants. Likewise, your own personal recording (audio or video) of your classes or office hour sessions is allowed only with the express written permission of your instructor. If you wish to post course materials or photographs/videos of classmates or your instructor to third-party sites (social media) you must have informed consent. Without explicit permission from the instructor and in some cases your classmates, the public distribution or posting of any photos, audio/video recordings or pre-recordings from class, discussion section, or office hours, even if you have permission to record, is not allowed and could be considered academic misconduct.

REQUIRED READINGS

Required readings should be completed, preferably in the order listed, before each designated session. Most of the readings are from the three required books, supplemented by materials that will be included on our class Canvas site. All required books have been published within the last several years and may be available at no charge through U-M library holdings or through other sources. A few brief supplemental readings may be distributed prior to individual sessions, usually to add very current information to a particular discussion.

--Barry Rabe, Can We Price Carbon? (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2018). Yes, you are required to read a book by your professor. This page-turner considers the political feasibility of carbon pricing, the climate policy strategy that has broad support from economists but often struggles politically in the United States and beyond. It examines two decades of experience of advancing carbon pricing proposals at federal and sub-federal levels, examining common political stumbling blocks but also common design features that increase the likelihood of adoption. This will be our primary book during the first section of the course. Any personal royalty proceeds from purchase will be tripled and that funding will be donated to a UM fund set up to support student internships in environmental policy. (Disclosure: I am currently completing an essay
that reviews developments domestically and globally in carbon pricing since the publication of the book and key findings will be discussed in a class session.)

--Ann Carlson and Dallas Burtraw, eds., Lessons from the Clean Air Act: Building Durability and Adaptability into U.S. Climate and Energy Policy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019). This book examines the Clean Air Act over a half-century period of evolution through a multi-disciplinary team assembled by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Its primary goal is to analyze each major title of this legislation and examine its durability and performance over time, leading to a range of questions as to its future adaptability for climate and other concerns. The project was designed to inform possible applications of the Clean Air Act to climate change mitigation by future Presidents and Congresses. The collection reflects competing perspectives drawn from economics, political science, and law, involving scholars who combine active research programs with extensive environmental policy engagement records. Carlson is a former UCLA law professor who currently serves the Biden Administration in the Department of Transportation; Burtraw is a Ford School MPP alum and is a senior fellow at Resources for the Future.

--Daniel Fiorino, Can Democracy Handle Climate Change? (Cambridge: Polity Books, 2019). It has long been assumed in environmental policy research that democratic governmental systems are far more likely to be politically responsive to environmental challenges and design and implement effective policies than autocratic systems. Recent decades have challenged that conventional wisdom, particularly in the arena of climate change. Fiorino is a political scientist who directs the Center for Environmental Policy at American University. He served for decades in senior leadership roles at the Environmental Protection Agency and addresses this question drawing on both his research and policy experience. (Disclosure: I am currently completing a paper examining the evidence concerning the capacity of democratic and capitalist systems to address climate change, scheduled to be presented at a conference in March at the University of Virginia. I am struggling with this topic!)

SCHEDULE OF SESSIONS

Section One: POLICY FROM THE TOP-DOWN: THE FEDERAL ROLE AND THE ISSUE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

January 5: Introduction to Environmental and Climate Politics and Policy

January 10 & 12: Congressional Capacity to Adopt Environmental Legislation, 1970-2022 (January 12 session will be recorded and posted on Canvas as instructor will be in New York to address state insurance commissioners on climate change)


Rabe, Can We Price Carbon?, Chapters 1 and 2.


Alex Bozmoski and Nate Hochman, “The Future of Conservative Climate Leadership,” National Affairs (Fall 2021): 127-140.

Rabe, Can We Price Carbon?, chapter 3.

January 24, 26 & 31: The Politics of Carbon Pricing, Policy Durability, and the Emergence of Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanisms (January 26 session remote as instructor will be speaking on these very topics at a carbon pricing conference at the Brookings Institution)

Rabe, Can We Price Carbon?, chapters 4, 5, and 7.

Stefano Carattini, Maria Carvalho, and Sam Fankhauser, “Overcoming Public Resistance to Carbon Taxes,” WIREs Climate Change (February 2018).


February 2 & 7: Class Debates over First Paper Assignments. All papers due by beginning of the February 2 session.
SECTION TWO: GETTING TO PARIS: THE ADMINISTRATIVE PRESIDENCY, REGULATION & THE CLEAN AIR ACT

February 9: Global Governance and the Tale of Three Global Climate Regimes


February 14 & 16: Environmental Policy in the Era of the Administrative Presidency


West Virginia v. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (June 30, 2022). Read majority opinion (Chief Justice Roberts, joined by Justices Alito, Gorsuch, Kavanaugh, and Barrett) and dissenting opinion (Justice Kagan joined by Justices Breyer and Sotomayor). Concurring opinion by Justice Gorsuch optional.

February 21: Mobile Sources Under the Clean Air Act: Applying the California Vehicle Emissions Waiver to Climate Change (Receive second paper assignment)


February 23: Stationary Sources and Electric Power Generation under the Clean Air Act: Possible Extensions to Climate Change

On National Ambient Air Quality Standards and a proposed National Pollution Cap, see William Boyd, “The Clean Air Act’s National Ambient Air Quality Standards: A Case
Study of Durability and Flexibility in Program Design and Implementation,” in Lessons from the Clean Air Act, chapter 2.

On Stationary Sources and the Clean Power Plan, see Hannah J. Wiseman, “Stationary Sources, Movable Rules: Intransigence under the Clean Air Act,” in Lessons from the Clean Air Act, chapter 3.

February 28 & March 2. Winter Break. Enjoy!

March 7 & 9: Regulation of Energy Sector Methane Emissions under the Clean Air Act (Remote sessions via Zoom due to instructor presentation at the University of Virginia Conference on Democracy and Capitalism)


On the future of the Clean Air Act, see Ann Carlson and Dallas Burtraw, “Conclusion,” in Lessons from the Clean Air Act, chapter 7.

Optional reading on renewable fuels development through the Clean Air Act, see Joseph E. Aldy, “Promoting Environmental Quality through Fuels Regulations: Lessons for a Durable Energy and Climate Policy,” in Lessons from the Clean Air Act, chapter 5.

March 14 & 16: Class Debates over Second Paper Assignments. All papers due by beginning of March 14 session.

SECTION THREE: POLICY EXPERIMENTALISM: STATES AND BOTTOM-UP ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

March 21: The Evolving State Government Role in Environmental Policy


March 23 & 28: States and Climate Policy Development


Alicia Zhao, et al., *An ‘All-In’ Pathway to 2020: The Beyond 50 Scenario* (Center for Global Sustainability, University of Maryland), November 2022).


March 30: First-Mover on Steroids: The California Case and the Question of Environmental Justice


April 4: Cities and Climate Change


Planet Blue, *Climate Action at the University of Michigan, Fiscal Year 2022 Report*: 2-14.

Daniel Fiorino, *Can Democracy Handle Climate Change?*, chapter 1.

April 6: Lessons from Canadian Environmental Politics and Policy


Fiorino, *Can Democracy Handle Climate Change?*, chapters 2 and 3.

April 11: Lessons from Norway and the European Union

Fiorino, *Can Democracy Handle Climate Change?*, chapters 2 and 3.

April 13 & 18: Submit final essay by the beginning of April 13 class session and participate in one of two final class debates.