

ERS 201

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY, POLITICS & GOVERNANCE

School of Environment, Resources and Sustainability
University of Waterloo
Fall 2021

Instructor: Prof. Andrea Collins

Office Hours: Fridays, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. EST ([Book a time](#))

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Teaching Assistants:

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Contact Policy: Given our various responsibilities and commitments, your TAs and I are not always able to answer emails immediately. Anticipate hearing back from us within 1-2 business days. All emails regarding ERS 201 should include the course code in the subject line, for instance: “ERS 201: Question about Week 10 reading”. If you email us using Learn, it does this automatically. If you do not hear from us within 48 hours, please send a polite follow-up email.

Calendar Description: This course provides students with an introduction to processes of environmental policy, politics and governance. The roles of various actors, discourses and institutions involved in environmental policy-making and governance will be examined. These processes will be illustrated through an examination of a range of environmental issues from the local to the global level.

Prereq: Level at least 2A; Environment, Resources and Sustainability students only

Antireq: ERS 210, ERS 275 001 F15

Detailed Course Description:

This course introduces students to environmental policy-making, politics and governance in a Canadian context. Throughout the course, the importance of ideas, institutions, interests and power will be emphasized in understanding processes of environmental policy formation, implementation and effectiveness.

The first part of the course examines the features of the Canadian environmental policy landscape: domestic political actors and dynamics, including the federal-provincial relationship, environmental policy tools, the significance of natural resource exports to the economy, engagement of Indigenous communities in environmental policy, and Canada’s engagement with the North American and global policy contexts. There will be a mid-term test on these topics around the mid-term mark.

The second part of the course focuses on key contemporary issues in environmental policy and politics that are important to Canada and builds off the concepts outlined in the first weeks of term. Students will likewise be responsible for a research paper that applies concepts from the course. The term concludes with a final exam.

Course Objectives:

The aim of this course is to provide students with an empirical foundation and conceptual framework for the practical analysis of policy, politics and governance of environmental issues in Canada.

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

- Demonstrate knowledge of key environmental issues facing Canada today.
- Identify the key features that shape the environmental political context in Canada and understand the ways in which these features affect environmental governance.
- Have a basic understanding of the key types of policy tools that have been employed to address environmental problems in Canada and compare their relative strengths and weaknesses.
- Understand the political dynamics surrounding environmental problems and policies in Canada.
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills, including the ability to explain key issues, study evidence, consider alternative positions, and draw logical conclusions.

Required Course Texts

(available at the University of Waterloo Bookstore and in the UW Library on Course Reserve):

1. Andrea Olive, *The Canadian Environment in Political Context*, 2nd Edition (University of Toronto Press, 2019).
2. Additional chapters and articles - available electronically via LEARN or via the UWaterloo Library.

Mark Breakdown:

Live Q&A Attendance and/or Discussion Board	10%
Mid-term Test – due Friday, Oct. 22 at 5 p.m. EST	25%
Research Paper – due Friday, Nov. 12 at 5 p.m. EST	30%
Final Exam – due Friday, Dec. 10 at 5 p.m. EST	35%

Live Q&A Attendance and/or Discussion Board – 10%

Every week, there will be a live question and answer (Q&A) and discussion session for 50-60 minutes on Zoom. This is your opportunity to meet with me and your fellow students for a live discussion. You can participate via chat or raise your hand and unmute yourself if you prefer. Portions of these sessions will be recorded for those who cannot attend, however we will also often have unrecorded discussion time and breakout groups, so I hope you will feel as though you can participate as if it were an in-person class. If you attend, participate, and stay for all or most of the time (i.e. at least 75% of the session), you will earn a full point. You may earn partial or no credit if you attend but do not contribute or are only in the session briefly.

However, I do realize that you may not be able to participate in live sessions during the term. Instead, you may also choose to participate in a discussion board as an alternative. Only those posting in the discussion board can see the posts. If your post answers the discussion prompt provided and reflects engagement with the material, you will earn 1 point for this instead. You may earn a half point or less if you do not engage with what is asked. **Discussion boards will be open for 7 days, closing each week on Fridays at 4:59 p.m. EST.** If you miss both the Q&A and the Discussion Board, you will not earn a point.

You can earn only 1 point per week, but you are welcome to both attend class and participate in the discussion board (though you may find it repetitive). There are 9 weeks (Weeks 1-5, 7-8 and 10-11) to earn points, though you only need to participate in 8 weeks to earn full points (Learn will drop the lowest score automatically).

If you are concerned about your attendance grade: Let me know as soon as you can! It is best to discuss with me early in the term to resolve any issues or concerns so that we may come up with alternatives if need be.

Do note that the online discussion forums are not anonymous. You should only write things that you would feel comfortable saying to someone else in person. UWaterloo's academic integrity policies also apply in the Forums, which means not only that you should provide credit for words and ideas that are not yours, but also that you should act ethically and appropriately. Refer to [Policy 71](#) for the details.

Mid-Term Test – 25%

A mid-term test will be held during Week 6, following Reading Week. The exam will involve questions covering the first five weeks of the term. You may use all the course resources to answer the questions, but you must work independently. More details on test format will follow.

Research Paper – 30%

You will write a research paper (**2400 - 3000 words**) that analyzes an **environmental policy issue** facing Canada today based on your independent research and application of concepts from ERS 201. This assignment will help you to develop the following critical thinking skills:

- Collecting and examining evidence
- Explaining the issue in your own words
- Considering different positions on an issue
- Drawing logical conclusions from the evidence and making recommendations

More information, some suggested topics and a rubric will be available on Learn. Research papers will be submitted to TurnItIn for similarity checking. If you would like to opt-out of TurnItIn, you must notify me by October 29th so that you can submit an early draft of your paper outline and arrange for a separate virtual meeting to discuss your research after you submit the assignment. The paper is due **Friday, Nov. 12 at 5 p.m.**

Final Take-Home Exam – 35%

The final exam will ask you to integrate lessons from the entire term, which may include the lectures, guest lectures, readings and videos. The exam will be released on the last day of classes and will be due during the exam period.

Exams will be submitted to TurnItIn for similarity checking. If you would like to opt-out of TurnItIn, you must notify me by Dec. 1st so that we can arrange for a separate virtual meeting to discuss your answers after you submit the exam.

Late Work:

Grace Period: The written assignment due dates will have a **48-hour (2 day) grace period** during which time no late penalty will apply. No documentation is required. You are encouraged to submit everything on time to keep up with the class, but given the current state of the world, do use these days as needed.

Late Penalty: All written assignments submitted after the grace period will receive an automatic penalty of 5 percentage points (out of 100 points available on each assignment) per day, to a maximum 50% penalty. No assignments will be accepted after 10 days past the initial due date unless you have requested and received an extension from the professor.

LECTURE SCHEDULE & REQUIRED READINGS

Week 1 (Sept. 8) – Introduction

Required Readings:

- Olive, Ch. 1

PART 1 – *The Canadian Political Landscape*

Week 2 (Sept. 15) – Political Structures, Actors and Institutions

Required Readings:

- Olive, Ch. 2
- Olive, Ch. 3

Week 3 (Sept. 22) – Making Environmental Policy in Canada

Required Readings:

- Olive, Ch. 3 [Revisit the Policy Process on pgs. 70-82]
- Olive, Ch. 4
- Deborah McGregor. 2014. “Lessons for Collaboration Involving Traditional Knowledge and Environmental Governance in Ontario, Canada.” *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 10 (4): 340–53. In LEARN.

Week 4 (Sept. 29) – Political Interests and the Economy

Required Readings:

- Olive, Ch. 12.
- Michael Howlett and Nigel Kinney, “The Current (Post-Staples?) State of Canada’s Resource Industries”, in D. VanNijnatten (2016) *Canadian Environmental Policy and Politics*, pp.38-56. (On Learn)

Week 5 (Oct. 6) – Canada in the World: Global Environmental Politics

Required Readings:

- Olive, Ch. 11.
- Stoett, Peter J. “Substantive But Inconsistent: Canada’s Role in Global Environmental Governance, 1968–2017.” *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 24, no. 3 (2018): 316–28.
- Annie Hylton, “Is Canada to Blame for Human Rights Abuses in Guatemala?” *The Walrus*, June 30, 2017. <https://thewalrus.ca/is-canada-to-blame-for-human-rights-abuses-in-guatemala/>

Reading Week – October 11 - 15

Week 6 (Oct. 18-22)– Mid-term Test

PART 2 – Contemporary Environmental Politics in Canada

Week 7 (Oct. 27) – Environmental Racism and Environmental Justice in Canada

- McGregor, Deborah. Reconciliation and environmental justice, *Journal of Global Ethics*, (2018) 14:2, 222-231, DOI: 10.1080/17449626.2018.1507005
- Waldron, Ingrid, “Chapter 4 – Not in my Backyard: The politics of Race, Waste and Place in Nova Scotia,” in I. Waldron (2018) *There’s Something in the Water*, pp. 66-88.

Week 8 (Nov. 3) – Energy & Climate Change – Guest Lecture by Prof. Ian Rowlands

Required Readings:

- Olive, Ch. 9 – Energy Policy and Climate Change, pp. 221-248.
- IRENA, IEA and REN21 (2018), “Chapter 4 – Power” in *Renewable Energy Policies in a Time of Transition*. IRENA, OECD/IEA and REN21.

Week 9 (Nov. 10) – Research Paper Due

Week 10 (Nov. 17) – Food, Land and Forests

Required Readings

- Olive, Ch. 8 – “The Politics and Policy of Land: From Agriculture to Forests to Cities” pp. 189-220.
- Annette Desmarais and Hannah Wittman. 2014. “Farmers, Foodies and First Nations: Getting to Food Sovereignty in Canada.” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 41 (6): 1153–73. In LEARN.

Week 11 (Nov. 24) – Protecting Water and Air

Required Readings

- Olive, Ch. 6 – “Water” pp. 135 - 162
- Olive, Ch. 7 – “Air and Chemical Pollution,” pp. 159-188.
- Watch: *Global News: Canada’s Toxic Secret*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSt-0SE3O1s>

Week 12 (Dec. 1) – Conclusion and Final Exam

Academic integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check [the Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information.]

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4](#). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. [Check [the Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information.] A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#). For typical penalties, check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances](#) (other than a petition) or [Policy 71, Student Discipline](#) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72, Student Appeals](#).

Note for students with disabilities: [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with [AccessAbility Services](#) at the beginning of each academic term.

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students’ submissions are stored on a U.S. server, therefore students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography), if they are concerned about their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin® in this course.

It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor if they, in the first week of term or at the time assignment details are provided, wish to submit the alternate assignment.

Mental Health

The University of Waterloo, the Faculty of Environment and our Departments/Schools consider students' well-being to be extremely important. We recognize that throughout the term students may face health challenges - physical and / or emotional. Please note that help is available. Mental health is a serious issue for everyone and can affect your ability to do your best work.

Counselling Services <http://www.uwaterloo.ca/counselling-services> is an inclusive, non-judgmental, and confidential space for anyone to seek support. They offer confidential counselling for a variety of areas including anxiety, stress management, depression, grief, substance use, sexuality, relationship issues, and much more.

Religious Observances:

Students need to inform the instructor at the beginning of term if special accommodation needs to be made for religious observances that are not otherwise accounted for in the scheduling of classes and assignments.

Communications with Instructor and Teaching Assistants:

All communication with students must be through either the student's University of Waterloo email account or via Learn. If a student emails the instructor or TA from a personal account they will be requested to resend the email using their personal University of Waterloo email account.