Environmental Institutions
ESM 248, Winter 2023
Class meeting: Monday / Wednesday 8 - 9:15 (Bren 1424)
Professor: Mark Buntaine (buntaine@bren.ucsb.edu)
Office hours: Wednesdays 1-2 and by appointment
(Bren 4422, link to book 15 min. appointment)
TA: Yifan (Flora) He (yifan_he@bren.ucsb.edu)
Office hours: Thursdays 9-10 and by appointment (Bren 3022, aka the Cave)

Holidays: M 1/16, M 2/20

Course Summary

Institutions are rules, both formal and informal, that shape interactions between individuals, groups, and organizations. Because institutions exist in a vast array of forms at many different levels, they affect nearly every aspect of environmental management. This course provides tools that can be used to analyze informal, local, national, and international institutions. By recognizing the myriad of rules that affect the design and implementation of environmental management, you will be equipped to anticipate successful strategies to address environmental problems in many settings.

Critical to all types of institutional analysis are the concepts of rule-making, enforcement, and monitoring. Institutions such as national constitutions, cultural practices, or organizational procedures shape how rules are made. For any rule to affect behavior, some entity must be willing to impose costs for non-compliance or provide benefits for compliance. Mechanisms of enforcement include social pressures, market demand, legal sanctions, and reputation. To be able to enforce rules, information about compliance must be available. Monitoring produces this information and comes about through dense social relationships, government audits, private certification schemes, and voluntary reporting requirements, among many other possibilities. Institutional analysis seeks to diagnose the ways that behaviors can be shifted in desirable directions through rule-making, monitoring, and enforcement strategies. As we will see, environmental policies and management activities are seldom effective if they are not nested within supporting institutions.

Course Goals

- Analyze how formal and informal institutions affect individual and organizational behaviors in a variety of settings;
- Explore innovations in rule-making, enforcement, and monitoring, and their effects on environmental management outcomes;
- Assess the opportunities for institution building and reform at the community, domestic and global levels;
- Complete professional tasks that use institutional analysis;
- Develop professional communication skills related to institutional analysis;
Evaluation

Mini-Projects: The main goal of this course is to use institutional analysis to complete tasks found in professional settings. As such, the course is built around four mini-projects, which will be outlined in separate documents. For each of the mini-projects, you are encouraged to collaborate with up to two classmates. You may only collaborate with any single person one time over the four mini-projects. Everyone in a group must take full ownership of the final project and will receive the same grade, since I have no way to distinguish individual contributions.

Participation: Your active participation is important for the success of this course. Unlike a traditional lecture course evaluated by exams, sessions have been designed to build skills through active participation, discussion, and activities. I expect that you will closely read all of the assigned articles and/or documents before coming to class and that you will be prepared to engage in all discussions and activities. In addition, you will be required to prepare professional presentations for some mini-projects, the quality of which will factor into both your participation and assignment grades. You are expected to attend all course sessions. Contact me beforehand if you need to miss class for a legitimate reason, otherwise absences will negatively affect your participation grade.

Mini-Project #1 (Institutional profile, due: Tuesday 1/24 @ 5pm) 20%
Mini-Project #2 (Institutional response, due: Friday 2/17 @ 5pm) 20%
Mini-Project #3 (Monitoring brief / poster, due: Tuesday 3/7 @ 5pm) 20%
Mini-Project #4 (Institutional proposal, due: Thursday 3/23 @ 5pm) 20%
Participation 20%

Assignment completion policy: You must complete all assignments to pass the course.

Re-grades: I take student evaluation seriously and do not entertain requests to re-grade assignments unless I receive a formal, written request for a re-grade that compellingly documents a serious oversight on my part. A serious oversight on my part indicates that the entire assignment should receive further attention. Your grade may go up or down if I decide that an assignment needs this kind of attention, so plan accordingly. That being said, I strongly encourage you to meet with me to discuss the substance of my comments about your mini-projects.

Academic Honesty: I expect you to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. This means only turning in work that is your own and properly citing all information and ideas that you draw from others. Any assignment that does not adhere to UCSB academic honesty guidelines will not receive credit and will be referred to campus judicial procedures. See the linked guidelines.

Key for types of class sessions: Discussion, Lecture, Activity, Presentations
**Unit 1: Institutional Forms and Features**

**Session 1 (M 1/9) – Institutional roots of environmental problems (D)**

Why do environmental solutions that are well-conceived fail during implementation?

North, *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance*, Ch. 1


Discussion: Come prepared to describe an environmental problem that you care about and one reason why that problem has not been solved.

**Session 2 (W 1/11) – Recognizing different types of institutions (L&A)**

What types of institutions affect environmental outcomes? What is the difference between formal and informal institutions? What levels of institutions exist?

Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, Ch. 2


Session activities:

Create a Gauchospace post in a small group that contains: (i) a description of an environmental outcome; (2) an analysis of a human behavior that contributes to the outcome; (3) a description one formal institution that drives that behavior; and (4) a description of one informal institution that drives the behavior.

**NO CLASS M 1/16 — Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday**

**Session 3 (W 1/18) – Institutional profile (Recorded lecture & group work)**

*Note: Mark will be in Malawi for research travel. A lecture explaining how to complete the institutional profile will be posted online. The class time can be used for self-organized group work.*

Examples of institutional profiles, read at least one:

Sarr, S., Hayes, B., & DeCaro, D. A. (2021). *Applying Ostrom’s Institutional Analysis and Development framework, and design principles for co-production to*


Mini-project #1 (Institutional Profile): identify the institutional features that affect the current status of an environmental resource of your choice and submit a 4-5 page institutional profile. **Due Tuesday 1/24 @ 5pm.**

**Unit 2: Rule-Making**

**Session 4 (M 1/23) – Self-organized institutions (L)**
Under what conditions can groups of people create their own rules to solve environmental problems without relying on the government?

Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, Ch. 6.


**Session 5 (W 1/25) – Governments as rule-making institutions (L/A)**
How does the structure of government and procedures for making choices affect the types of rules that are adopted to manage environmental problems?


**Session 6 (M 1/30) – Participation and rule-making (A)**
When does public participation affect the outcomes of public rule-making and when does it not? Is more public participation always desirable?


**Activity:** Participatory decision-making simulation. Details will be posted on GauchoSpace.

**Session 7 (W 2/1) — Inequities in rule-making (L/D)**

Whose interests are represented in rule-making? How do interest groups gain more power in rule-making? What are strategies to increase equity in rule-making?


**Unit 3: Enforcement**

**Session 8 (M 2/6) – Strategy of enforcement (D/L)**

When will potential violators of rules have incentives to comply? What strategies for enforcement are available to ensure compliance with rules? When is it optimal to enforce given the costs involved?


**Suggested extra reading:**

**Session 9 (W 2/8) – Legal enforcement (L)**

*When will the threat of penalties and fines bring potential violators of rules into compliance? How do public authorities build credibility in enforcement?*


**Session 10 (M 2/13) – Market-based enforcement (D)**

*Under what conditions can markets enforce compliance with environmental rules? Does market-based enforcement substitute for public enforcement?*


*Mini-project #2 (Institutional Response): Analysis of an Eco-Label from the perspective of a firm or an NGO. Write a 3-4 page strategic assessment about how the firm or NGO should respond to an Eco-Label based on the institutions it establishes. Due Friday 2/17 @ 5pm.*

**Session 11 (W 2/15) – Social enforcement (D)**

*Under what conditions do social norms and pressures offer a way to ensure compliance with environmental rules?*


**NO CLASS M 2/20 — Presidents Day Holiday**
Unit 4: Monitoring

Session 12 (W 2/22) – Strategy of Monitoring Compliance (L, Zoom)
How will potential violators of rules respond to efforts to monitor their actions? How can enforcing agents be strategic in their monitoring efforts in response given the costs involved?

Note: Mark may need to hold this class remotely


Read in detail about one EPA compliance monitoring program: https://www.epa.gov/compliance/compliance-monitoring-programs

Session 13 (M 2/27) – Citizen Monitoring (L)
Under what conditions does calling on citizens to monitor potential violators of environmental rules lead to better outcomes?


Session 14 (W 3/1) – Innovations in Monitoring (Poster Session)

Background reading for some ideas:


*Mini-project #3 (Monitoring Brief):* Write a 2-page memo to a policy-maker of interest suggesting ways to improve monitoring of an environmental problem, based on the poster that you present in class. **Due Tuesday 3/7 @ 5pm.**
Unit 5. Building Institutions

Session 15 (M 3/6) – Institutional Change (D)
When do institutions change? When is the change fast and when is it slow? What are ways that advocates can prompt institutional change?


Session 16 (W 3/8) – Identifying Institutional Opportunities (L/A)
What can be done to address institutional failures? What are ways to leverage existing institutions?


Session 17 (M 3/13) – Development assistance and government reform (L/A)
When can external assistance be used to build stronger environmental institutions?


Activity: Define a strategy for spending international funding on climate adaptation: [https://www.adaptation-fund.org/](https://www.adaptation-fund.org/)
Session 18 (W 3/15) – Global institutions (L)
What is the role of international institutions in shaping environmental outcomes?


Mini-Project #4: Create a 4-5 page proposal for building and/or reforming an institution to manage an environmental problem. Address rule-making, monitoring, and enforcement, including trade-offs between these components of institution building. **Due Thursday 3/23 @ 5pm.**