

**ESM 241: Environmental Politics and Policy, Winter 2024**  
**Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30 - 10:45 AM**

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**TA:** Renae Marshall ([rmarshall@ucsb.edu](mailto:rmarshall@ucsb.edu))

**Materials:** All materials can be accessed at: [canvas.ucsb.edu](https://canvas.ucsb.edu)

**Slack:** All course communications by Slack ([invitation link](#))

**Office hours: Anderson:** Mondays 1-2 ([link to book 15 min. appointment](#)) and by appointment

**Marshall:** Wednesdays 2-4 PM, Bren 3017 and by appointment

### ***Overview***

This course focuses on the politics of the policy process. The goal is to give you a clear picture of the processes through which societies arrive at collective or public choices through the operation of the political system. Our principal objective is to inform how you will engage with the policy process in your careers by exploring how the policy process shapes the political feasibility of environmental solutions.

While designing and assessing policy options based on their technical merits is crucial, there are other courses at the Bren School that address these issues (e.g., your core course on environmental economics or courses in conservation planning). The fact is that these “optimal” policies are rarely adopted. Instead, the political system shapes what is or is not adopted. ESM 241 seeks to illuminate the policy process itself and to shed light on the forces that determine actual policy choices in contrast to examining the pros and cons of policy options regarding specific issues. Understanding the politics of the policy process should help you to understand whether seemingly attractive policy options are politically feasible and how to frame and present policy options in ways that enhance their prospects for enactment and successful implementation.

We will seek to answer the following types of questions. How do elections shape the adoption of policy solutions? How do institutional rules for decision making create veto points that constrain policy adoption? How does the executive promulgate rules on environmental governance? How are individual issues identified and framed for consideration as matters of public policy, and what determines whether they reach the top of the policy agenda?

This course has three main outcomes. The first outcome of this course is to introduce you to the politics of public policy making and the policy making process. We

will study why governments do what they do and develop an understanding of the actors, processes and policies. By the end of the class, diligent students will gain the knowledge of the logic of politics and the policy process.

The second outcome of this course is to improve your professional skills as advocates, advisors and analysts. Applying abstract ideas to real world problems, interpreting the meaning and significance of the analysis, and communicating the results are learned skills. The course is designed around activities to prepare you for the professional tasks you might undertake in your career in interaction with the policy process. These include identifying policy barriers, analyzing electoral strategy, developing approaches to build coalitions, designing effective messaging, and creating political strategies to pass policies.

The third and final outcome of this course is to learn the responsibility of being actors in the policy process. This is particularly important because many actors in the policy-making system lack the time, attention or expertise to make policy. Because of the constraints inherent to a policy system in a representative democracy, many unelected people in government agencies, interest groups, advocacy organizations and nonprofits are delegated policymaking responsibility.

Policy processes are generic in the sense that they occur in all political systems. But they are affected in important ways by the specific institutional character of particular political systems. Although our primary focus in this course will be on the American political system, we will refer to other political systems as a means of illuminating distinctive features of the American system and of providing a point of departure for exploring the effects of these features on the results of the policy process.

### **Resources**

- The [US Constitution](#) as amended
- The [Polity IV Project](#) for an overview of political regimes worldwide.

### **Procedures and Requirements**

Please see detailed policies and resources at the end of this document.

### **Deliverables**

The deliverables for ESM 241 include:

- [Policy Barriers Memo](#) (15%, due W 1/17)
- [Spatial Analysis and Paragraph](#) (15%, due W 1/24)

- [Coalition Strategy](#) (15%, due: W 1/31)
- [Communication Strategy](#) (15%, due W 2/7)
- [Political Strategy](#) (25%, due W 2/14)
- Active participation in class and section (15%)

**Late Policy:** Late assignments will not be accepted without prior permission from the instructor. They will be marked down by 10%.

## **Section**

Section 1 (week 1): [Policy barriers memo](#)  
 Section 2 (week 2): [Spatial Analysis and Paragraph](#)  
 Section 3 (week 3): [Coalition Strategy](#)  
 Section 4 (week 4): [Communication Strategy](#)  
 Section 5 (week 5): [Political Strategy](#)

## **Class Sessions and Readings**

*Note: additional (optional) readings and resources for each session and the activities guides are posted on Canvas.*

**Session 1.1 (M 1/8):** Introduction to course goals — *why don't economically and technically appropriate policies that address environmental problems get adopted or implemented successfully? What can be done about it?*

Mildenberger & Stokes (2020):

<http://bostonreview.net/science-nature-politics/matto-mildenberger-leah-c-stokes-trouble-carbon-pricing>

[Why the Senate passed the Inflation Reduction Act but not a cap-and-trade bill, according to three ex-lawmakers](#)

Hughes (2020): [Flint Safe Drinking Water](#)

### *Additional optional readings*

Majkut:

<https://www.niskanencenter.org/the-immediate-case-for-a-carbon-price/>



**Session 1.2 (W 1/10):** Elections and political parties — *how do people gain political power? What do we know about the importance of issue positions for turnout and vote choice, which determine election outcomes? How does the shadow of future elections impact decisions once in office? (in class primary/general election exercise)*

[FIORINA VIDEO](#)

Anderson, Butler, and Harbridge-Yong [How primaries result in lack of compromise.](#)

Schaffer, L. M., Oehl, B., & Bernauer, T. (2022). [Are policymakers responsive to public demand in climate politics?](#) *Journal of Public Policy*, 42(1), 136-164.

**NO CLASS ON M 1/15 for Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday**

**Session 2.2 (W 1/17):** Elites and Rules (Veto players at multiple levels) – *how does the structure of collective decision-making and policy enactment determine the policies that get adopted?*

Dan Butler video: [Pivotal Politics](#)

Bryner, 1995, "[From the Clean Air Act of 1970 to the 1990 Amendments](#)"

**Session 3.1 (M 1/22):** Executive rule-making – *how does the executive branch make policy? What determines the types of interests that the executive responds to when crafting rules?*

VIDEO: [Executive Agencies and Rulemaking](#)

Berardo, R., & Holm, F. (2018). [The participation of core stakeholders in the design of, and challenges to, the US Clean Power Plan.](#) *Climate policy*, 18(9), 1152-1164.

**Session 3.2 (W 1/24):** Interest groups and coalitions – *how do interest groups organize to bring about effective political pressure on decision-makers? What types of coalitions or groups can gain influence through active campaigning or other political pressure?*

Daniel Butler Wilson-Low matrix video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0EV19dAapnQ>

Culhane, T., Hall, G., & Roberts, J. T. (2021). [Who delays climate action? Interest groups and coalitions in state legislative struggles in the United States](#). *Energy Research & Social Science*, 79, 102114.

Méndez, M. (2020). *Climate change from the streets: How conflict and collaboration strengthen the environmental justice movement*. Yale University Press. [Ch. 5. “Cap and Trade-Offs”](#)

**Session 4.1 (M 1/29):** Public campaigns and opinion – *who shapes public opinion? When and why do policy-makers respond to public opinion? How can information campaigns be targeted to have more of an effect on policy-maker choices?*

Dan Butler Video: <https://youtu.be/JoQKHysCRsg>

Levine, A. S., & Kline, R. (2017). [A new approach for evaluating climate change communication](#). *Climatic Change*, 142(1-2), 301-309.

**Session 4.2 (W 1/31):** Comparative policy analysis – *why do we see similar policy proposals succeed in some places and not others? What does this teach us about the ability of different systems to produce policies?*

Finnegan, J. J. (2022). [Institutions, climate change, and the foundations of long-term policymaking](#). *Comparative Political Studies*, 55(7), 1198-1235.

**Session 5.1 (M 2/5):** International agreements – *what are the unique challenges of creating binding rules for managing the environment at the international level?*  
Also using rooms *Sycamore (1510), Oak (1520)*

Victor, D. G. (2006). [Toward effective international cooperation on climate change: Numbers, interests and institutions](#). *Global environmental politics*, 6(3), 90-103.

**Session 5.2 (W 2/7):** Politically feasible policies – *what are the ingredients for a politically viable policy proposal? Under what circumstances are new policy proposals likely to succeed?*

Jakob, M., Steckel, J. C., Jotzo, F., Sovacool, B. K., Cornelsen, L., Chandra, R., ... & Robins, N. (2020). [The future of coal in a carbon-constrained climate](#). *Nature Climate Change*, 10(8), 704-707.

Lindwell (2022): [With the Inflation Reduction Act, Congress Takes a Monumental Step in the Climate Fight](#)

## **Detailed Policies and Procedures**

We are committed to creating a safe and inclusive climate for all at Bren. We are available to talk with you if you have any concerns. Below we've collected many of the policies and resources that you might need. But we're also happy to help you to find the resources. Please feel free to be in touch if you have questions.

### **COVID**

We know that COVID-19 might still affect your ability to be in class. Please reach out if you are struggling with any elements of this class or if you need accommodations or support. We also welcome your feedback at any time either directly or anonymously (see Gauchospace suggestion box).

### **Individual Differences and Accommodations**

UCSB is committed to providing reasonable academic accommodations to students with disabilities (<http://www.ada.ucsb.edu>). If you anticipate experiencing difficulty in this course for any reason, please consult with the instructor. If you have a disability that may prevent you from fully demonstrating your abilities, you should contact the Disabled Students Program. Any student wishing to receive accommodations for a verified disability should request academic accommodations through the Disabled Students Program (<http://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu>, 893-2668) as soon as possible.

### **Academic integrity/Responsible Scholarship**

Honesty and integrity in all academic work are essential for a valuable educational experience. The Office of Judicial Affairs has policies, tips, and resources for proper citation use, recognizing actions considered to be cheating or other forms of academic theft, and students' responsibilities, available on their website at: <http://judicialaffairs.sa.ucsb.edu>. Students are responsible for educating themselves on the policies and to abide by them. Assignments with plagiarism will be given zero points.

### **Religious Observances**

UCSB is committed to providing reasonable academic accommodations to allow students observances of their religious beliefs. Whenever possible, students will be given reasonable time to make up any academic assignment that is missed due to participation in a religious observance. It is your responsibility to inform us as soon as possible of any intended absences for religious observances.

### **Copyright and Course Recording Policy**

All course materials (class lectures and discussions, handouts, examinations, web materials) and the intellectual content of the course itself are protected by United States Federal Copyright Law, the California Civil Code. The UC Policy 102.23 expressly prohibits students (and all other persons) from distributing or selling lectures notes and all other course materials without the prior written permission of the instructor (See <http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/2710530/PACAOS100>). Students are permitted to make notes solely for their own private educational use. Exceptions to accommodate students with disabilities may be granted with appropriate documentation. To be clear, in this class students are forbidden from completing study guides and selling them to any person or organization. In addition, students and class visitors may not make audio or visual recordings of lectures, class discussions, or class presentations without the advance written consent of the instructor. Approved recordings are to be solely used for the purposes of individual or group study by students enrolled in the class. If the recordings are to be used in any other manner, including any form of reproduction or distribution on the Internet or any other media, then in addition to the advance written consent of the instructor, the person making the recording shall obtain written consent from any student whose words or likeness appear in the recording. Inherent within this policy, instructors recognize that they must take into consideration and make accommodations to students who require access to course materials in compliance with the University's obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

## **Discrimination and Sexual Harassment**

We seek to create a learning environment free of discrimination and sexual harassment.

**As faculty members and instructors, we are required to report discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual violence involving students.** All UC employees including faculty and supervisors (except those specifically identified as confidential employees) are required to notify the Title IX office if anyone in the University community brings information about, or an employee becomes aware of, a possible incident of discrimination, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. Such reports are not confidential and all parties must be named.

The Title IX Compliance and Sexual Harassment Policy Compliance Office (TIX/SHPC) provides assistance in preventing and resolving & investigating complaints of sexual harassment/sexual violence and gender discrimination. It is also illegal to discriminate against a woman because of pregnancy, childbirth, or a medical condition related to pregnancy or childbirth. <http://www.oesh.ucsbs.edu/> If you believe you may be experiencing discrimination, exclusion from or denial of benefits of any program at UCSB, on the basis of your sex, gender or gender presentation, the TIX/SHPC is available to receive and respond to your complaint.



**If you would like confidential support**, the CARE: Campus Advocacy, Resources, and Education program can provide confidential emotional support, connect you with medical care, give you options for filing a report, help you understand your legal rights, facilitate housing needs, and connect survivors to campus and community funding sources. Resources can be found at: <http://sexualviolence.ucsb.edu/get.help/>

## **Distressed Students**

UCSB is committed to providing a quality learning environment for its students. It is not uncommon for students to encounter emotional and mentally stressful challenges over the course of their studies. If you would like to talk with a counselor, please reach out to [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) at 805-893-4411. If you know of someone else in distress who may need help, please encourage them to contact CAPS or submit a referral online. UCSB's [Student Wellbeing site](#) and the [Bren School's Student Resources](#) website include other links to resources that can help you take care of yourself and others in our community. Please be kind to yourself and others and reach out if you need support.

## **Assignment completion policy**

You must complete all assignments to pass the course, even if skipping an individual assignment would not result in a non-passing grade by percentage.

## **Grading**

We take student evaluation seriously and do not entertain requests to re-grade assignments unless we receive a formal, written request for a re-grade that compellingly documents a serious oversight on our part. A serious oversight on our part indicates that the entire assignment should receive further attention. Your score may go up or down if we decide that an assignment needs this kind of attention, so plan accordingly. We strongly encourage you to meet with us to discuss feedback on your assignments.

## **Syllabus Subject to Minor Changes**

You agree to complete the assignments in a timely manner in accordance with the schedule printed in the syllabus and to participate in the class using proper student conduct and etiquette. As part of this agreement, your responsibilities are printed clearly within this syllabus with deadlines so that you will know well in advance when readings and assignments are due. The syllabus is also subject to change if deemed necessary by the instructor. You will be afforded ample warning before any new responsibility or assignment is due. Most often, a change to the syllabus will constitute a minor change in reading materials or the cancellation of a day of class. If such a change occurs, a

revised syllabus will be made available to students and replace any old copies of the syllabus.