

Environmental Problems

Geography 464

Fall 2017

3 credits

Meets:	Tu/Th 12:30 pm – 1:45 pm
Location:	Bolton Hall B60
Instructor:	Ryan Holifield
Office Location:	Bolton 434
Phone:	229-4868
Email:	holifiel@uwm.edu
Office Hours:	Tu/Th 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm <i>or by appointment</i>

Introduction to the course

How do we come to identify and define particular sets of environmental conditions as “problems”? And how do we go about attempting to solve them? To be sure, environmental *sciences* and *scientists* of various kinds play extremely important roles in addressing these questions. However, they are obviously not the only actors – and Geography 464 is not a “natural science” course.

Environmental problems are always problems *for* someone or something. Addressing them requires attending to the interests, desires, and values of a wide range of constituencies: businesses, environmental advocacy organizations, government agencies, political representatives, and neighborhood residents, to name a few – and to this list we also must add nonhuman species unable to speak for themselves. It also requires choosing among multiple competing political, philosophical, and practical perspectives on how best to identify and solve environmental problems. In short, the knowledge generated by the natural sciences cannot by itself solve our most vexing environmental problems. We also have to make decisions, and this requires us to face up to the complex, messy worlds we call society, culture, law, economics, and politics – and the growing field of *environmental governance*.

If one goal of the course is to introduce you to the complexities of environmental problems and our attempts to address them through governance, another is to cultivate your capacity to *think geographically* about them. By “thinking geographically,” I mean a couple of different things. One is to recognize the significance of key geographic concepts as lenses on environmental problems – our emphasis will be on the concepts of *scale*, *place*, *territory*, and *networks*, but we will consider others as well. A second is to get a sense of the distinctive ways in which geography as an academic discipline—usually in conversation or combination with other disciplines—approaches environmental problems.

Course prerequisites and requirements

The official prerequisites for Geography 464 are junior status (or above) and one introductory course in a life science or environmental science. If you have not taken such a course, I would recommend taking Geography 125 (Introduction to Environmental Geography) or CES 210 concurrently with this one. Geography 464 counts as one of the required courses for the Environmental Track, Urban Track, or Regional and Educational Track in the undergraduate geography major, and it is an approved elective for CES majors. It is also open to graduate students for credit.

Readings

We will use the following required textbook for this class:

**Evans, J.P. *Environmental Governance*, London and New York: Routledge, 2012.
(ISBN# 9780415589826)**

Currently, the textbook is available as an e-book through the UWM library, which also has a physical copy of the book. Another inexpensive way to acquire the textbook is as a Kindle ebook rental through Amazon or as an eTextbook rental through www.chegg.com and other sites. If you prefer to purchase the physical book, it is available at the UWM Virtual Bookstore and through other online vendors.

All other required and optional readings for this class will be available online through the course's D2L site.

Course learning objectives and assignments

By the end of the course, you should be able to do the following:

1. Recognize and describe major environmental laws and policies, as well as major global, national, regional, and state governing institutions and agencies.
2. Define key terms in the governance of environmental problems.
3. Discuss the historical evolution of environmental governance, explaining the difference between classic "command-and-control" approaches and contemporary governance approaches.
4. Discuss the primary geographic dimensions of this historical evolution, including decentralization, shifts in scale of regulation, changing significance of territory and boundaries, and emergence of transboundary networks.
5. Classify and describe dominant contemporary perspectives on environmental governance in the US.

6. Analyze efforts to govern, manage, and solve one or more environmental problems facing Milwaukee or the larger region (e.g., Wisconsin, Lake Michigan, etc.).
 - a. Identify and describe specific environmental problems associated with a place or issue.
 - b. Identify and describe key actors and institutions involved in addressing these problems, distinguishing among competing interests and positions.
 - c. Discuss the geographic dimensions of the problems and the institutions involved in addressing them (e.g., scale, territory, place, network, etc.).
 - d. Identify and describe barriers to solving the problems you have identified.
 - e. Evaluate the merits of current approaches and argue on behalf of a particular solution.
 - f. Present the case clearly and succinctly to your classmates.

The three components of your class grade are linked closely to these learning objectives. Your final grade will be determined by the following:

1. Two exams – one midterm and one final (50% total)
2. Team blog project and presentation (45%)
 - a. Four individual blog posts and comments, worth 10% each (total 40%)
 - b. One 5-minute online team presentation and comment, worth 5% total
3. Attendance, participation, and occasional short homework assignments (5%)

You will receive more information about the blog project in a separate set of handouts, including details on different criteria for graduate and undergraduate students.

Exams: You will take a midterm exam worth 20% of your grade and a final exam worth 30% of your grade. The midterm will consist of a combination of multiple choice and short essay questions, and it will test your knowledge and comprehension of major concepts covered during the class during the first few weeks of the semester. The final will include a range of question types as well, but it will also include an essay in which you show that you not only comprehend the arguments of the different approaches and theories we have studied, but also can compare, contrast, and critically evaluate their soundness, rigor, and applicability. You will receive study guides and other materials to help you prepare for both exams.

Grading Policy and Guide to Grades

See the following sites for UWM policies on grades and grading:

<https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S29.htm>

Graduate students: <http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/academic-policies-procedures/>

93-100%	A	73-75%	C
90-92%	A-	70-72%	C-
86-89%	B+	66-69%	D+
83-85%	B	63-65%	D
80-82%	B-	60-62%	D-
76-79%	C+	0-59%	F

If you take the class pass-fail (S/U), you must get the equivalent of at least a "C" to earn an "S" in the course.

Work load

This is a 3-credit course. As a general rule of thumb, I expect you to spend 2-3 hours outside of class for every one hour in class. Since we will spend 2½ hours in class each week, you can expect to spend approximately 5-8 hours each week preparing for class or working on assignments.

Federal law now requires university instructors to state the amount of time an average student can expect to spend on different class components during the entire semester:

Estimated time for course components	Hours
Time in the classroom* (29 sessions)	36
Time spent reading textbook and other materials	48
Time taking final exam	2
Time preparing presentations	8
Time completing other assignments	25
Time for preparation and study	25
Total for semester (@3 credits x 48 hrs/credit hour)	144
<i>*Includes midterm</i>	

Can I have an extension? A note on special consideration

Please don't ask for extensions, make-up assignments, or second chances on exams. Here's UWM's policy on "special consideration," which I strive to follow closely (<https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S29.htm>):

Special Consideration. The principle of equal treatment of all students shall be a fundamental guide in responding to requests for special consideration. No student should be given an opportunity to improve a grade that is not made available to all members of the class. This policy is not intended to exclude reasonable accommodation of verified student disability, or the completion of work missed as the result of religious observance, verified illness, or justified absence due to circumstances beyond the student's control.

Comments: This policy applies to requests for special consideration both before and after a course is completed (See also Grade or Record Changes). It is usually impossible to make opportunities for grade improvement available to all students in a course after the course has ended. Examples of unacceptable opportunities for an individual student include extra work, retaking an examination, taking an extra examination, or an extension of time on an assignment or examination. The policy on incompletes (UWM Select Policies and Procedures, S-31) explains the circumstances in which a student may be given extra time for the completion of a course. This policy should reassure students who are not seeking special consideration and it should also protect instructors from student pressure for special consideration.

Late work

To be fair to students who turn their work in on time, **you will receive no more than half-credit for assignments turned in late (until the last regular day of class, not including the final exam)**, unless a documented medical or personal emergency arises. Please see me immediately if an emergency arises, or if you know you will have a problem turning your work in on time.

Please note that “the D2L dropbox [or discussion forum] didn’t work” is not an acceptable excuse for a late assignment; you are responsible for making sure your assignment reaches the dropbox or discussion forum. You should email the instructor immediately—and before the assignment is due—if you have technical difficulties submitting your assignment.

Attendance policy

Attendance and participation are crucial in this class. If you anticipate missing numerous class sessions during the semester, I would recommend waiting until a future semester to take the course. You are permitted to miss three classes without an excuse. **For each unexcused absence over three, your final grade for “Attendance and Participation” (see above) will be reduced.** Excused absences are limited to family and medical emergencies only. If you are more than 15 minutes late for a class, or if you leave more than 15 minutes early, you will be counted as absent.

Classroom conduct

In this class, we must work together to create a positive learning environment, and I expect you to *respect the rights of other students to learn*.

- Please come to class on time and stay until the end. If you must come in late or leave early, please avoid distracting other students or disrupting the lecture or discussion.
- Please respect me and your fellow students when we are speaking by not engaging in side conversations with your classmates.

Cell phones, laptops, etc.

- Please turn your cell phone to “silent” when you come to class.
- You may use laptops, tablets, or other electronic devices in class only to record lecture notes, complete class-related activities, or refer to digital copies of course texts or notes—and only with the prior approval of the instructor. **Please do not use such devices for e-mail, messaging, web-surfing, gaming, or other activities during class.**

I also expect you to *acknowledge and respect the diversity of participants in the class*. At times we will discuss controversial issues in this course, and students in the class will not always be on the same side. Your task is not to “win” debates, and it is certainly not to dismiss some points of view, perspectives, or experiences as incorrect or irrelevant without considering them carefully and critically. On the contrary, you should seek to develop an understanding of the different positions in debates about environmental problems—including positions that differ from your own—and to challenge your own preconceptions. Even if you disagree with points of view expressed by your instructor or your fellow students, as citizens of this class you are responsible for considering different points of view respectfully.

Make-up exams and due dates

To be fair to all students in the course, you may not make up exams or reschedule due dates unless a documented medical or personal emergency arises. If you must be absent on the day of an exam or presentation, you must contact me immediately to reschedule a make-up date.

Technology

D2L site: You will gain access to readings, surveys, and other course materials through the course D2L site: <http://d2l.uwm.edu/>. To reach the site, simply log in using your Panther ID and password, and then follow the instructions to find the course site. If you need help getting access to the site or to D2L, please use the UWM Help Desk, which should be your first point of contact for any technical issues you encounter:

Help Desk web site: <http://uwm.edu/technology/help/>

Help by phone: (414) 229-4040 (for hours: <http://uwm.edu/technology/help/>)

Submit Help Request: <https://uwm.cherwellondemand.com/CherwellPortal/CampusTechnology#0>

Help Desk Location: Bolton 225 and Library Learning Commons (M-F, 8 am-5 pm)

For a handout on accessing D2L, visit: <http://uwmltc.org/?p=870>

Software: The computer you use must have a basic word processing package such as MS Word for Windows, and you should know how to use it. You will also need to be able to view Adobe PDF files (lectures, reading guides, other readings). You can view these files using free downloads, and you'll find links to these downloads on the D2L site.

Email etiquette: The best way to reach me outside of class is via email (holifield@uwm.edu). (Note, though, that my last name is “Holifield,” not “Holifiel”!) Although you shouldn’t expect a response within minutes, I generally check and respond to email frequently, and except in unusual circumstances (for instance, I am occasionally out of town for a few days for a conference) I will answer you within 24 hours. I will let you know if I will be away from my email account for more than 24 hours.

To succeed in this course, you need to check your UWM email account regularly and read all emails I send. I will do my best not to bombard you with email, and I will never try to sell you any strange products. You should put my email address in your address book and on your “safe senders” list.

UWM recommends that you do **not** forward your UWM email to a private email account, because private email providers sometimes block incoming UWM email. If you choose to use a private email account despite this recommendation, it will be your responsibility to set up the account to receive email forwarded from your Pantherlink account. I will not accept “I didn’t receive the email” as an excuse.

Here are some important guidelines for your emails to me—please observe them:

- Please put “Geog 464” in the subject header line.
- Please address your emails to me **by name**.
- Please consider the **tone** of your emails carefully. I’m happy to respond to polite questions or requests for information, but every semester I receive a small number of rude and inconsiderate emails. If you write the latter, I won’t hesitate to let you know.
- **Please sign your emails by name.** Otherwise I may reply to you as “rbh09478” or whatever your Panther ID happens to be.
- PLEASE LOOK AT THE FOLLOWING WEB SITE for excellent advice on emailing your professors:
[I’m also happy to meet with you in person. Please feel free to drop by my office hours or email to set up an appointment.](http://www.wikihow.com>Email-a-Professor</div><div data-bbox=)

University policies and other concerns

For the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee’s official policies on **disabilities, religious observances, active military duty, incompletes, discriminatory conduct, academic misconduct, complaint procedures, and grade appeal procedures**, please see the following web site:

<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf>. Geography 464 adheres to all of these policies.

Academic misconduct: You are responsible for reading and following UWM guidelines on academic misconduct, including cheating and plagiarism:
http://uwm.edu/deanofstudents/conduct/conduct_procedures/academic-misconduct/. If instructors suspect academic misconduct, we are required to follow the procedures described here:
http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm.

H1N1 Influenza: In the event of disruption of normal classroom activities due to an H1N1 swine flu outbreak, the format for this course may be modified to enable completion of the course. In such an event, you will be provided an addendum to this syllabus that will supersede this version.

In accordance with UWM policies, I am happy to make accommodations for disabilities and religious observances. If either circumstance applies to you, you should notify me ***within the first two weeks of class.*** (See the “Syllabus Links” above for UWM’s policies.)

Incompletes: "An Incomplete may be given to a student who has carried a subject successfully until near the end of the semester but, **because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond that student's control,** has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work. **An Incomplete is not given unless the student proves to the instructor that s/he was prevented from completing course requirements for just cause as indicated above.**" (quoted from UWM policy: <http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S31.pdf>).

Calendar

Date	Unit	Session	Topic (subject to change)
5-Sep		1	Intro to class: What are environmental problems?
7-Sep	1	2	Environmental problems as "wicked problems"
12-Sep	1	3	Historical background – changing approaches to governing
14-Sep	2	4	The Limits to Growth and the shift to governance
19-Sep	2	5	Globalization and sustainable development
21-Sep	2	6	Competing framings of environmental problems
26-Sep	3	7	Institutions and rules in environmental governance
28-Sep	3	8	Common pool resource management and scale
3-Oct	3	9	Key actors in environmental governance
5-Oct	4	10	The global governance process
10-Oct	4	11	Global governance – institutions
12-Oct	4	12	Climate change and global governance
17-Oct	n/a	13	Review
19-Oct	n/a	14	Midterm
24-Oct	5	15	Networks and environmental governance
26-Oct	5	16	Networks and environmental governance
31-Oct	6	17	Markets and environmental governance
2-Nov	6	18	Markets and environmental governance
7-Nov	6	19	Markets and environmental governance
9-Nov	7	20	Transition management and environmental governance
14-Nov	7	21	Transition management and environmental governance
16-Nov	8	22	Resilience and adaptive governance
21-Nov	8	23	Resilience and adaptive governance
n/a			No class – Thanksgiving
28-Nov	9	24	Resilience and adaptive governance/participation
30-Nov	9	25	Public participation in environmental governance
5-Dec	9	26	Public participation in environmental governance
7-Dec	10	27	Public participation in environmental governance
12-Dec		28	Conclusion and reflections
14-Dec		29	Exam review and course evaluations

Final Exam Period: Thursday, December 21, 12:30 – 2:30 pm
[\(http://uwm.edu/onestop/enrolling/finding-classes/final-exam-schedule/\)](http://uwm.edu/onestop/enrolling/finding-classes/final-exam-schedule/)