

# Environmental Problems

## Geography 464 (201 – Online)

Spring 2017

3 credits

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## 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 and Global Studies 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](http://www.chegg.com). 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 major components of your class grade are linked closely to these learning objectives. Your final grade will be determined by the following:

1. **Quizzes, reflections, and essays** (50%) (full instructions on the D2L site)
  - a. Eight multiple choice quizzes, worth 2.5% each (20%)
  - b. Ten short answer focused reflections, worth 2% each (20%)
  - c. Final essay (10%)
2. **Team blog project and presentation** (42%) (full instructions on the D2L site, including details on different criteria for graduate and undergraduate students)
  - a. Topic and interest survey (1%)
  - b. Four individual blog posts, worth 7% each (28%)
  - c. One or more comments on classmates' blog posts, worth 2% for four submissions (8%)
  - d. One 5-minute online team presentation (4%)
  - e. Comment on online team presentation (1%)
3. **Participation in online discussions and occasional short homework assignments** (8%) (more information below, full instructions on the D2L site)
  - a. Introductory activities (introduction, response, quiz) (3%)
  - b. Participation and homework (5%)
  - c. *Extra credit midterm and final course evaluation surveys (extra credit of 1% each)*

**Quizzes, reflections, and essays** (full instructions on the D2L site):

- The quizzes have strict time limits, but you will be able to take them up to three times before the deadline, with no penalty.
- The short answer reflections and final essay substitute for midterm and final exam components from the conventional version of this course. You should submit your short answer reflections and final essays to the appropriate dropbox folders before the deadlines below.
- Your first four quizzes and first five reflections will be due by **right before Spring Break** (see the Due Date Calendar). Your second four quizzes, second five reflections, and final essay will be due during **the first day of the final exam period** (see the Due Date Calendar). However, as online students you will have the opportunity to complete the quizzes and reflections earlier, and I encourage you to do so.

**Team blog project and presentation** (full instructions and deadlines on the D2L site):

- The major project for the semester will be a blog project, in which you'll use environmental governance concepts to analyze efforts to govern real-world environmental problems in Wisconsin and the Great Lakes region. You'll be working with a team, but you'll compose your own blog posts and comments individually. You'll coordinate topics with your team members, and you'll work together on the final online presentation.
- During the first month of class, you'll complete a topic/interest survey to let me know your preferences for a topic. I will assign project groups immediately after the survey deadline.
- You'll submit four blog posts, and you'll also submit one or more comments on blog posts from other teams. You'll also submit a comment on another team's online presentation.

**Participation, discussion forums, short homework assignments, evaluation surveys** (full instructions and deadlines on the D2L site):

- The first component of your participation grade is the three introductory activities: personal introduction discussion forum, response to personal introduction, and introductory quiz. Those who add the course after these are due can receive a very short extension.
- There will be eight D2L discussion forums to discuss class topics, videos, and case studies, and a couple of short homework assignments.
- The discussion forums will be largely unstructured, with few restrictions on your posts beyond matters of "netiquette." Your grade will be based on a simple "0-1-2" rubric, available on the D2L site. You are not strictly required to participate in every discussion forum, but your final participation grade will be based on the sum of the total points you earn during the course of the semester. Short homework assignments will be worth one point each.
- There will be two anonymous course evaluation surveys available: one due at the midterm, and the other due at the end of the course. By taking a short "quiz" at the end of each survey, you can receive one percentage point of extra credit for each one.

## Grading Policy and Guide to Grades

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

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

Graduate students: <http://www.graduateschool.uwm.edu/students/policies/>

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.

## 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 (<http://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.

## Expectations: work load and participation in an online course

**Work load:** It's important for you to understand that even though you will not attend class in a physical classroom, the work load for an online course is just as heavy as you would expect from a conventional class. Although the amount of time spent per week will vary from student to student, as a rough estimate you can expect to spend 8 to 10 hours per week on the class.

Here's how you can expect to spend your time in a typical week:

- 2-3 hours reading textbook and other readings
- 1-2 hours viewing video clips and viewing or reading short lectures (most will be available as Word documents or PDF files)
- 1-1.5 hours taking quizzes, writing short reflections, or completing final essay
- 2-3.5 hours participating in discussions and/or working on the blog project

You will be responsible for managing your time in order to complete your work. Since this is often a challenge for students in an online course, I'll provide occasional tips and reminders to help you. If time management and organization are major problems for you, you may wish to consider enrolling in the face to face version of this course instead.

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, Spring 2017	Hours
Reading textbook and other readings	45
Viewing video clips/lectures	30
Preparing for and completing quizzes, short answer reflections, and final essays	24
Completing discussions, blog posts, comments, and other assignments (see above)	45
<b>Total for semester (@3 credits x 48 hrs/credit hour)</b>	<b>144</b>

**Participation:** Many of you have taken courses before in which you could sit back and learn more or less passively—just listening and taking notes, for instance. In contrast, online courses *require* active participation. The discussion forums and assignments play a central role in this course, and you don't have the option of sitting quietly in the back of the room. I expect you not just to participate in each discussion, but to engage thoughtfully with your classmates, with me, and with the materials you will be reading and viewing. If you strongly prefer a passive learning style, online learning may not be for you—but if you are willing to participate fully, you may find that you are one of the many students who thrive in online settings.

In order to be successful in this class, you should

- Be able to communicate effectively in writing
- Enjoy learning independently
- Be prepared to work through technical problems and difficulties
- Establish a personal schedule to manage your time effectively
- Be prepared to work just as hard as you would in a conventional class (if not harder)
- Be able to meet deadlines
- Have strong reading skills
- Be able to use a personal computer and the Internet

## Late work

To be fair to students who turn their work in on time, **you will not receive credit for quizzes, short answers, final essays, or discussion posts/short homework assignments submitted late**, unless a documented medical or personal emergency arises. For **blog posts and comments**, I will offer **half credit**

for late submissions that arrive before the final post is due and otherwise meet the criteria for a passing grade. Please contact me immediately if an emergency arises and 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.

## Technology

### *Technological requirements*

#### **Course site:**

You will gain access to lectures, quizzes, assignments, discussions, and exams through the course D2L site: <http://d2l.uwm.edu/>. In order 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: <https://uwm.cherwellondemand.com/CherwellPortal/CampusTechnology#0>

Help Desk Telephone: (414) 229-4040 or Toll Free (877) 381-3459 (see current hours at website above)

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

#### **Hardware and Internet connection:**

In order to take this class, you ***must*** have regular access either to a computer that has a broadband Internet connection or a campus network connection to the Internet. *A dialup or low-speed connection is insufficient to take this course*, and it is recommended that you use a wired connection rather than a wireless connection whenever possible.

If you do not have a computer of your own, you will need to use the campus computer labs or possibly a public library. Otherwise, you can find UWM’s recommendations for personal computer specifications at the following site: <http://uwm.edu/techstore/buyers-guide/>.

Please note that ***computer problems or lack of access to a computer with a high-speed Internet connection will not be acceptable excuses for missing due dates or failing to participate in discussion forums***. You will need to access the course site ***daily***. By taking an online course, you take on the responsibility of making sure you get prompt help from the Help Desk for all technical difficulties.

**Software:** The computer you use must have a basic word processing package such as Word for Windows, and you should know how to use it. You will also need to be able to view Adobe PDF files. You can view all of these files using free downloads, and you’ll find links to these downloads on the D2L site in the “Links” section.

## Communicating with your instructor

The best way to reach me is via email ([holifiel@uwm.edu](mailto:holifiel@uwm.edu)). (Note, though, that my last name is “**Holifield**,” not “**Holifiel**”!) Although you shouldn’t expect a response within minutes, especially outside of normal daytime working hours, I generally check and respond to email frequently, and except in unusual circumstances (for instance, if I am out of town for an extended time) 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.

In order to succeed in this course, you **must** check your UWM email account at least once daily 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 in spite of this recommendation, it will be your responsibility to set up the account to receive email forwarded from your UWM 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” or “Geography 464” in the subject header line.
- Please address your emails to me **by name** (most students prefer to address me as Professor Holifield or Dr. Holifield, but as long as you use my name I’m satisfied). Presumably many of you are preparing for professional careers, and you should compose email messages to your professors following professional conventions. I’ll think twice about responding to emails that simply say “Hey” or “Hi,” or include no salutation at all.
- 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.
- Here is a web site with very good suggestions for emailing professors:  
<http://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor>.

**Other options:** I have also set up a FAQ on the course D2L site. If you have a general question about the syllabus or course requirements, I strongly recommend that you check the FAQ first. I’m also happy to meet with you in person or talk with you on the phone or Skype during my office hours. Please send me an email to set up an appointment to talk. If you have questions or concerns about the class, please do not hesitate to contact me.

## Conduct and “netiquette”

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. I also expect you to acknowledge and respect the diversity of participants in the class. At times we will discuss controversial environmental 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 the environment—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. The instructor will do the same.

Communicating in an online environment involves additional considerations. If you haven’t already, please take a look at the following guide to interacting with others online, known as “netiquette”:  
<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>.

## Make-ups and due dates

In order to be fair to all students in the course, you may not reschedule due dates unless a documented medical or personal emergency arises. In the event that you cannot meet a due date because of an emergency, please contact me as soon as possible so we can work out a solution.

## 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://uwm.edu/secu/wp-content/uploads/sites/122/2016/12/Syllabus-Links.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/academicaffairs/facultystaff/policies/academic-misconduct/>. If instructors suspect academic misconduct, we are required to follow the procedures described at this web page.

***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: [https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S\\_31\\_INCOMPLETE\\_GRADES.pdf](https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_31_INCOMPLETE_GRADES.pdf)).

If you have questions or concerns about the class, please do not hesitate to contact the instructor. There is no extra credit available for this course.

## Calendar

This is a calendar of general course topics only. You’ll find all due dates in the file “Due Date Calendar” on the D2L site, and you’ll find details on weekly readings and assignments on the Content page of the D2L site.

Week 1 – Jan 23 to 29	Introduction and environmental problems as “wicked problems”
Week 2 – Jan 30 to Feb 5	Historical background the debate over Limits to Growth
Week 3 – Feb 6 to 12	Globalization, the shift to governance, and orders of governance
Week 4 – Feb 13 to 19	Governing common pool resources: institutions and rules
Week 5 – Feb 20 to 26	Governing common pool resources: key actors
Week 6 – Feb 27 to Mar 5	Governing global environmental problems
Week 7 – Mar 6 to 12	Network environmental governance
Week 8 – Mar 13 to 19	Network environmental governance
Spring Break – Mar 20 to 26	
Week 9 – Mar 27 to Apr 2	Market environmental governance
Week 10 – Apr 3 to 9	Market environmental governance
Week 11 – Apr 10 to 16	Technological transition management
Week 12 – Apr 17 to 23	Adaptive governance
Week 13 – Apr 24 to 30	Participation in environmental governance
Week 14 – May 1 to 7	Conclusion and reflections
Week 15 – May 8 to 13	Final assignments