THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Course Outline

Part I

Programme Title : Master of Public Policy and Management
Programme QF Level : 6
Course Title : Environmental Policy and Governance
Course Code : PPG6015
Department/Unit : Department of Social Sciences and Policy Studies
Credit Points : 3
Contact Hours : 39
Pre-requisite(s) : Nil
Medium of Instruction : EMI
Course Level : 6

Part II

The University's Graduate Attributes and seven Generic Intended Learning Outcomes (GILOs) represent the attributes of ideal EdUHK graduates and their expected qualities respectively. Learning outcomes work coherently at the University (GILOs), programme (Programme Intended Learning Outcomes) and course (Course Intended Learning Outcomes) levels to achieve the goal of nurturing students with important graduate attributes.

In gist, the Graduate Attributes for Sub-degree, Undergraduate, Taught Postgraduate, Professional Doctorate and Research Postgraduate students consist of the following three domains (i.e. in short "PEER & I"):

- **P**rofessional **E**xcellence;
- **E**thical **R**esponsibility; **&**
- **I**nnovation.

The descriptors under these three domains are different for the three groups of students in order to reflect the respective level of Graduate Attributes.

The seven GILOs are:

1. Problem Solving Skills
2. Critical Thinking Skills
3. Creative Thinking Skills

4a. Oral Communication Skills

4b. Written Communication Skills

5. Social Interaction Skills
6. Ethical Decision Making
7. Global Perspectives

1. Course Synopsis

This course aims to enable students to understand environmental policies and their governance in various parts of the world, with an emphasis on real-world examples from Asia and China.

Part A of the course introduces students to the fundamental and practical aspects of an environmental policy: development, assessment and revision. It uses real-world examples to illustrate the following multi-step approach:

- Identify the need for the policy (e.g., global warming due to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions);
- Set the policy target (e.g., 50% below the 2000 level by year 2030);
- Identify the possible policy actions to achieve the target (e.g., promote energy-efficient appliances and buildings, increase fuel-efficient/electric cars, retire coal-fired power plants, and develop renewable, nuclear energy, and clean vehicular fuels).
- Formulate a policy plan that may include regulations (e.g., no old dirty cars on the road by 2020), tax and subsidy (e.g., exemption of registration fee for electric cars), and quota-based programs (e.g., renewable portfolio standards (RPS) to develop wind generation for electric car charging).
- Assess the plan's merit from various perspectives (e.g., costs and values, political and public acceptance, science and technology, administration and management).
- Revise the policy and its plan after their implementation to address such questions as: (a) should the policy target be tightened? and (b) should its plan be changed?

To ensure students' firm understanding, Part A requires students to form teams, each performing a case study of an environment policy in Asia that impacts one's daily life (e.g., air quality, electricity generation, energy consumption, environmental education, food production, land use, mining and resource extraction, marine resources, public transportation, toxic waste, and water quality). Each team may have up to three members, although a student may choose to work as a one-person team.

An environment policy can fail sans good governance. Hence, Part B focuses on environmental governance that entails interventions to change environment-related incentives, institutions, decision making, and behaviour. It includes regulatory processes, mechanisms and organizations through which political actors influence environmental actions and outcomes. To see this point, consider the case of large GHG reductions that cannot occur without addressing such questions in environmental governance as:

- Who are the major consumers of fossil fuels that contribute to GHG emissions and global warming (e.g., cars, electricity generators, and manufacturing plants)?
- What are the other sources of GHG emissions (e.g., coal and wood as cooking/heating fuel, deforestation, farming, land fill, and fossil fuel extraction)?
- Do these consumers believe that global warming is a real risk, rather than a scientific hoax?
- Do they act on their own, without intervention of any kind, to reduce GHG emissions?

- How do they respond to regulatory processes (e.g., GHG emissions standards), incentive mechanisms (e.g., carbon taxes) and organizations (e.g., government agencies and self-regulatory bodies)?
- What are the characteristics of the global warming problem that transcends national borders (e.g., developed vs. developing countries), space (e.g., Asia vs. North America), and time (current vs. future generation)?
- What are the actions that the government, communities, businesses, and NGOs may take to achieve GHG reductions?
- What is the role of decentralization that delegates the responsibility of GHG reductions to local administrative and organizational arrangements, as well as individual decision-making by market participants (e.g., RPS set by individual states in the U.S.)?
- What are the market-based mechanisms that use incentives (e.g., carbon taxes and cap and trade) to induce GHG reductions?
- What are the inter-relationships among international accords, national policies, local decision-making structures, transnational institutions, and environmental groups?
- What is the impact of globalization that interconnects various regions on GHG reductions?

To ensure students' firm understanding, Part B requires each team to perform a follow-up study of environmental governance for the case chosen in Part A. This study should focus on the systems, processes, and tools to effectively execute an environmental policy, rather than Part A's study on the development, design and revision of the policy.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes ($CILO_s$)

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

$CILO_1$: Articulate the critical issues in environmental policy and governance.

$CILO_2$: Understand the basic tools and techniques for designing and implementing environmental policy and governance.

$CILO_3$: Know and appreciate the impacts of environmental policy and governance on consumers, firms, environment, government administration, and social welfare.

3. Content, CILOs and Teaching & Learning Activities

Course Content	CILOs	Suggested Teaching & Learning Activities
An overview on environmental policy and governance.	*$CILO_{1-3}$*	➢ Lectures comprising presentation and discussion of the key concepts and practices. ➢ Case studies by students on environmental policy and governance in Asia and China. ➢ Presentations by students on the practice and success/failure of
The multi-step and multi-facet approach to environmental policy and governance.	*$CILO_{1-3}$*	
Real-world examples to demonstrate the theory and	*$CILO_{1-3}$*	

practice of environmental policy and governance.		environmental policy and governance. ➢ Reports prepared by students to document the case studies. ➢ Web and library search. ➢ Reading lecture notes and key references.
Discussion of case studies prepared by students in the Asian and Chinese context.	*CILO*$_{1-3}$	

4. Assessment

Assessment Tasks	Weighting (%)	CILO
(a) Case Study Presentations and Discussion Students are required to work as a team to: (a) make two presentations: one on environmental policy and one on environmental governance; (b) prepare questions and ideas for discussion; and (c) encourage active participation among other members of the class. Half of each team member's grade reflects the team's overall performance, while the remainder is based on the member's own performance.	40%	*CILO*$_{1-3}$
(b) Class Discussion and Participation Students are expected to study relevant readings before s/he attends the classes and must participate actively in the discussion.	10%	*CILO*$_{1-3}$
(c) Individual Report Each student is required to write a report of about 1,500-2,000 words to concisely describe the team's two case studies. With clear lines of reasoning supported by documented evidence, the report should include: (a) an executive summary of the cases; (b) team formation and responsibility assignments; and (c) his/her involvement in: (1) problem identification; (2) alternative regulatory proposals; (3) key findings; and (4) policy recommendations based on (3). It should have an epilogue that summarizes the student's learning experience from the two case studies; and where applicable, interactions with other team members.	50%	*CILO*$_{1-3}$

5. Use of Generative AI in Course Assessments

Please select one option only that applies to this course:

☐ ***Not Permitted***: In this course, the use of generative AI tools is not allowed for any assessment tasks.

☑ ***Permitted***: In this course, generative AI tools may be used in some or all assessment tasks. Instructors will provide specific instructions, including any restrictions or additional requirements (e.g., proper acknowledgment, reflective reports), during the first lesson and in relevant assessment briefs.

6. Required Text(s)

Nil

7. Recommended ReadingS

Biermann, F., & Pattberg, P. (2012). *Global environmental governance reconsidered.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Cohen, S. (2014). *Understanding environmental policy.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Evans, J. P. (2012). *Environmental governance.* New York: Routledge.

Gupta, A., & Mason, M. (2014). *Transparency in global environmental governance: Critical perspectives.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

Layzer, J. A. (2011). *The environmental case: Translating values into policy.* New York: CQ Press.

Man, J. Y. (2013). *China's environmental policy and urban development.* Cambridge: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

Morin, J., & Orsini, A. (2015). *Essential concepts of global environmental governance.* New York: Routledge.

Sachs, J. D. (2015). *The age of sustainable development.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Selin, H., & VanDeveer, S. D. (2013). *European Union and environmental governance.* New York: Routledge.

Vig, N., & Kraft, M. E. (2015). *Environmental policy: New directions for the Twenty-First Century.* New York: Sage.

Young, O. R. (2013). *On environmental governance: Sustainability, efficiency, and equity.* Boulder: Paradigm Publishers.

Zhang, J. Y., & Barr, M. (2013). *Green politics in China: Environmental governance and State-Society relations.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

8. Related Web Resources

- Academic publications (http://scholar.google.com.hk/)
- An Inconvenient Truth that Describes the Global Warming Problem Caused by greenhouse gas emissions.
- Asian Development Bank (http://www.adb.org/publications)

- China's Wealth, Growth, and Environmental Nightmare (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OU1J_U1NSOg) that documents the environmental problems in China.
- In-depth Coverage on IPCC Report on Climate Change (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uudzj5hb9LA) that Summaries the UN Report on Global Warming.
- OECD publications (http://www.oecd.org/about/publishing)
- The Big Fix - BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Cover up (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_KgFBciS_X00) of the 2010 oil spill disaster in the Gulf of Mexico.
- The BP Oil Spill with Stephen Fry – World's Largest Environmental Disaster (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCGzCLHAMWI) that reports the 2010 oil spill disaster in the Gulf of Mexico.
- The Scientific Case for Urgent Action to Limit Climate Change (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4Q271UaNPo) from the University of California Television.
- World Bank publications (http://www.worldbank.org/reference/)
- Under the Dome (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6X2uwlQGQM) that describes China's pollution problem.

9. Related Journals

- *Environmental Science & Policy (http://www.journals.elsevier.com/environmental-science-and-policy/)*
- *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management (http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-environmental-economics-and-management/)*
- *Journal of Environment Management (http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-environmental-management/)*
- *Journal of Governance and Regulation (http://www.virtusinterpress.org/-Journal-of-Governance-and-.html)*
- *Regulation & Governance (http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1748-5991)*

10. Academic Honesty

The University upholds the principles of honesty in all areas of academic work. We expect our students to carry out all academic activities honestly and in good faith. Please refer to the *Policy on Academic Honesty, Responsibility and Integrity* (https://www.eduhk.hk/re/uploads/docs/00000000001633679892454 8BbN5). Students should familiarize themselves with the Policy.

11. Others

Nil

Updated as of 16 July 2025