

The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Legislative Affairs
Spring Semester 2021
February 1 – April 15, 2021

**U.S. Energy & Environmental
Policy**
LGAF 6264.LH1
3 Credits

Thursday evenings, 6:00-8:00 p.m. Hall
of the States

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Office hours: virtual, by appointment

Course Description

This is a graduate level course in U.S. energy and environmental policy. We will focus on several key topics: (a) an overview of energy and environmental policymaking in the United States; (b) an overview of energy resources worldwide and in the United States; (c) the use of fossil fuels — oil and gasoline, coal, and natural gas; (d) the use of non-fossil sources of energy and renewable energy sources — nuclear power, solar, wind, biomass, hydropower and others; (e) energy, the environment, and climate change; (f) reducing the demand for energy and protecting the environment through conservation and efficiencies; (g) an analysis of recent energy and environmental legislation and regulation; and finally (h) the future of U.S. energy and environmental policymaking.

The Learning Objectives for this Course

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- (a) *Demonstrate an understanding of U.S. domestic energy and environmental policy and related scientific, technological and political issues.*
- (b) *Describe how energy needs are met in critical areas of U.S. life, from transportation through transmission of electricity.*
- (c) *Explain the major legislative, regulatory and policy initiatives in the area of energy and the environment.*
- (d) *Convey your understanding of energy and environmental terms, concepts, issues and*

policy in writing and in speech.

Our Virtual Classroom

Live online class sessions will be conducted on Zoom at our regularly scheduled class time (Thursdays from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time). You can access the class by using the “Zoom Meetings Link” in the content area of our Blackboard page. These class sessions will be a combination of lecture and discussion (including small breakout groups). It is essential that you have read the assigned material and have a grasp of the week’s significant news related to Congress so that you are engaged and ready to participate actively in class. To facilitate our discussions and interaction, I strongly encourage you to activate your computer video camera during class. You can address any privacy concerns by utilizing Zoom’s “virtual background” feature.

Asynchronous Instruction and Activities

In addition to our 10 synchronous (live online) classes, each week there will be some form of asynchronous activity to supplement our regular live class sessions. These will take a variety of forms – watching pre-recorded lectures, listening to podcasts, Blackboard discussion boards, etc.

How Your Grade Will be Determined

Research Paper: You will write a 12 to 15-page research paper (not counting bibliography and charts, figures) on a contemporary energy or environmental policy issue. In this paper, you will (a) summarize the current state of the federal policy in this field; (b) advocate for federal policy changes that you think are desirable in this field; and (c) describe relevant policy actors and institutions in the federal executive and legislative branches who would be most responsible for making such changes, and list and briefly describe the interest groups that would be most likely to support them.

You must submit your research paper topic and short outline to me no later than March 8. The paper will be due April 13 and will constitute 40 percent of your course grade. Unexcused late submission of your paper will result in a reduction of your grade.

Class Participation and Oral Presentation: Each student will give a 15-minute presentation of his or her research findings and advocacy in our last two class sessions. Students are also expected to participate actively in class discussions throughout the semester, including any asynchronous assignments such as discussion boards. Together this will count as 15 percent of your final grade.

Final Examination: The final examination will be a take-home, open-book, open-note examination. You will be asked two broad questions (you will pick two from three options) related to energy and environmental policy and your answers will be based on the reading, lectures and discussions that we have done during the semester. This will count as 45 percent of your final grade.

Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

Grade*	Grading Standard
A 94-100	Your work is outstanding and ready for submission in a professional environment. Your material, effort, research, and writing demonstrate superior work.

A-	90-93	Represents solid work with minor errors. Overall, excellent work.
B+	87-89	Very good. Represents well-written material, research, and presentation, but needs some minor work.
B	83-86	Satisfactory work, but needs reworking and more effort. Note that although not a failing grade, at the graduate level, anything below a “B” is viewed as unacceptable.
B-	80-82	You’ve completed the assignment, but you are not meeting all of the requirements.
C+	77-79	Needs improvement in content and in effort. Shows some motivation and concern.
C	73-76	Needs reworking, improved effort, and additional research. Shows minimal motivation and concern.
C-	70-72 (lowest grade to pass)	Poor performance. Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc.
F	Below 70	Unacceptable performance, or inability to submit the assignment.

*Please note that you may be penalized for late submission of assignment(s).

Textbooks:

Daniel Yergin, *The Quest: Energy, Security, and the Remaking of the Modern World* (Penguin, 2012)
Walter A. Rosenbaum, *Environmental Politics and Policy*, 11th Ed., (CQ Press/SAGE, 2020)

Suggested Sources and Online Readings:

The U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Energy Explained, Your Guide to Understanding Energy* <http://www.eia.gov/energyexplained/index.cfm>

Suggested sources for current energy policy news:

RealClear Energy, Politico, The Hill:
<http://www.realclearenergy.org>
<http://www.politico.com/energy-and-environment>
<http://www.politico.com/tipsheets/morning-energy>
<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment>

The Bipartisan Policy Center, *The Executive Branch and National Energy Policy: Time for Renewal* (November 2012) https://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/BPC_Governance_Report_0.pdf

Michael Ratner, *21st Century U.S. Energy Sources: A Primer*, Congressional Research Service (2018) <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R44854.pdf>

International Energy Agency, *World Energy Outlook - Executive Summary* (2019)

<https://iea.blob.core.windows.net/assets/1f6bf453-3317-4799-ae7b-9cc6429c81d8/English-WEO-2019-ES.pdf>

The Aspen Institute Energy and Environment Program, *Energy in a Time of Innovation and Volatility*, Anne Pramaggiore & Clint Vince, Co-Chairs, 2016 Energy Policy Forum

<https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/2016-energy-policy-forum-report/>

The Aspen Institute Energy & Environment Program, *Disruptive Forces and The Energy System's Response to Change*, Ernest Moniz & Anne Pramaggiore, Co-Chairs, 2017 Energy Policy Forum

<https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/2017/11/2017EnergyPolicy.pdf>

Blackboard Site

A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site throughout the semester, as Blackboard will be the primary venue for outside classroom communications between the instructors and the students. Students can access the course site at <https://blackboard.gwu.edu>. Support for Blackboard is available at 202-994-4948 or helpdesk.gwu.edu.

Academic Integrity:

All members of the university community are expected to exhibit honesty and competence in their academic work. Students have a special responsibility to acquaint themselves with, and make use of, all proper procedures for doing research, writing papers, and taking exams.

Members of the community will be presumed to be familiar with the proper academic procedures and will be held responsible for applying them. Deliberate failure to act in accordance with such procedures will be considered academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is defined as “cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” Acts of academic dishonesty are a legal, moral, and intellectual offense against the community and will be prosecuted through the proper university channels. The University Code of Academic Integrity can be found at <http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity>.

In the Legislative Affairs program, we enforce a *zero tolerance* policy for plagiarism. If there is evidence that you plagiarized your research assignment, you will be given an “F” for the assignment and an “F” for the course. That also means you’ll probably be kicked out of our master’s program. To guard against plagiarism, we use SafeAssign, a feature found in Blackboard. All papers must be submitted to this site. More on this when we get closer to our research assignment.

Support for Students with Disabilities:

GW’s Disability Support Services (DSS) provides and coordinates accommodations and other services for students with a wide variety of disabilities, as well as those temporarily disabled by injury or illness. Accommodations are available through DSS to facilitate academic access for students with disabilities.

Please notify your instructor if you require accommodations. Additional information is available at <http://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/>.

In the Event of an Emergency or Crisis during Class

If we experience some an emergency during class time, we will try to stay at this location until we hear that we can move about safely. If we have to leave here, we will meet at **[fill in proximate location]** in order to account for everyone and to make certain that everyone is safe. Please refer to Campus Advisories for the latest information on the University's operating status:

<http://www.campusadvisories.gwu.edu/>.

Out of Class/Independent Learning Expectation

Over the course of the semester, students will spend at least 2 hours (100 minutes) per week in class. Required reading for the class meetings and written response papers or projects are expected to take up, on average, 7 hours (350 minutes) per week. Over the course of the semester, students will spend 25 hours instructional time and 87.5 hours preparing for class.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the semester, students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the course through GW's online course evaluation system. It is very important that you take the time to complete an evaluation. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback throughout the course of the semester by contacting any/all of the following:

Dr. Casey Burgat
Director, Legislative Affairs
Program sbillet@gwu.edu |
202-994-1149

Associate Dean for Learning and Faculty Development
College of Professional Studies
jackp@gwu.edu | 202-994-3592

Suzanne Farrand
Director of Academic Administration, GSPM
sfarrand@gwu.edu | 202-994-9309

COURSE CALENDAR

(The instructor reserves the right to alter course content and/or adjust the pace to accommodate class progress. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar.)

February 4

Week 1: Introduction and Energy & Environmental Basics

Class Overview

Discuss Syllabus and Class Requirements and Expectations

Personal Introductions

Energy and Environmental Basics – lecture and discussion

Readings:

Yergin, *The Quest*, Introduction and Prologue

Rosenbaum, Chap. 1, “After Earth Day”, pp. 1-13

February 11

Week 2: An Overview of U.S. Energy & Environmental Policymaking Institutions

Executive Branch: Key Cabinet Agencies and Independent Regulatory Agencies, White House and OMB

Congress: Committees of jurisdiction and key members

Role of the courts

Role of states and local governments

Readings:

Bipartisan Policy Center, *The Executive Branch and National Energy Policy: Time for Renewal* (2012) ([link](#))

Rosenbaum, Chap. 3, “Making Policy: Governmental Institutions and Politics”

February 18

Week 3: Overview, Policy Context and Outlook

World and U.S. energy resources – basics, trends and outlook

Energy and Environmental Policy Context – From Scarcity to Abundance, Volatility in the Marketplace, Comparing Presidencies

Readings:

IEA *World Energy Outlook - Overview* (2020)

Rosenbaum, Chap. 8, “America’s Energy Politics in Transformation”

The Aspen Institute, *Energy in a Time of Innovation & Volatility*, pp. 1-10, pp. 16-25 ([link](#))

CRS, *21st Century U.S. Energy Sources: A Primer* (2017) (Summary and Introduction – through p. 3) ([link](#))

February 25

Week 4: Fossil Fuels: Oil, Coal & Natural Gas

Basics, trends and outlook
Unconventional methods impact on oil production
Geopolitics
“Fracking” and other environmental issues
U.S. policy affecting fossil fuels

Readings:

Yergin, *The Quest*, chapters 11-14
EIA’s *Energy Explained: Oil, Coal*
Other Reading TBD

Guest Speaker: Chris Smith, former Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy at the Department of Energy

March 4

Week 5: Nuclear Power

Basics, History
Nuclear power generation in United States
Issues: Safety, Environmental, and Proliferation
Nuclear Waste Policy

Readings:

Yergin, *The Quest*, chapter 18 and chapter 20 (pp. 407-418)
Aspen Institute, *The Future of Nuclear Energy in the United States* (2017), pp. 3-9
(Executive Summary and Status of Existing Nuclear Power Plants) [link](#)
EIA’s *Energy Explained: Nuclear Power*

Guest Speaker: Chris Hanson, Commissioner of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, former Senior Advisor in DOE’s Office of Nuclear Energy

Research Paper Outline Due March 8

March 11

Week 6: Solar, Wind, and other Renewables

Basics, Trends and Outlook
Economics of renewables
Federal and state incentives and regulation

Readings:

Yergin, *The Quest*, chapters 27-30
EIA's *Energy Explained: Solar, Wind and Renewables*
Other Reading TBD

Guest Speaker: TBD

March 18 – Spring Break

March 25

Week 7: Electricity and the Utility Industry

The modern electric grid
Challenges for electric utilities; distributed generation
Grid resiliency and cyber security
Environmental regulation of the utility industry

Readings:

Yergin, *The Quest*, chapters 17, 19, 20

Guest Speaker: Tom Craig, Director of Federal Government Affairs, Duke Energy, and former majority clerk for Senate Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee

April 1

Week 8: Energy, the Environment and Climate Change

US Policy Issues
Paris Climate Agreement

Readings:

Yergin, *The Quest*, chapters 23-26
Rosenbaum, Chap. 10, "The Politics and Policy of Global Climate Change"

April 8

Week 9: The Future of Energy & Environmental Policy

The Biden Administration and energy and environmental policy
Pending and Potential Court Cases
International Issues

Readings:

Yergin, *The Quest*, chaps. 33-35 & Conclusion
Other Readings TBD

April 15

Week 10: Review, Research Paper Presentations

Research Papers Due April 13

Oral presentations of Research Papers and discussions in Breakout
Groups

Exam Review

Final Exam Take Home Given Out

Copyright Statement

Unless explicitly allowed by the instructor, course materials, class discussions, and examinations are created for and expected to be used by class participants only. The recording and rebroadcasting of such material, by any means, is forbidden.