

# COURSE SYLLABUS

## EVPP 337-K01

### Environmental Policy Making in Developing Countries

Spring 2024

Class period: February 19 to June 14, 2024

Location: 100% ONLINE

Instructor: Dr. Paul Philippe Razafinjatovo / Back-up Instructor, to be contacted only if main instructor is sick and unable to teach: Dr. Younsung Kim ([ykih@gmu.edu](mailto:ykih@gmu.edu))

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Office Hours: online by appointment (Blackboard)

#### 1) Course Description:

Environmental Policy making in Africa goes hand in hand with the efforts to promote Sustainable Development. All initiatives to address environmental issues should integrate the challenges relative to social, economic, and political dimensions. This course studies the essentials of sustainable development initiatives, explores key environmental issues such as climate change and biodiversity loss, and analyzes the processes through which policies were developed to address them in Africa. While the development of environmental policies adopts well-established procedures, their design is shaped by various conditions. This class also studies the conditions under which environmental policies are developed in Africa.

This course is divided into three parts. The first part provides an overview of Environmental Policy Development mechanisms and their application in the context of Africa. The second part introduces the concept of sustainable development as a key component of environmental policy development in Africa. The third part focuses on important environmental issues such as climate change, deforestation and biodiversity loss that affect African countries, the relevant mechanisms, and players involved in the development of policies that address such issues.

#### 2) Learning objectives:

The main objective of this course is to provide students with essential knowledge of the environmental policy development mechanism in developing countries. Upon completion of this course, the students receive clear understanding of how and why environmental policy is developed in developing countries with focus on Africa and the challenges that are involved in

this process. To do so, students will be exposed to the different factors that influence the development and implementation of environmental policies in developing countries. In addition, they will receive clear understanding of some important environmental issues and the different ways they are addressed at the national and international levels. Finally, they will receive strong oral and written communication skills that are necessary for their future studies and career.

### 3) Course instructional method

In this course, students mainly learn in three different ways. Firstly, completing the reading assignment provides students with essential knowledge of the subjects taught in this class as highlighted by the authors of the reading materials, which are essentially scientific articles and official government documents. Moreover, the lecture slides pinpoint some key points that are crucial for understanding these subjects by synthesizing some important information in the materials and providing additional explanation. Finally, students are expected to receive a strong knowledge of a particular environmental issue of their choice through proposing research that unveils one specific aspect related to it.

This course is 100% online. All lectures, student presentations, quizzes and exams will be delivered and administered online through Blackboard and Blackboard tools. All quizzes and exams are administered through Blackboard using Respondus Lockdown Browser and your webcam.

Upon completion of a reading assignment, students are required to complete an open-book quiz to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of some important points highlighted in the reading materials. The quiz is also expected to test the critical thinking skill of the students on the materials. In addition, closed book quizzes on both reading materials and lecture slides encompassing three different subjects are also given to students to test their understanding.

The assignments are expected to test the student's knowledge and understanding of environmental policy making in Africa and to express it in a professional way either through an oral presentation or in writing. The order in which the subjects are taught in this course is set in a way that provides students with the knowledge of mechanisms and challenges involved in environmental policy making before studying their application to different environmental issues in Africa.

### 4) Writing Intensive Course

This course fulfills the "Writing Intensive Course" requirement. Therefore, the lecturer devotes class time to providing instructions to students on how to complete written assignments successfully. To do this, students should complete a minimum of 3,500 words written assignments. In addition, the instructor should provide constructive feedback on drafts. For more information about the University's writing-intensive requirement, please visit [http://wac.gmu.edu/program/wi\\_requirement](http://wac.gmu.edu/program/wi_requirement)

### 5) Course prerequisite:

Students who have completed 60 credits are accepted in this course. Please inform your instructor if you do not meet this requirement.

## 6) Course requirements:

This is a three-credit course. Therefore, students are expected to spend an average of ten hours per week on the work required for this course. The successful completion of this course requires that students complete their assignments on time and pass the quizzes and final exam. Students are expected:

- i. to take the **open book quizzes** on the syllabus and assigned reading materials.
- ii. to write **two syntheses of reading materials** as assigned. More information on the syntheses is provided below.
- iii. to take **the closed book quizzes** on specified lectures and reading materials.
- iv. to give a ten-minute (**10 minutes**) power point **presentation with a recorded video** (your face should be shown in the video) **of the research proposal**. The design and contents of the presentation as well as the associated guidelines are also provided in this syllabus.
- v. To complete the two drafts of the main **written assignment**, which is the **research proposal paper (2,500 words)**.
- vi. to take the **final written exam** at the end of the semester

## 7) Grading breakdown:

Assignments	Percentage of final grade
Presentation of research proposal	15%
Synthesis of reading materials	15%
First draft of research proposal paper: 2,500 words	5%
Final draft of research proposal paper	15%
Assessments	
Open book Quizzes	15%
Closed book Quizzes	15%
Final written exam	20%

## 8) Letter grade percentages

Letter grade	Percentage of grade
A+	97 - 100%
A	93 - 96%
A-	90 - 92%
B+	87 - 89%
B	83 - 86%
B-	80 - 82%
C+	77 - 79%
C	73 - 76%
C-	70 - 72%
D	60 - 69%
F	<60%

#### 9) Email communication

In all your email communication with me, please **only use the GMU email address**. I am required to reply to your email within 48 hours, but I will try my best to get back to you as soon as possible. Students must use their Mason email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. I will not respond to messages sent from a non-Mason email address.

#### 10) Assignment submission

All assignments must be uploaded on blackboard by the deadline. Late submission is not accepted. All assignments are **individual work** of the student. Plagiarism, cheating, lying and copying from other students' work are not tolerated (please see honor code below). It is extremely important to meet the deadlines in this class. **No late submission of assignments is accepted**. The assignments are no longer available on blackboard if you miss the deadline.

#### 11) Honor Code:

Adherence to the *GMU Honor Code* is expected of all students. Students are expected to comply with the GMU honor code in completing their assignments and in their interaction with others during the class. Plagiarism, cheating and lying are the main forms of the honor code violation. Students are expected to visit the following link to avoid accidental or intentional violations and understand the consequences: <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/>.

I will use a software that can detect plagiarism in your papers. Make sure to paraphrase the information you want to use from a different source. It is an online class, and most quizzes and exam are closed book. To avoid potential problems, make sure to follow the requirements relative to the use of the Respondus Lockdown Browser as you take some of your quizzes and exam when they are closed book.

#### 12) Written assignments:

The written assignments are intended to strengthen the students' writing and analytical skills. There are two different types of written assignments assigned to students in this semester: the research proposal paper and the syntheses of reading materials. In all written assignments, students are expected to demonstrate their ability to write an academic paper.

The research proposal paper is the written form of the research proposal presentation. It includes a full description of the main components of the research proposal. Students are expected to consider the feedback they receive on their oral presentation as they write their paper. Syntheses of reading materials are mainly intended to test the students' understanding of the reading materials and their critical skills. In both papers, refrain from using **unnecessary quotes**. You should always paraphrase the arguments you want to use from different sources.

Your written assignments are graded using a grading rubric.

Use the help offered by GMU if you need assistance to improve your writing skills.

a) Research proposal paper (2,500 words)

The research proposal paper is the course project. It is an essay that allows students to demonstrate their ability to describe a local environmental issue and propose new research that aims to **explore one specific aspect relevant to it**. The development of an environmental policy is mainly driven by the knowledge of the causes and impacts of environmental issues. Therefore, the specific aspect that can be proposed by students is limited to a **particular cause or impact of a local environmental issue**. Students are asked to describe the nature and significance of a local environmental issue of their choice and explain the ways to collect and analyze **primary data** while investigating one specific aspect relevant to it, **assuming that no research in this aspect has been conducted before in the research area, and all conditions are met to make required resources available for data collection**. Since no secondary data is available, it is recommended to plan the research and data collection for a five-year period.

The geographical scope of the research proposal is limited to a specific location within **one of the African states**. While an environmental issue can have different scales, the research proposal assignment is **limited** to the study of **one aspect relevant to a local environmental issue only**. This restriction is intended to provide an opportunity for the students to deliver more focused and in-depth description of the issue and the research methods necessary for the study of the aspect related to it in **a local village or city in Africa**.

b) Synthesis of reading materials

A synthesis is a piece of writing drafted through the lens of key themes highlighted in the reading materials. Not only does the synthesis demonstrate the student's knowledge of the main ideas in the reading materials, but it also denotes his or her ability to analyze them. Students are required to identify three common key themes that are highlighted in the materials. The key themes are statements or arguments that reflect the opinions or positions, commonly shared by the authors of the reading materials. An example of key theme would be: "The development of an environmental policy adopts several approaches". A **key theme is a sentence, not a subject**. **In your paper, each key theme should be discussed in a paragraph separately**. The synthesis is an essay composed of five to six paragraphs. Like any essay, it is divided into three main parts: an introduction, a main body, and a conclusion. Please **use headings and subheadings to clearly show the different parts of your paper**.

13) Oral assignment: Presentation of the research proposal (individual work)

The presentation of the research proposal is intended to strengthen the presentation skills of the students. It presents only the most important information in the research proposal paper. Your research proposal is a research project, and your goal is to convey some information that highlights a local environmental issue and **propose research to study one specific aspect** (cause or impact only) related to it. The presentation should be given during weeks 5 to 7 and last **ten minutes**.

When you give your oral presentation, please **dress professionally** as though you give it in a conference. In your video, using Kaltura, record yourself as you present your power point slides screen with your computer camera (webcam). Make sure **your face is shown** as you give your presentation. Make eye contact with your webcam (as if you do it to your audience). Don't wear

hat and anything that you would not wear while giving a presentation in a conference. Be professional!

You are also graded based on the clarity and contents of your presentation. Introduce yourself, be enthusiastic, greet your audience, speak up and show your interest and knowledge of your topic.

Use **Microsoft power point only** for your presentation. Refrain from putting **too much information on your slides, just use bullet points**. Your presentation does not necessarily include everything in your research proposal paper. However, it should highlight the Introduction, research methodology and conclusion. While the Introduction should at least include **facts and figures, research objective and hypotheses**, the research methodology **should address the five questions (what1, what2, why and how1 and how2 questions)** in your paper, and the conclusion comprises a short **summary, expected results, and policy alternatives**. Use only relevant pictures. Please see the instructions relevant to the research proposal paper to learn about these required items. To upload, click on write submission and then mashups to select the Kaltura media that you made. You also need to upload your power point slides in the same submission tab.

In this assignment, not only do you have to upload your PowerPoint slides with video, but you also ask questions on your colleagues' presentations, and answer those you receive on your presentation. The objective here is to test how you answer questions pertaining to your presentation and ask relevant questions on your colleagues' presentations. Therefore, the presentation grade is also based on **the quality of your answers and questions**.

**Duration of the presentation:** 10 minutes.

#### 14) Quizzes:

There are two different types of quiz. While the open-book quizzes are graded they are mainly intended to guide students as they identify some key information in the reading materials and direct their attention to some important points relevant to this course. Students are required to read carefully their reading materials to prepare for the open book quizzes. The closed book quizzes are, however, intended to assess the students' knowledge and understanding of the course materials. They generally include multiple choice questions with single or multiple answers. They may also consist of short or long-answer questions. Occasionally, I will ask you to write a short essay. Students are given plenty of time to take the quiz as it is available for four days, but it is timed once it is open. Once started the open book quizzes can be taken for one hour. The closed book quizzes are only available for 24 hours. The lecture slides and materials from which the quiz is taken are mentioned. How to prepare for the closed book quizzes? Make sure to know and understand the key concepts highlighted in the lecture slides and reading materials and review the relevant open book quizzes.

Download the blackboard Respondus Lockdown browser as you will use it to take your closed book quizzes and exam.

### 15) Exam:

The exam will take place at the end of the semester. It is a comprehensive exam, i.e., it covers everything that was taught during the semester. Study carefully the lecture slides and review some important points highlighted in the reading materials to prepare for your exam. You should also review the past quizzes to get prepared for it. The exam is just like a longer quiz. It is a timed and closed book, and you have to use Respondus Lockdown browser to take it. Make sure to follow carefully the instructions relative to the use of this browser. As an example, you should stay **within the frame throughout your quizzes or test**. Failure to do so will result in grade F in this course.

### 16) Reading materials:

The reading materials are carefully chosen to provide students with the framework and up-to-date information of the different subjects taught in this class. They are meant to be carefully read. Take notes as you read and highlight the key themes or main points in different parts of the articles. That will help you get a big picture of the materials and write your syntheses.

### 17) Lecture Power Point slides

The course power point presentation is intended to provide students with the most important points that they should know and understand. They include key information that constitutes the backbone or foundation of the subjects taught in this course. Some key aspects in the reading materials are also highlighted in the slides. It is meant to emphasize some crucial points that the students should get out this course. After reading the materials and all the slides, students are asked to study the questions in the slides and to check their knowledge and understanding.

### 18) Technology Requirements

The technology requirements for this online course are listed below:

Hardware:

- A Windows or Macintosh computer with at least 2 GB of RAM and a fast, reliable broadband Internet connection (e.g., cable, DSL).
- Recommended computer monitor and laptop screen size be 13-inches or larger for optimum visibility of course material.
- A webcam for taking quizzes and exam using Respondus Lockdown Browser and for student presentations.

Software:

- Web browser (See Blackboard Support for supported web browsers)
- Blackboard Courses (Log into <http://mymason.gmu.edu>, select the Courses Tab)
- Blackboard Collaborate (select from the course menu)
- Microsoft Office (purchase)
- Respondus Lockdown Browser (from blackboard)
- Kaltura (from blackboard).



### 19) Student support resources

Here are some important GMU website links and resources that may help students succeed in their studies:

- University Catalog at <http://catalog.gmu.edu/>
- University Policies at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>
- Counseling and Psychological Services at <http://caps.gmu.edu/>
- Learning Services at <http://caps.gmu.edu/learningservices/>
- University Career Services at <http://caps.gmu.edu/learningservices/>
- University Writing Center at <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>
- Student privacy is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and is an essential aspect of any course. Instructor responsibilities with respect to student privacy are an important consideration when it comes to faculty and student digital communication.
- Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to upholding the letter and spirit of the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. Under the administration of University Life, Disability Services implements and coordinates reasonable accommodations and disability-related services that afford equal access to university programs and activities. Students can begin the registration process with Disability Services at any time during their enrollment at George Mason University. If you are seeking accommodations, please visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Email: [ods@gmu.edu](mailto:ods@gmu.edu)
- George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination and a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support. University Policy 1202: Sexual Harassment and Misconduct (check here: <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/sexual-harassment-policy/>)

### 20) Use of Artificial Intelligence

We have multiple writing assignments in this class. Because the act of composing a response in your own words actually increases your learning, it is important that you complete the task yourself, rather than rely on an artificial intelligence (AI) tool. Completing these writing assignments yourself will help strengthen your performance in this class on later assignments and activities, as well as help you develop professionally and succeed in your career goals. You should also be aware that AI text generation tools may present incorrect information, biased responses, and incomplete analyses; thus they are not yet prepared to produce text that meets the standards of this course. If you do choose to experiment with AI text generation, you are expected to indicate your usage of it and give credit for text that has been generated by AI. Use of AI-generated text without proper attribution is a violation of academic integrity.

### 21) Course Schedule (tentative) – Dates and times in this syllabus are in Korean Standard Time Zone (KST).