

POLS*3370: ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

Course Syllabus
Department of Political Science
University of Guelph

Fall 2026

Professor Craig Johnson

Classes: Tuesday and Thursday, 8:30am-9:50, MCKN 121
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LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

POLS*3370 explores the politics of environmental policy and governance in comparative and international perspective, emphasizing particularly the ways in which different models of environmental governance have been used to understand and address the world's most pressing environmental challenges, including deforestation, water pollution, air pollution, and climate change. By tracing the political history of environmentalism, the course offers critical insights about the ways in which governments, environmentalists, and businesses have shaped contemporary environmental policy discourses.

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

1. Recognize and describe the major theoretical and policy frameworks that have been used in the study of environmental politics and governance.
 2. Analyze the relationships between the politics of environmental science, the politics of global environmental governance, and the domestic politics of environmental policy formulation and regulation.
 3. Identify the different processes, people and political ideas that have shaped the modern environmental movement.
 4. Evaluate the relative strengths and limitations of different environmental policy instruments and governance frameworks, including regulatory instruments, economic instruments and participatory models of environmental governance.
 5. Understand the use of market instruments in reducing emissions and vulnerability to climate change, the role of geoengineering, and the politics of new environmental movements, including rights of nature, Indigenous sovereignty, and degrowth.
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