BOSTON COLLEGE
Department of Economics

ECON2278: Environmental Economics
Spring 2017

Instructor: Gökçe Akın-Olcum (e-mail: gokce.olcum@bc.edu)
TA: Jacob Penglase (e-mail: penglase@bc.edu; office hours: W 10am-11am, F 2pm-3pm at Maloney 391C)

Course Website:
All course materials will be on Canvas. Also, all announcements, assignment submissions will be made on Canvas. Hence, check Canvas every single day!

Course Description:
Throughout the course, we will examine where the tension between economic activities and environment stems from, how economic activities cause environmental degradation and what kind of regulatory actions should be taken in order to maintain the balance between economic growth and environmental sustainability. The course has two main parts, theory and applications. We will start with analyzing the underlying economic theory and then move forward to the applications of the economic theory to real world cases.

Textbook:

Optional Texts:

Readings:
Required readings for each topic will be posted on Canvas. All readings are required unless otherwise stated. Exams might include questions from the non-textbook readings.

Grading Policy:
The composition of overall course grade is as follows:

1. Midterm exams (20% + 20%)
2. Final exam 35%
3. Assignments
   a. Homework assignment 10%
   b. Paper assignment 15%

Some important notes:
- The posting and due date of assignments will be announced on Canvas.
- Late assignments are not accepted.
• For the problem sets, you are allowed to work in groups, but each person must hand in/upload their own problem set. Solutions to problem sets will also be posted on Canvas. It is your responsibility to make sure you understand the solutions, and learn from your own mistakes. If you need help, please ask my help or Jake’s help.

• Paper assignment will be in the form of an economic analysis of a **current environmental issue**. Find an article in a newspaper/periodical or on the internet. Analyze the issue economically, using the economic concepts and tools that are discussed in class. It must be **typed, and printed on paper**. The due date is **April 19th**. Hand in a **copy of your essay and the related article** at the beginning of class on the due date.

• Exams will target your overall understanding of the course material. Therefore, you should expect both analytical and conceptual questions in the exams.

• **Makeup exams will not be allowed** and you are responsible for attending the scheduled midterm and final exams. If you miss the midterm exam, its weight will be added to the final exam’s.

**Attendance Policy:**
Attendance is mandatory. 3 absences will be allowed (for any reason). Beyond that, I will drop 1 point off your final grade for each absence. Exams will also include questions targeting you attendance level to this class. Hence, if you do not think you will be able to attend lectures, do not take this course.

**Laptop Policy:**
Unless you need it for a medical reason, the use of laptops are not allowed in this class.

**Academic Integrity:**
Any violation of the University’s Academic Integrity Policy will be reported and judged by the academic integrity committee. In case of any responsibility for violation, penalties may include a failing grade as well as probation, suspension, or expulsion. You are strongly advised to familiarize yourself with the university’s academic integrity policy: [http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/integrity.html](http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/integrity.html). Any instances of cheating, plagiarism will be reported to the Dean’s office without exception.

**Course Calendar**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>Introduction to the course</th>
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<tr>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Introduction to Global Climate Change</td>
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<td><strong>Documentary: The Truth About Climate Change - Part 1</strong></td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Introduction to Global Water Scarcity</td>
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<td><strong>Documentary: One Water or Watermark</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Additional Reading Assignments:</strong></td>
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<td>• Kaufmann, et al. 2016. <em>Spatial heterogeneity of climate change as an experiential basis for skepticism</em>. PNAS.</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>The Role of Economics in Environmental Management Ch1</td>
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| Feb  | 01-06 | Modeling the Market Process Ch2 |
|      | 08-15 | Market Failure/Public Goods/Externalities Ch3 |

**Additional Reading Assignments to Chapter3:**
• Tierney, J. 2006. Where the Tuna Roam. NYTimes.

20-22  Conventional Solutions to Environmental Problems Ch4
27    Economic Solutions to Environmental Problems Ch5

Mar. 01    Economic Solutions to Environmental Problems Ch5
02    MIDTERM EXAM

6-10  Spring Vacation
13    Economic Solutions to Environmental Problems Ch5

Additional Reading Assignments to Chapter5:
• Galbraith, K. 2013. A Carbon Tax by Any Other Name. NYTimes.
• Forrister, Bledsoe. 2013. Pollution Economics. NYTimes.

15-20 Benefit-Cost Analysis Ch9

Additional Reading Assignments to Chapter9:

22    Measuring Costs for Environmental Decision Making Ch8
27-29 Measuring Benefits for Environmental Decision Making Ch7

Apr. 03 Measuring Benefits for Environmental Decision Making Ch7

Documentary: Black Wave: The Legacy of the Exxon Valdez

05    MIDTERM EXAM
10    Evolution of Global Air Policy Ch13

Additional Reading Assignments to Chapter13:

12    Easter Monday
17-19 Evolution of US Air Policy (Mobile & Stationary Sources) Ch 10-11-12

Additional Reading Assignments to Chapters10-11-12:

24-26 Evolution of Global Climate Policy

May 01    Review Session
03    FINAL EXAM

NB This outline is tentative. Topics may be dropped or added during the semester depending on how the class is going.