

BOSTON COLLEGE
Department of Economics

ECON2278: Environmental Economics
Spring 2017

Instructor: Gökçe Akın-Olçum (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:

Callan, Scott J. and Thomas, Janet M. *Environmental Economics and Management*. (6th Edition)

Optional Texts:

Stavins, Robert. *Economics of the Environment: Selected Readings*. (6th Edition)

Field, Barry and Field, Martha. *Environmental Economics*. (6th Edition)

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 your 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>. Any instances of cheating, plagiarism will be reported to the Dean's office without exception.

Course Calendar

Jan.	18	Introduction to the course	
	23	Introduction to Global Climate Change	
		Documentary: <u>The Truth About Climate Change - Part 1</u>	
	25	Introduction to Global Water Scarcity	
		Documentary: <u>One Water</u> or <u>Watermark</u>	
		<i>Additional Reading Assignments:</i>	
		• Palmer, T. 2014. <i><u>Record-breaking winters and global climate change</u></i> . Science.	
		• Laghari, J. 2014. <i><u>Melting glaciers bring energy uncertainty</u></i> . Nature.	
		• Kaufmann, et al. 2016. <i><u>Spatial heterogeneity of climate change as an experiential basis for skepticism</u></i> . PNAS.	
	30	The Role of Economics in Environmental Management	Ch1
Feb.	01-06	Modeling the Market Process	Ch2
	08-15	Market Failure/Public Goods/Externalities	Ch3
		<i>Additional Reading Assignments to Chapter3:</i>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tierney, J. 2006. <u>Where the Tuna Roam</u>. NYTimes. • Costello, et al. 2008. <u>Can Catch Shares Prevent Fisheries Collapse?</u> Science. • Worm, et al. 2006.. <u>Impacts of Biodiversity Loss on Ocean Ecosystem Services</u>. Science. 	
	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
	<i>Additional Reading Assignments to Chapter5:</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Galbraith, K. 2013. <u>A Carbon Tax by Any Other Name</u>. NYTimes. • Forrister, Bledsoe. 2013. <u>Pollution Economics</u>. NYTimes. • Broder. 2013. <u>Lawmakers Release CO2 Emissions Tax Plan</u>. NYTimes. • Tyson. 2013. <u>The Myriad Benefits of a Carbon Tax</u>. NYTimes. • Harrington, Morgenstern. <u>Economic Incentives versus Command and Control</u>. Resources for Future. • Stavins, R. <u>Some Research Priorities in Environmental Economics</u>. American Economic Association. 	
	15-20 Benefit-Cost Analysis	Ch9
	<i>Additional Reading Assignments to Chapter9:</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plater, Z.J.B., 2013. <u>Fish Tale</u>. Boston College Magazine. • Goulder, L., Stavins, R. 2002. <u>An Eye on the Future</u>. Nature. • U.S. EPA. 2010. <u>Guidelines for Preparing Economic Analyses</u>. 	
	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: <u>Black Wave: The Legacy of the Exxon Valdez</u>	
	05 MIDTERM EXAM	
	10 Evolution of Global Air Policy	Ch13
	<i>Additional Reading Assignments to Chapter13:</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tierney, J. 2009. <u>The Richer-Is-Greener Curve</u>. NYTimes. 	
	12 Easter Monday	
	17-19 Evolution of US Air Policy (Mobile & Stationary Sources)	Ch 10-11-12
	<i>Additional Reading Assignments to Chapters10-11-12:</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fischer, C., Fox, A.K. 2011. <u>The Role of Trade and Competitiveness Measure in US Climate Policy</u>. American Economic Review. 	
	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.

