

ECON 2713 (X2) - Economics of the Natural Environment

Department of Economics

Acadia University

Winter 2021

Instructor	Dr. Justin Beaudoin
Email	justin.beaudoin@acadiau.ca
Office Location	Virtual (Microsoft Teams)
Office Hours	By appointment
Course Website	ACORN
Class Location	In person: BAC 203; Live stream: Microsoft Teams
Class Times	Tue/Thu, 8:30 - 9:50am

Course Description

This course serves as an introductory analysis of pollution and the overuse of natural resources. The course applies microeconomic reasoning to compare observed pollution and resource use in the world with the socially optimal outcomes, and to understand the potential for markets and government policies to address existing problems related to the environment.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon course completion students are expected to be able to:

- critically evaluate statements and policies related to the environment;
- understand the tradeoffs faced in environmental policy;
- convey economic arguments to a general audience;
- apply their knowledge in a wide range of professional capacities; and
- serve as better informed global citizens.

Prerequisite

In general, completion of ECON 1013 with a grade of C- or better (or approval of the instructor). Students without a background in supply and demand analysis may find parts of the course more challenging, but I will review the required microeconomic concepts as necessary.

Class Format

This is a “hybrid scheduled” class. There are three ways to access the course meetings:

1. Face-to-face (in person) at BAC 203 on Tue/Thu from 8:30 - 9:50am.
2. Live stream via Microsoft Teams on Tue/Thu from 8:30 - 9:50am (to access the class you will need to 'Join' the scheduled meeting during this time).
3. Watch the recorded video asynchronously (a link will be posted on ACORN shortly after the class concludes).

It is highly recommended that you use Option 1 or 2 whenever possible. I cannot guarantee the quality/reliability of the recordings, and participating synchronously allows you to better ask questions and to keep pace with the course.

Please note that some classes may be fully online, due to issues such as weather, health, etc. If this is the case, this will be announced in advance of class. Please contact me if there is ever any confusion about the day's plans. Note: if there is consistently low in-person attendance, the class may switch to completely virtual delivery.

Course Materials and Websites

ACORN (<https://acorn.acadiau.ca/course/view.php?id=22337>) is the primary source for class announcements and will contain all course materials: syllabus, class notes/slides, video recordings, and materials for assignments and tests.

Teams is used for live streaming class meetings and for office hours; course material will *not* be stored on Teams.

If there is any confusion about where to locate specific material, feel free to contact me for clarification.

Technology Issues & Support

If there are any issues with my internet connection, please wait approximately 10 minutes for me to troubleshoot the problem. In the case that the problem persists, I will provide an update to address any necessary adjustments to the schedule (such as providing an additional prerecorded video).

If you are having technological issues, please contact the Service Desk for support. The Consultants will help you work through any issues that you're having. There are several contact methods:

Live Chat: ts-chat.acadiau.ca
HUB Service Portal: hub.acadiau.ca or ts.acadiau.ca
Phone: 902-585-4357 or 1-888-609-3330
Email: helpdesk@acadiau.ca

If the problem causes you to miss a class meeting, please refer to the recorded video link posted on ACORN, and contact me with any questions that you have.

How to Ask Questions?

I encourage you to ask questions throughout the course. I can promise you that if you have a question, several of your classmates have that same question. There are many ways to ask questions relating to material discussed in class or covered in the prerecorded videos:

- In person during class
- Via Teams during class, using the chat window or by “raising your hand”
- During office hours
- Via email

Office Hours

All office hours will be via Teams this semester (until further notice). This semester, all of my office hours will be by appointment; we will use the “Meet Now” link on Teams. Please send me an email to arrange an appointment.

Should any issues or concerns arise throughout the course, you are encouraged to consult with me as soon as possible so that we can work together to find the resources to help you succeed.

Textbook

The textbook for the course, which is required, is:

“Environmental Economics and Policy, 7th Edition”, by Lynne Lewis and Tom Tietenberg, Routledge. ISBN: 978-1-138-58759-5.

Links to purchase the book from the campus bookstore or directly from the publisher are available on ACORN. Our course will follow the organization of the 7th edition of the textbook fairly closely according to the scheduled outlined below, though previous editions of the textbook may be similar and could be used for the course.

Assignments

We will have three assignments throughout the course:

- Assignment #1: Climate change and sea level rise analysis (due Feb 18)
- Assignment #2: Policy briefing (due Mar 25)

- Assignment #3: Discussion of current events (due Apr 13)

Specific instructions will be provided as the course proceeds.

Midterm Test

There will be one midterm test in the course. The test will be conducted online through ACORN on Thu, Feb 25. More details regarding the format and focus of the test will be provided closer to the test date.

No make-up test will be provided; the weight of a missed test will be reassigned to the weight of the final exam in determining your overall grade for the course.

Final Exam

The Final Exam will be conducted online through ACORN (date: TBA). Unless there is a valid reason (*approved in advance*), students are required to take the exam on the date assigned by the University. The Final Exam will cover the entire course. More details regarding the format and timing of the exam will be provided closer to the exam date.

Grading

Assignments (3)	45%
Midterm Test	25%
Final Exam	30%

The grade scale for the course is below:

Letter Grade	GPA	% Range	Rating
A+	4.33	90 - 100%	Excellent
A	4.0	85 - 89%	
A-	3.67	80 - 84%	
B+	3.33	77 - 79%	Good
B	3.0	73 - 76%	
B-	2.67	70 - 72%	
C+	2.33	67 - 69%	Average
C	2.0	63 - 66%	
C-	1.67	60 - 62%	
D+	1.33	57 - 59%	Pass
D	1.0	53 - 56%	
D-	0.67	50 - 52%	
F	0.0	0 - 49%	Failure

Class Material

The following list outlines the material that we will cover in the course, with the class discussions highlighting the most important concepts within each chapter. The extent to which we cover various topics will be affected in part by student interest, amount of discussion, and difficulty of material.

- Chapter 1: The role of economics in formulating and implementing policy
- Chapter 2: The economic approach: property rights, externalities and environmental problems
- Chapter 3: The role of policy instrument choice in efficient environmental management
- Chapter 4: Evaluating trade-offs: benefit-cost analysis and other decision-making metrics
- Chapter 5: Valuing the environment: methods and examples
- Chapter 6: Ecosystem goods and services: nature's threatened bounty
- Chapter 7: Fisheries policy
- Chapter 8: Climate change I: the nature of the challenge
- Chapter 9: Climate change II: the role of energy policy
- Chapter 10: Climate change III: carbon pricing
- Chapter 11: Climate change IV: adaptation
- Chapter 12: Transportation: managing congestion and local pollution
- Chapter 13: Water: managing water quality for rivers, lakes, and oceans
- Chapter 14: Toxics policy and environmental justice
- Chapter 15: Meeting the challenges: the role of economics

The class notes and links to recorded videos will also be posted on ACORN.

Class Schedule

The following is a preliminary schedule for the course topics that may be updated as the course proceeds. Readings refer to the textbook and are listed as suggestions to keep you up-to-date with the course; the materials in that day's class may not perfectly coincide with the listed reading. The posted class notes will contain any information about any potential changes to the schedule in advance.

Class #	Date	Notes
..... <i>Week 1</i>		
1	Tue, Jan 19	Class Introduction & Discussion of Syllabus; Chapter 1
2	Thu, Jan 21	Chapter 2
..... <i>Week 2</i>		
3	Tue, Jan 26	Chapter 3
4	Thu, Jan 28	Chapter 4
..... <i>Week 3</i>		
5	Tue, Feb 2	Chapter 5
6	Thu, Feb 4	Chapter 5
..... <i>Week 4</i>		
7	Tue, Feb 9	Discussion of Assignment #1
8	Thu, Feb 11	Chapter 6
..... <i>Week 5</i>		
-	Tue, Feb 16	No class
9	Thu, Feb 18	Chapter 7; Assignment #1 due
..... <i>Week 6</i>		
10	Tue, Feb 23	Chapter 7
11	Thu, Feb 25	Midterm Test
..... <i>Week 7</i>		
12	Tue, Mar 2	Chapter 8
13	Thu, Mar 4	Chapter 9
..... <i>Week 8</i>		
14	Tue, Mar 9	Chapter 10
15	Thu, Mar 11	Chapter 10
..... <i>Week 9</i>		
16	Tue, Mar 16	Chapter 11
17	Thu, Mar 18	Chapter 11
..... <i>Week 10</i>		
18	Tue, Mar 23	Chapter 12
19	Thu, Mar 25	Chapter 12; Assignment #2 due

Class #	Date	Notes
..... <i>Week 11</i>		
20	Tue, Mar 30	Chapter 13
21	Thu, Apr 1	Guest speaker
..... <i>Week 12</i>		
22	Tue, Apr 6	Chapter 14
23	Thu, Apr 8	Chapter 15
..... <i>Week 13</i>		
24	Tue, Apr 13	Course Wrap Up and Review; Assignment #3 due
..... <i>Final Exam: TBA</i>		

Course Policies

Course dates/policies are outlined at the beginning of the course and are the student's responsibility; please communicate any issues, concerns or scheduling conflicts *well before* the relevant deadline so that we can address the issue appropriately. Any requests for re-grading must include a written explanation as to why re-grading is appropriate, and the entire quiz/test/exam will be re-graded (so that the overall grade may increase, decrease, or remain the same). This request must be submitted within one week of the date that the quiz/test/exam was returned in class.

Please communicate with me if an illness or other issue will cause you to miss multiple classes. I ask that students exercise proper classroom etiquette in respect of their classmates and the instructor (both in person and virtually).

University Policies

Please refer to the following link for the latest University updates and any policy information regarding Covid-19:

<https://www2.acadiau.ca/covid-19.html>

Please review and adhere to the University's Mask Policy:

<https://www2.acadiau.ca/covid-19/mask-policy.html>

Please review and adhere to the Student Code of Conduct:

<https://www2.acadiau.ca/files/files/COVID-19/StudentCodeofConductBriefing.pdf>

You should also review the Student Services Plan:

<https://www2.acadiau.ca/files/files/COVID-19/StudentServicesPlanningModel.pdf>

Accessibility

If you are a student with documentation for accommodations who anticipates needing supports or accommodations, please contact Marissa McIsaac, Accessibility Resource Facilitator at 902-585-1520, disability.access@acadiau.ca or Emily Duffett, Accessibility Officer, 902-585-1823, disability.access@acadiau.ca.

Academic Ethics

It is the responsibility of students to familiarize themselves with the University's policy on academic ethics. Copying, plagiarism and other academic offenses will not be tolerated. Penalties are severe and may result in suspension from a program/course and expulsion. A complete list of Academic Regulations can be found on the Policies page of the University's website. I strongly recommend that all class members review the sections in the 2020-21 academic calendar dealing with Academic Policy and Regulations. It is a serious offense to engage in academic misconduct.

Last updated: January 18, 2021