

Econ 2713 - Economics of the Natural Environment
Winter 2017 - BAC 236 TH 10:00-11:15am

Instructor: Andrew Davis, andrew.davis@acadiau.ca

Office Hours: 1:30-4pm, Monday and Friday, BAC 344, or by appointment.

Course Description: “An introductory analysis of pollution and the overuse of natural resources. Two ideas are central to the course: (1) A socially optimal level of pollution and/or resource use that is the market level and not zero. (2) The failure of both markets and governments to deliver this level, and the characteristics of institutions that outperform markets and/or governments in isolation.”

Topics Covered: The philosophy of fairness, social welfare, and environmentalism; markets and efficiency; externalities, property rights and public goods; environmental regulation; benefit-cost analysis; valuation of nonmarket resources; economic sustainability; applications to a variety of environmental topics and policies as time permits.

Prerequisite: Econ 1013 with a grade of C- or better.

Textbook: Berck and Helfand, the Economics of the Environment (recommended but can likely get away without it)

Grading:

- Cap and Trading: 12%
- Presentation: 12% (see below)
- Briefing Note: 16% (see below)
- Midterm: 25%
- Final: 35%

Cap and Trading: There will be a single substantive assignment based around the in-class implementation of a carbon permit trading market. Details on ACORN later in the term.

Presentation: All students are required to put together a presentation. Students who do not actually wish to present can submit a presentation electronically, where it will be graded out of 10 instead of 12. The presentation should take the form of a brief case study on a particular topic relevant to the course. Topics can be as general or as specific as desired, e.g. from discussing the influence economic thinking has had on forming global climate change regulation, to examining the economic incentives and outcomes in play in Nova Scotia fisheries. Material covered in presentations is fair game for the final. Presentations will commence late in the year. See ACORN for more details.

Briefing Note: All students are required to individually write a 'policy briefing note' on a Canadian environmental issue. You may write on the same topic as was covered in your presentation. The briefing note is written from the perspective of a government employee familiar with the issue updating their superiors within the department after a national Canadian newspaper has suddenly started covering the topic. 1500-2500 words. Lay out the background around the topic, review the current governmental policy relating to the issue, highlight any potential problems in the area which the newspaper could target, and either defend the current policy or recommend and justify changes.

Disabilities and Access: If you are a student with a documented disability who anticipates needing accommodations in this course, please inform me after you meet with Kathy ORourke (902-585-1823) disability.access@acadiau.ca or Abu Kamara (902-585-1291) abu.kamara@acadiau.ca in Accessibility Services, Student Resource Centre, lower level of the Old SUB.

Academic Honesty: https://central.acadiau.ca/registrar/faculty_information/academic_integrity

Important Dates:

Jan. 9 - Winter courses begin.

Jan. 17 - Last day to drop without a W.

Feb. 20-24 - Winter study break. No classes.

Feb. 28 - Midterm

Mar. 3 - Last day to drop with a W.

Apr. 7 - Last class.