

Environmental Policy Making in Michigan

RD 440

Dr. Chuck Nelson, Instructor
Spring Semester 2006
Tuesday 6:00 – 8:50 PM
Room 19 Natural Resources

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Introduction

This course focuses on the Michigan legislative process and its role in environmental policy formulation. Environment is taken in the broad sense and touches on natural resources and the influence of people on those natural resources through a variety of means including the overarching effects of community and many key sectors including agriculture, natural resources, land use, outdoor recreation and tourism. The course examines the influences on state policy of the actors in the policy process. This includes the executive, legislative and judicial branches of state government, as well as the influences on the state of federal and local units of government. In addition, it highlights the role of the citizenry, the cornerstone of our democratic form of government. Citizens are key actors as they represent corporate, non-profit and individual interests through lobbying, grass roots movements and asserted economic benefits and costs. As a citizen, you will be active in the policy process on an environmental issue of your choosing currently before the legislature.

Objectives

By the end of this course students should be able to:

1. Understand the public policy process involving executive, judicial and legislative branches of government and the range of citizen involvement.
2. Understand and demonstrate objective policy analysis expertise regarding Michigan issues.
3. Understand and demonstrate policy advocacy expertise regarding Michigan issues.
4. Understand and demonstrate a working knowledge of Michigan's natural and environmental resources and the agencies and rules that regulate their use.

Required Texts

Michigan Legislature (2005) A Citizen's Guide to State Government. On the web at:
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/publications/CitizensGuide.pdf>

Michigan Legislature (2001) Michigan's Natural Resources and Environment: A Citizen's Guide. On the web at:
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/publications/NaturalResources.pdf>

The websites associated with each speaker

Assignments

Speaker Highlights

Speaker highlights are a ½ to 1 page hand written paper turned in during the 15 minutes following each guest speaker presentation. The paper will note the name and title of the speaker and the main points of their presentation. Each paper is worth up to 3 points. **NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Policy Analysis

In a typewritten single space format of 2-3 pages, you will provide an analysis of the policy implications of a current or proposed Michigan environmental policy. This may be a statute, administrative rule, Natural Resources Commission order, DNR or DEQ director's order, or a policy of the DEQ, DNR or the MDA. This paper must include the following components:

1. A literature based definition of policy analysis and how it differs from policy advocacy.
2. Summary of the policy in question
3. Discussion of the impact of the policy if implemented:
 - a. Intended and unintended consequences (potential and actual)
 - b. Supporters and opponents
 - c. Symbolic impacts

Policy Advocacy

This is a hands-on experience in citizen input to the Michigan environmental policy making process. Choose a bill introduced in the current Michigan legislative session (2005-2006) that concerns environmental policy. This includes any of those classified by the legislature as agriculture, energy, environmental protection, land use, natural resources, recreation, water or watercraft on the Michigan legislature website at <http://www.legislature.mi.gov>.

In a 5-8 page single space paper format:

1. Give the bill number, title, sponsor(s) and committees to which it is assigned along with the name of the chairpersons of those committees.
2. Explain why you have chosen this bill. What is your interest?
3. Provide a 1-2 page policy analysis on the bill (numbers 2 – 3c above).
4. Clearly state your views on the bill your reasons for those views. You can support it in its present form, support with amendments or oppose it. Explain how the current situation will be effected if your views are enacted.
5. Using the information gathered on the bill, present your views in person to the office of one legislator. This may be to the legislator or an aide. Generally you are most effective presenting this to a legislator who represents you. If you are not a voter in Michigan, present your views to a member of the committee to whom the legislation is assigned. In your meeting, provide the legislator with a one page written statement of your views, the rationale for those views and the action you request (e.g. vote yes, vote no, amend, etc.). Put a copy in your paper.

6. Follow up your visit with a less than one page **letter** (not email) to the legislator reiterating your position, rationale, thanking them for the opportunity to express your point of view and requesting a letter in response regarding their actions on the proposed legislations. Put a copy in your paper.
7. Present your views in a 1 page letter to the director of the administrative agency charged with enforcing the proposed law and requesting a response about the position of their agency on the legislation. The agency is likely to be the DEQ, DNR or the MDA. Put a copy in your paper.
8. Provide a copy of all written replies and a final update on the status of the bill as of the due date of 4/25/06.
9. **Do a 6 minute oral presentation for the class** in which you: identify the bill; outline the key provisions; state your position and rationale; describe your interaction with policy makers and the outcome. Powerpoint may be useful.

Grading Procedures

All grading will be on a straight scale with:

90% or more	= 4.0 = \geq 270 pts.
85%-89.94%	= 3.5 = 255-269 pts.
80%-84.94%	= 3.0 = 240-254 pts.
75%-79.94%	= 2.5 = 225-239 pts.
70%-74.94%	= 2.0 = 210-224 pts.
65%-69.94%	= 1.5 = 195-209 pts.
60%-64.94%	= 1.0 = 180-194 pts.
< 60%	= 0.0 = < 180 pts.

Assignments/Tests Grading

	% of Grade	Points Possible
Policy Analysis Paper	10%	30
1st Exam	30%	90
2nd Exam	30%	90
Policy Advocacy Paper	20%	60
Policy Advocacy Presentation	5%	15
Speaker Highlights	5% (possible to get 12 extra points)	15 (up to 27)
TOTAL	100%	300

There will be **no** extra credit opportunities other than those the instructor provides to all students on the 2 exams and the speaker highlights.

Special notes

1. No one will be excused from taking exams at the times scheduled without **PRIOR** permission of the instructor or a written doctor's excuse. You need to e-mail me or leave me a voice mail if I am not available.
2. Individuals who miss lectures or videos are expected to make arrangements with fellow students to obtain notes on the material presented. The instructor's lecture notes and videos will not be duplicated or available.

RD 440 CLASS CALENDAR

(readings should be completed by the date of the class)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings/Web Addresses</u>
1/10	Introduction, the Policy Process and Policy Analysis	http://www.legislature.mi.gov
1/17	Understanding Michigan State Government Choose Issue for Policy Analysis	A Citizen's Guide to State Government (on the web) (Pgs. 1-3; 11-15; 60-64)
1/24	Michigan's Natural Resources and Environment Policy Analysis Due	Michigan's Natural Resources and Environment: A Citizen's Guide (on the web) (Pgs. 1-34)
1/31	Natural Resource Damage Assessment - Guest Speaker Dr. Lisa Williams, US Fish and Wildlife Service Choose Policy Advocacy Issue	http://www.fws.gov/midwest/saginawNRDA/
2/7	Issue Advocacy – Guest Speaker Dave Dempsey, Great Lakes Policy Advisor, Clean Water Action/Consultant to Michigan Environmental Council	http://cleanwateraction.org/mi/index.htm
2/14	Exam 1	
2/21	Issue Advocacy – Guest Speakers Jason Dinsmore, Resource Policy Analyst, and Erin McDonough, Resource Policy Analyst, Michigan United Conservation Clubs	http://www.mucc.org/
2/28	Executive Branch and Environmental Regulation – Guest Speaker Frank Ruswick, Esq., Assistant to the Director Michigan DEQ	http://www.michigan.gov/deq
3/7	Spring Break	
3/14	Executive Branch and Natural Resource Policy – Rodney Stokes, Legislative Liaison Michigan DNR	http://www.michigan.gov/dnr
3/21	Issue Advocacy - Dr. Gary Dawson, Director of Environmental Services, Consumers Energy Corporation	http://www.consumersenergy.com/welcome.htm
3/28	Legislative Branch and Appropriations - Guest Speaker Representative Scott Hummel (R-DeWitt), Chair House Appropriations	http://www.michigan.gov/som/0,1607,7-192-29701_29704---,00.html
4/4	Executive Branch and the Governor's Priorities – Guest Speaker Dana Debel, Environmental Advisor to Gov. Granholm	http://www.michigan.gov/gov/
4/11	Federal Influence on Michigan Environmental Policy – Guest Speaker Lauri Elbing, former staffer to Rep. John Dingell (D-Dearborn)	http://www.house.gov/dingell/
4/18	Student Policy Advocacy Presentations	
4/25	Student Policy Advocacy Presentations ADVOCACY PAPER DUE 4/25	
5/3	Exam 2 8-10 PM Room 19 NR	

HAVE AN ENJOYABLE SUMMER!!! If you are interested in a career related to environmental policy, please contact me and I will be happy to work with you.