PIA3206: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES, POLICY AND ETHICS

Effective Term
Semester B 2022/23

Part I Course Overview

Course Title
Environmental Issues, Policy and Ethics

Subject Code
PIA - Public and International Affairs
Course Number
3206

Academic Unit
Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration
One Semester

Credit Units
3

Level
B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction
English

Medium of Assessment
English

Prerequisites
Nil

Precursors
Nil

Equivalent Courses
SA/POL3206 Environmental Issues, Policy and Ethics

Exclusive Courses
SA/POL3942 Environmental Policy and Ethics

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to examine the different perspectives and explanations regarding global environmental degradation and to analyse the relationship between economic growth, environmental justice and sustainable development. Besides, different theories of environmental ethics and their implications for public policy formulation in relation to the environment are to be evaluated in this course. Through analysing different environmental issues and problems, and evaluate different policy options in response to these issues and problems, students' moral reasoning, and critical and creative thinking skills will be enhanced.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

	CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Identify major global environmental issues and problems, critically assess the different explanations regarding global environmental degradation, and construct explanations of their own..		x	x	
2	Analyse the relationship between economic growth and sustainable development , evaluate the tension between promoting social utility and upholding social justice as the goals of environmental governance and produce solution to resolve the tension.		x	x	x
3	Explain the major theoretical approaches to environmental ethics and construct independent assessment of their implications for environmental policy formulation		x	x	x
4	Enumerate key environmental policy instruments and construct independent assessment their usefulness for addressing real life environmental issues and problems		x	x	x
5	Acquire the skill to reason morally, critically and creatively, and recognize their ethical responsibility towards nature, the environment and their fellow human beings		x	x	

A1: Attitude
Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability
Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments
Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

	TLAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Seminar	These are organized thematically to enable students to develop awareness of major environmental issues and problems and their impact on the future of both the planet earth and human livesacquire knowledge of the theories, concepts and values essential for engaging in a rational debate regarding our relationship and our response to the environmentexamine different policy options and evaluate their effectiveness for achieving the goal of sustainable development	1, 2, 3, 4	3 hours per week
2	Readings	These include academic reading materials, newspaper clippings, government policy papers and information on relevant websites. Students have to do at least one of the related readings for each of the lectures, and to do all the essential readings for each of the tutorials to deepen and to reinforce their learning in the lectures	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
3	Audio-Visual Materials	Relevant documentaries and films are used to cultivate students' affective learning and to create caring and empathy with the environment	1, 2, 4, 5	
4	Essay-writing	Each student has to submit an individual essay of 1,500 words as a way to test their ability to integrate learning through relating theory to real life problems	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks (e.g. Parameter for GenAI use)
1	Seminar attendance, discussion and participation	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	25	
2	Individual essay and presentation	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	25	

Continuous Assessment (%)

50

Examination (%)

50

Examination Duration (Hours)

2

Assessment Rubrics (AR)

Assessment Task

1. Seminar attendance, discussion and participation

Criterion

Ability to explain key concepts and theories in environmental ethics and to identify key environmental issues, enumerate relevant policy instruments and evaluate their usefulness in resolving the issues from an ethical perspective. Ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions. Presentation Skill and performance of collaboration among group members in the discussion.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Very good explanation of key concepts and theories in environmental ethics. Outstanding ability to identify key environmental issues, enumerate relevant policy instruments and evaluate their usefulness in resolving the issues from an ethical perspective. Very capable of presenting organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions. Very good presentation skill and very good collaboration among group members in the discussion.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good explanation of key concepts and theories in environmental ethics. Strong ability to identify key environmental issues, enumerate relevant policy instruments and evaluate their usefulness in resolving the issues from an ethical perspective. Capable of presenting organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions. Good presentation skill and good collaboration among group members in the discussion.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Adequate explanation of key concepts and theories in environmental ethics. Some ability to identify key environmental issues, enumerate relevant policy instruments and evaluate their usefulness in resolving the issues from an ethical perspective. Adequately capable of presenting organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions. Adequate presentation skill and adequate collaboration among group members in the discussion.

Marginal (D)

Limited explanation of key concepts and theories in environmental ethics. Limited ability to identify key environmental issues, enumerate relevant policy instruments and evaluate their usefulness in resolving the issues from an ethical perspective. Minimally capable of presenting organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions. Limited presentation skill and limited collaboration among group members in the discussion.

Failure (F)

Little evidence of being able to explain key concepts and theories in environmental ethics. Weak ability to identify key environmental issues, enumerate relevant policy instruments and evaluate their usefulness in resolving the issues from an ethical perspective. Weakness in presenting organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions. Little presentation skill and little collaboration among group members in the discussion.

Assessment Task

2. Individual Essay

Criterion

Ability to explain key concepts and theories in environmental ethics and to identify key environmental issues, enumerate relevant policy instruments and evaluate their usefulness in resolving the issues from an ethical perspective. Ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Very good explanation of key concepts and theories in environmental ethics. Outstanding ability to identify key environmental issues, enumerate relevant policy instruments and evaluate their usefulness in resolving the issues from an ethical perspective. Very capable of presenting organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good explanation of key concepts and theories in environmental ethics. Strong ability to identify key environmental issues, enumerate relevant policy instruments and evaluate their usefulness in resolving the issues from an ethical perspective. Capable of presenting organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Adequate explanation of key concepts and theories in environmental ethics. Some ability to identify key environmental issues, enumerate relevant policy instruments and evaluate their usefulness in resolving the issues from an ethical perspective. Adequately capable of presenting organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

Marginal (D)

Limited explanation of key concepts and theories in environmental ethics. Limited ability to identify key environmental issues, enumerate relevant policy instruments and evaluate their usefulness in resolving the issues from an ethical perspective. Minimally capable of presenting organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions

Failure (F)

Little evidence of being able to explain key concepts and theories in environmental ethics. Weak ability to identify key environmental issues, enumerate relevant policy instruments and evaluate their usefulness in resolving the issues from an ethical perspective. Weakness in presenting organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

Assessment Task

3.Final Examination

Criterion

Ability to explain key concepts and theories in environmental ethics and to identify key environmental issues, enumerate relevant policy instruments and evaluate their usefulness in resolving the issues from an ethical perspective. Ability to present organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Very good explanation of key concepts and theories in environmental ethics. Outstanding ability to identify key environmental issues, enumerate relevant policy instruments and evaluate their usefulness in resolving the issues from an ethical perspective. Very capable of presenting organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good explanation of key concepts and theories in environmental ethics. Strong ability to identify key environmental issues, enumerate relevant policy instruments and evaluate their usefulness in resolving the issues from an ethical perspective. Capable of presenting organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Adequate explanation of key concepts and theories in environmental ethics. Some ability to identify key environmental issues, enumerate relevant policy instruments and evaluate their usefulness in resolving the issues from an ethical perspective. Adequately capable of presenting organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

Marginal (D)

Limited explanation of key concepts and theories in environmental ethics. Limited ability to identify key environmental issues, enumerate relevant policy instruments and evaluate their usefulness in resolving the issues from an ethical perspective. Minimally capable of presenting organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions

Failure (F)

Little evidence of being able to explain key concepts and theories in environmental ethics. Weak ability to identify key environmental issues, enumerate relevant policy instruments and evaluate their usefulness in resolving the issues from an ethical perspective. Weakness in presenting organized ideas and structured arguments to support conclusions.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Environmental crisis and economic growth; world poverty and environmental justice, sustainable development and economic inequality; social utility and distributional justice; balance between human and non-human interests; anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism; environmental planning and environmental impact assessment; command and control, economic measures, and market-based environmental policy measures; environmental impact assessment, air pollution control; sustainable waste management; renewable energy, genetically modified food

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

	Title
1	Joe Walker, "The Human Dimension" in Environmental Ethics. London: Hodder & Stoughton. 2000, Chapter 4, pp.86-103
2	The World Commission on Environment and Development. Our Common Future. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, Chapter 2
3	Norton, Bryan, "Environmental Problems and Future Generations" in The Environmental Ethics and Policy Book, Donald VanDeVeer and Christine Pierce (eds.) 2nd ed., Wadsworth Publishing company, 1998, pp.440-448
4	Garrett Hardin, "Lifeboat Ethics", in The Environmental Ethics & Policy Book, Donald VanDeVeer and Christine Pierce (eds.) 2nd ed., Wadsworth Publishing Company,1998, pp.393 - 398
5	Rolston III, Holmes, "Feeding People Versus Saving Nature", in The Environmental Ethics & Policy Book, Donald VanDeVeer and Christine Pierce (eds.) 2nd ed., Wadsworth Publishing Company,1998, pp.409-420
6	Peter S. Wenz, "Overpopulation, Markets, and Human Rights" in Environmental Ethics Today, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, Chapter 1, pp.19-36
7	Garret Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," Science, Vol. 162, No. 3859 (December 13, 1968): 1243-1248. (Journal, available on-line).
8	Images of Nature, in Lori Gruen and Dale Jamieson, eds., Reflecting on Nature: Readings in Environmental Ethic, (New York: Oxford University Press 1994): 1-25, 28-30. (Hereafter RON). (Semi-closed Reserve).
9	Val Plumwood, "Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism," in RON, pp. 142-59. (Semi-closed Reserve).

10	Film: Giant pandas: the last refuge
11	Edwin O. Wilson, Biophilia, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984): 1-2, 83-101, 119-140. (Semi-closed Reserve).
12	Excerpts from: Robert D. Bullard, "Environmental Blackmail in Minority Communities." In Lori Gruen and Dale Jamieson, eds., Reflecting on Nature: Readings in Environmental Philosophy, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 132-41. (On Reserve.)
13	Environmental Justice Case Study: The Yucca Mountain High-Level Nuclear Waste Repository. Online: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yucca_Mountain
14	Film: Excerpts from Erin Brockovich.
15	Pong-wai Lai, Lai-yan Woo, Kim-che Lam, Wai-ying Lee, Tung Fung, "Siting and Community Response to Locally Unwanted Land Uses: A Literature Review", Research Monograph, April 2007, Chinese University of Hong Kong
16	IEA. (2001) Toward a Sustainable Energy Future. International Energy Agency. Paris, France: OECD. Chapters 5 (Energy efficiency), 6 (Renewable energy), 7 (Sustainable transport), 8 (Climate change).
17	WCED. (1987) Energy: Choices for Environment and Development, in Our Common Future. World Commission on Environment and Development. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, Ch 7, pp. 168-205.
18	Zhou, Y., Rengifo, C., Chen, P., & Hinze, J. (2011). Is China ready for its nuclear expansion? Energy Policy, 39(2), 771-781. doi: 10.1016/j.enpol.2010.10.051.

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Walker, Joe, "Specific Environmental Issues" in Environmental Ethics. London: Hodder & Stoughton. 2000, Chapter 2, pp.27-44
2	Bailey, Ronald, "Debunking Green Myths," Reason (February 2002), Vol. 33, Issue 9, pp. 58-60.
3	Pimentel, David, "Skeptical of the Skeptical Environmentalist," Skeptic, Vol.9, no.2, 2002, p. 21.
4	Video: Three Gorges: The Biggest Dam in the World
5	Paul R. Ehrlich and John P. Holdren, "Population Increase Causes Increased Environmental Damage", Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application, Louis P. Projman (ed.), Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 1994, pp.310-315
6	Barry Commoner, Michael Corr, and Paul J. Stamler, "Population in Itself Does Not Cause Increased Pollution" in Environmental Ethics: Readings in Theory and Application, Louis P. Projman (ed.), Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 1994, pp.315-323
7	Stephen R. Kellert, "The Biological Basis for Human Values of Nature," in Stephen R. Kellert and Edward O. Wilson, ed., The Biophilia Hypothesis, (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1993): 42-69. (Semi-closed Reserve).
8	Judith H. Heerwagen and Gorden H. Orians, "Humans, Habitats and Aesthetics," in Stephen R. Kellert and Edward O. Wilson, ed., The Biophilia Hypothesis, (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1993): 138-172. (Semi-closed Reserve).
9	Environmental Protection Department, 2012. Sustainable Waste Management: Strengthening Waste Reduction: Is Waste Charging an Option? (Consultation Document), from http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/msw_consult/file/MSW_con_doc_full_eng.pdf
10	Ashok V. Shekdar, "Sustainable Solid Waste Management: An Integrated Approach for Asian Countries", Waste Management, 29 (2009), pp. 1438-1488
11	Tam, V., & Tam, C. (2006). Evaluations of existing waste recycling methods: a Hong Kong study. Building and Environment, 41, 1649-1660.
12	Tammemagi, H. (1999). The Waste Crisis: Landfills, Incinerators, and the Search for a Sustainable Future. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1-2, 4-5, 7, 12.
13	Jane L. Price and Jeremy B. Joseph, "Demand Management - A Basis for Waste Policy: A Critical Review of the Applicability of the Waste Hierarchy in terms of Achieving Sustainable Waste Management", Sustainable Development, 8, 96-105, 2000.
14	David C. Wilson, "Stick or Carrot?: The Use of Policy Measures to Move Waste Management up the Hierarchy", Waste Management & Research, 14, 385-398, 1996 (waste management hierarchy; different types of policy instruments).

15	Environmental Protection Department, 2005. A Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste in Hong Kong, from http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/msw/
16	Watson, M. & Bulkeley, H. (2005). "Just Waste? Municipal Waste Management and the Politics of Environmental Justice", Local Environment, 10 (4): 411-426. (Principles of justice; from principles to implementation)
17	John Glasson, Riki Therivel and Andrew Chadwick, "Introduction and Principles", in Introduction to Environmental Impact Assessment: Principles and Procedures, Process, Practice and Prospects, 2nd Edition, 1999, UCL Press Limited, USA, Chapter 1, pp.1-25
18	Planning Department, "Sustainable Development for the 21st Century", Downloadable at http://www.pland.gov.hk/p_study/comp_s/susdev/ex_summary/final_eng/index.htm
19	Environmental Protection Dept, "The operation of Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance in Hong Kong: April 1998--December 2001", pp.8-67
20	Au, Elvis Wai-kwong, "Environmental Planning and Impact Assessment of Major Development Projects in Hong Kong", Building Hong Kong : environmental considerations, Wong Wah Sang and Chan Hon-wan (eds.), Hong Kong University Press, 2000, Chapter 11, pp257-271
21	Leverett, B, et al., "Case Study on the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO)", Idling Engine: Hong Kong's Environmental Policy in a Ten-year Stall (1997-2007), 2007, Civic Exchange, Chapter 10, pp131-145.
22	Peter Singer, "All Animals are Equal", Reprinted in Thomas A. Mappes and Jane S. Zembaty, Social Ethics: Morality and Social Policy, 6th edition, Boston, McGraw Hill, 2002, pp. 436-446.
23	Tom Regan, "The Case for Animal Rights", Reprinted in Thomas A. Mappes and Jane S. Zembaty, Social Ethics: Morality and Social Policy, 6th edition, Boston, McGraw Hill, 2002, pp.446-450.
24	James P. Sterba, "From Anthropocentrism to Nonanthropocentrism", in Justice for Here and Now, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 125-150)
25	Mary Anne Warren, "The moral status of nonhuman life", in James P. Sterba (ed.) Social and Political Philosophy: Contemporary Perspectives, (Routledge 1998), pp. 370-385.
26	Wolff, Jonathan "Introduction" and "Scientific Experiments on Animals", in Ethics and Public Policy: A Philosophical Inquiry, London: Routledge, 2011, Chs. 1 & 2. Pp. 1-36.
27	Holland, Alan, "Sustainability", in A Companion to Environmental Philosophy, Dale Jamieson (ed.), Oxford: Blackwell, 2001, pp. 390-401
28	Sherer, Donald, "The Ethics of Sustainable Resources", in Environmental Ethics: Anthology, Andrew Light and Holmes Rolston III (eds.), Oxford: Blackwell, 2003, pp. 333-358
29	Norton, Bryan, "Environmental Problems and Future Generations" in The Environmental Ethics and Policy Book, Donald VanDeVeer and Christine Pierce (eds.) 2nd ed., Wadsworth Publishing company, 1998, pp.440-448.