Welcome to *U.S. Environmental Policy: Theory, History, Politics, and Law*. This is an online course that examines the landscape of contemporary environmental policy in the United States, its political history, and the theoretical arguments that provide its basis. Students will gain an understanding of the problems, events, and movements out of which U.S. environmental legislation arose; learn how key environmental policies are implemented; and explore theoretical, ethical, political, and practical challenges in the realm of environmental public policy. The class will consist of 14 modules. Each module covers a specific topic, historical episode, or theoretical debate, and within each module students will find the title of the module, a paragraph introducing the module, learning objectives, and a series of required assignments, which must be completed on schedule in order to move on to the subsequent modules.

One of the great challenges of environmental politics is the overwhelming complexity of the issues. And yet history shows us that environmental problems can be addressed in the public arena with some success. One of the primary aims of this course is to give students the confidence to wade into the arena of environmental public policy in whatever capacity they may be called to do so. At the end of the course students will have mastered a general overview of the political history and current state of environmental policy in the United States. They will be familiar with key debates about public policy pertaining to sustainability, conservation, and public health. And they will have gained an appreciation for the practical and ethical complexities inherent in environmental politics.

The course modules for the entire course, and the materials within the modules, are open for you to access within the D2L system, and the course schedule is laid out for you as well. Modules correspond to weeks. Some of you may choose to get a head-start on readings and assignments in later modules. This is OK, but note the following. First, discussion participation for any given module will only count toward your discussion participation grade if it takes place on the week of that module, during the discussion participation period specified on the schedule. Second, elements of upcoming course modules may be changed by the instructor in the course of the semester. Key terms may be added to the key terms assignments. Notes from the instructor may be added to the required reading. Outside readings may be added. Required readings may be made optional. Parameters, requirements, and guidelines for required activities and assignments may be adjusted. Discussion prompts may be altered. Required discussions or other activities may be added to course modules, or removed. Any such changes will be for the purpose of improving learning outcomes and the learning experience for students. Any substantial changes to modules will be made in advance of the week in question. And any changes of dates, deadlines, or assignments on the schedule will be announced well in advance.

**GRADED ACTIVITIES**
Discussion participation
This course is centered around readings and online discussions related to the topics of each module. In each module, students are required to participate in discussion of a few questions/topics. Students should make at least two or three substantive and thoughtful contributions to one or more thread within each discussion forum. Discussion participation is a required and graded activity, and the quality of your contributions will be considered in assigning your grade. Your discussion contributions should show that you have read and are engaging the material by regularly making references to the ideas and arguments in the texts. Discussion participation is a required activity that you cannot complete ahead of time. You must participate in a given discussion during the appropriate week, as stipulated on the schedule. Discussion participation periods will usually open on Monday at 8:00 AM, the deadline for the first post usually is Wednesday by 5:00 PM, and while discussions may continue past the assigned week, the period during which students get credit for discussion participation will typically end at 5:00 PM Friday. Consult the schedule.

It is of the utmost importance that online discussions remain civil, constructive, and polite. Care must be taken to refrain from language that may be taken as insulting, bullying, or as any kind of personal affront. Be especially cautious when using humor. Facial expressions and tone of voice often play crucial roles in communicating the meaning of a joke, and these are precisely what is lacking in online text-based communication.

Terms identification
Most modules contain a terms identification exercise, which is a required, graded activity. In some cases identifying the terms will require some independent online research, as not all of the “key terms” in each module are explained in the assigned readings. Wikipedia is often a great source, but use it always with due caution and seek verification for any claims made on Wikipedia that smell the least bit fishy or one-sided. Terms identification is a written assignment, meaning you need to write in your own words. No cutting and pasting. No plagiarism.

Proctored activity
Students in online courses such as ours are required to complete one proctored activity during the course. This will be a one-hour written exam in which you will be required to identify and explain the significance of key terms and concepts drawn from the first 6 course modules. The exam will be proctored electronically by Proctor U. You will have a flex period of several hours during which time you may schedule to take the exam. You must have access to an internet connected computer with a webcam. Information about Proctor U. can be found here. Students must pay a fee (between $15 and $25) for the Proctor U service. If you complete the activities in the foregoing modules, you will be well prepared for this exam.
Date: October 15-17
Time: you must schedule with Proctor U
Location: Online, inside eLearning as Proctored quiz 1.
You must register to take your test no less than 72 hours prior to the test.
You will be given 60 minutes to complete the activity.
You are required to present your Photo I.D.
You are not allowed to use the Web Browser.
You are not allowed a Restroom Break.
You are not allowed other Electronic Devices.
NOTE: If you do not take the proctored activity on the scheduled date(s) or miss it for whatever reason, THERE IS NO MAKE UP OPTION. You will receive a ZERO for this quiz. No exceptions.

Short papers
Undergraduate students will write a 4-6 page paper early in the semester on an assigned topic. Graduate students will write an additional short paper due near the middle of the semester. These papers should be written in a scholarly style, making consistent use of a recognized style for citations and bibliographic reference.

Policy paper
All students will write a final research paper 14-20 pages in length that will be due near the end of the semester. This paper will be written in the style of a policy paper, and can be structured somewhat differently to a normal research paper. The aim of a policy paper is to reach a politically influential audience, to inform that audience about your issue, and convince that audience to take political action on that issue. As such, policy papers may incorporate images, infographics, text boxes, bulleted lists and other similar devices. A guide to writing a policy paper will be provided in module IX.

The goal of the short paper as well as the final policy paper is to produce written statements with all the elements of good scholarship: correct grammar and spelling, readability, correct and consistent citation style, and a well-structured, thoughtful argument. A well structured argument is one that is centered around a clearly stated claim or series of claims. This is the “thesis statement” and most authors put it near the beginning of the written work. (Some written works, such as works of fiction, literature reviews and discussion papers, or technical or scientific write-ups may not have a central thesis. But in this course, papers will be of the type that should have a clearly stated thesis.) The thesis needs support from the rest of the paper. Whenever the importance of the topic is not taken for granted by the audience, a scholarly research paper should first of all demonstrate why the topic you are writing about should matter to readers. Then the paper may explore what others have said on the topic before the author offers their own take on the matter.

Note: Due dates for assignments are not fixed ahead of time, but will be communicated well in advance. Assignments handed in late will not be accepted and will receive no credit. Students are expected adhere to the UNG Student Code of Conduct.

REQUIRED TEXTS & MEDIA
The following books are required texts for this course.
Steven Cohen, Understanding Environmental Politics, Second Edition.
Electronic versions are available online and hard copies have been ordered at the University book store. Other required readings will be provided within the course modules.
Students are also required to watch *The Dust Bowl*, a documentary by Ken Burns, which is available for purchase on Amazon.com for $10.99. And finally, students are required to utilize Proctor U for the proctored activity mentioned above. The cost of the Proctor U service is usually between $15 and $40.

**CONTACTING THE INSTRUCTOR**

Communication with the instructor is key to student success in this course, and all students are encouraged to ask questions. All questions about the course that are not of a private nature should be posted to the “Ask the Instructor” discussion board so that other students have the benefit of the answer. For private questions, students may email the instructor (jake.greear@ung.edu), who will endeavor to answer all emails within 24 hours during weekdays. If the instructor will be unavailable by email for an extended period of time during the semester, notice will be given ahead of time. Students may also call the instructor between the hours of 2:00 and 5:00 pm on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays throughout the semester, or at other times arranged by email (Dr. Greear: 828 243 1961).