

COURSE SYLLABUS

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Alliance for Global Education
Public Health Policy and Practice Program in Beijing

Suggested US semester credit hours: 3 credits

IFSA-Butler/Alliance course code: PUBH 350 / ENVI 350

Course length: Semester

Delivery method: Face to face

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Environmental health concerns in China are well documented and widely acknowledged on the international stage. In this course, China's environmental challenges and the governmental policies and institutions and initiatives that impact them are examined. Topics include water pollution, indoor and outdoor air pollution, water pollution and water management, soil pollution and electronic waste, climate change, and environmental impact on food supply and safety. Rapid growth in China's industry and economy have led to increasing health hazards for Chinese people in their communities, homes, schools, and workplaces. In this course, students explore the various issues policy makers consider when undertaking risk assessment and developing regulatory policies to reduce these negative impacts while maintaining a trajectory of economic growth. Consideration of changing environmental politics and emerging environmental advocacy efforts provides further context for these discussions.

Readings and resources from both social science and environmental science provide an interdisciplinary perspective to these topics. Finally, the setting of Beijing, a city in transformation, provides a dynamic learning environment and "laboratory" for local examination of national issues.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course includes the following goals for students:

- Increase understanding of China's contemporary environmental challenges and issues.
- Become aware of China's current governmental policies and the structures that provide environmental governance.
- Become aware of changing environmental politics, citizen action, and environmental advocacy efforts in China.
- Become familiar with resources available for research on China's environmental regulatory policies and practices.
- Evaluate policies and practices and develop a recommended policy change on a particular environmental health issue.
- Demonstrate understanding of the cultural considerations of environmental health issues.

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- Strengthen research skills, persuasive argument skills, and academic writing skills.
- Make connections between learning in this course and other learning experiences in the Alliance for Global Education Program in Public Health Policy and Practice in Beijing.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The following schedule indicates the weekly discussion topics, related readings, and assignments for this course. With the exception of Week 1 (when resources will be reviewed as a group during class), students are expected to read or watch resources in advance and be prepared to actively discuss them in class. In each meeting, the instructor will overview the topic and then facilitate a group discussion, drawing out relevant themes, following up on specific lines of inquiry, and prompting students' thoughtful engagement with the topic. Students are encouraged to bring their prior learning experiences into class discussions and to make connections between this course and others whenever possible. Theories of experiential learning and integrative learning therefore undergird the dynamic learning environment of this course.

Each discussion will present the topic from integrated social science and environmental science perspectives. Each discussion will specifically connect the environmental challenge in question to impacts on China's population and their health.

Week 1: **Introduction: China's Environmental Health Issues in Context**

"Focusing a Lens on China's Environmental Challenges" Photo Essay by Sean Gallagher. Yale University Environment 360 Project. View 12 scene-setting photos with descriptions at http://e360.yale.edu/feature/sean_gallagher_photo_essay_documenting_chinas_environmental_challenges/2695/

Kan, H. (2009). Environment and Health in China: Challenges and Opportunities. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 117(12), A530-A531.

Zhang, J., Mauzerall, D., Zhu, T., Liang, S., Ezzati, M., & Remais, J. (2010). Environmental health in China: Progress towards clean air and safe water. *Lancet*, 375(9720), 1110-1119.

Week 2: **Environmental Management and Governance**

He, G., Lu, Y., Mol, A. P. J., & Beckers, T. (2012). Changes and challenges: China's environmental management in transition. *Environmental Development*, 3.

Lingxuan L., Zhang, B., & Bi, J. (2012). Reforming China's multi-level environmental governance: lessons from the 11th five-year plan. *Environmental Science and Policy*, 21.

- Assignment: Response Paper: Environmental Management and Governance

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Week 3: **Outdoor Air Pollution**

Van Rooij, B. (2010). The people versus pollution: Understanding citizen action against pollution in China. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 19(63).

Lingxuan L, He, P., Zhang, B., & Bi, J. (2012). Red and green: Public perception and air quality information in urban China. *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development*, May/June, 44-49.

Week 4: **Indoor Air Pollution**

Zhang J, & Smith K. (2007). Household air pollution from coal and biomass fuels in China: measurements, health impacts, and interventions. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 115, 848-855.

Sinton, J., Smith, K., Peabody, J., Yaping, L., Xiliang, Z., Edwards, R., & Quan, G. (2004). An assessment of programs to promote improved household stoves in China. *Science Direct*, 8(3), 33-52.

- Assignment: Response Paper: Indoor and Outdoor Air Pollution

Week 5: **Water Pollution**

Zhang, J., Mauzerall, D. L., Zhu, T., Liang, S., Ezzati, M., & Remais, J. V. (2010). Environmental health in China: Progress towards clean air and safe water. *Lancet*, 375, 1110–19.

Small group discussion: Examine one of the following case studies:

Ren, H. Wan, X., Yang, F., Shi, X., Xu, J., Zhuang, D., & Yang, G. (2015). Association between changing mortality of digestive tract cancers and water pollution: A case study in the Huai River Basin, China. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 12(1), 214-226.

Qin, B., Guangwei, Z., Gao, G., Zhang, Y., Li, W., Paerl, H. W., & Carmichael, W. W. (2010). A drinking water crisis in Lake Taihu, China. *Environmental Management*, 45, 105-112.

Week 6: **Flood Control and Water Management**

Hvistendahl, M. (2008). China's Three Gorges Dam: An environmental catastrophe? *Scientific American (March)*.

Wilmsen, B., Webber, M., & Yuefang, D. (2011). Development for whom? Rural to urban resettlement at the Three Gorges Dam, China. *Asian Studies Review*, 35, 21-42.

- Assignment: Response Paper: Water Pollution and Management

Week 7: **Soil Pollution**

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“Tainted Harvest: An e360 Special Report/Part I: China’s Dirty Pollution Secret: The Boom Poisoned Its Soil and Crops.” Yale University Environment 360 Project.

http://e360.yale.edu/feature/chinas_dirty_pollution_secret_the_boom_poisoned_its_soil_and_crops/2782/

“The Warriors of Qiugang: A Chinese Village Fights Back” Yale University Environment 360 Project.

http://e360.yale.edu/feature/the_warriors_of_qiugang_a_chinese_village_fights_back/2358/

Week 8: China Field Study Trip

The Alliance for Global Education semester program in Public Health Policy and Practice provides a week-long study trip for the hands-on examination of topics discussed in courses across the program, including PUBH 350 / ENVI 350 Environmental Health. Participation is mandatory. Experiences will augment class discussions. Details TBA. For an overview, see

http://www.allianceglobaled.org/china/beijing/public-health#field_study_trip

Week 9: Electronic Waste

Xia Huo, Lin Peng, Xijin Xu, Liangkai Zheng, Bo Qiu, Zongli Qi, Bao Zhang, Dai Han, & Zhongxian Pia. (2007). Elevated blood levels of children in Guiyu, an electronic waste recycling town in China. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 115(7), 1113-1117.

Hicks, C., Dietmar, R., & Eugster, M. (2005). The recycling and disposal of electrical and electronic waste in China: Legislative and market responses. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 25, 459-471.

In-class reflections on the Alliance for Global Education China Study Trip.

- Policy Memo Topic Proposal Due

Week 10: Food Supply and Food Safety

Guest Lecturer: Instructor, Alliance Global for Education PUBH 330 Nutrition, Food Safety and Security course. Topic: The compelling contemporary issues of food supply and food safety in China.

Lua, Y., Song, Wang, R., Liu, Z., Meng, J. Sweetman, A., Jenkins, A., Ferriere, R., Hong, L, Wei, L., & Wang, T. (2015). Impacts of soil and water pollution on food safety and health risks in China. *Environment International*, 77, 5–15.

- Assignment: Response Paper: Soil Pollution and Electronic Waste

Week 11: Changing Environmental Politics

Ma, Q. (2002). The governance of NGOs in China since 1978: How much autonomy? *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 31(3).

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Hsieh, S. & Knutson, S. (2013). Special report: The role and challenges of international NGOs in China's development. *China Development Brief*.

Chen, J. (2010). Transnational environmental movement: Impacts on the green civil society in China. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 19(65).

Week 12: **Independent Travel and Study Week**

No assignments.

Week 13: **Emerging Environmental Advocacy**

"In China, a New Transparency on Government Pollution Data." Yale University Environment 360 Project. (The Chinese government has begun to make environmental records available to the public, empowering green groups and citizens as they try to force factories — and the companies they supply — to comply with the law.

http://e360.yale.edu/feature/in_china_a_new_transparency_on_government_pollution_data/2352/

"China's New Environmental Advocates." Yale University Environment 360 Project. (Until recently, the idea of environmental advocacy was largely unheard of in China. But that's changing rapidly. At a legal aid center based in Beijing, Xu Kezhu and her colleagues are helping pollution victims stand up for their rights.)

http://e360.yale.edu/feature/chinas_new_environmental_advocates/2037/

Thompson, D., & Lu, X. China's evolving civil society: From environment to health. *China Environment Series*, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2006.

- Assignment: Response Paper: Changing Environmental Politics and Emerging Advocacy

Week 14: **Environmental Risk Management** (a policy study report example)

Eco-environmental Risk Management, China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development (CCICED). Special Policy Study Report. CCICED 2014 Annual General Meeting November 9-11, 2015. *Eco-Environmental Risk Management.pdf*

Week 15: **Conclusions and Final Projects**

Wrap-up discussions, final thoughts and questions.

Informal in-class student overviews of Policy Memos.

ASSIGNMENTS

Response Papers (5 total; due dates indicated throughout)

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Response papers can be constructed in a way that makes the most sense for you as the learner. Consider the class resources provided for the topic. Select one or more for the focus of your response. In a single page, describe your responses to what you encountered. Was your thinking challenged or were your prior ideas confirmed? Perhaps you found a particular reading compelling and it prompted you to consider new ideas or possible solutions; perhaps you made personal connections between a class discussion and your own learning; or maybe you located an additional resource that gave you more information on the topic. Feel free to describe your learning using any of these approaches or others, but do not use the response paper assignment to merely summarize a reading or a discussion. The response paper should demonstrate that you have given additional, reflective thought to an issue. Your voice should be heard in this paper.

Policy Memo Topic Proposal

Prepare a 1-page statement proposing a topic of personal interest for the final Policy Memo assignment. Clearly state the reasons for your interest in the topic and the questions that motivate you. Reference at least two of the course readings in your statement.

Annotated Resource List

The Annotated Resource List requires you to do additional reading on your area of interest. Prepare a list of 10 annotated resources related to your Policy Memo Topic. Each annotated resource should include the following: (a) a full citation for the resource, (b) a summary of the resource (in your own words—do not use the abstract), and (c) articulation of why you selected this resource/its relevancy to your project. Peer-reviewed journal articles must comprise at least 5 of your 10 selected resources. Do not include resources listed in this syllabus.

Policy Memo

Policy memos are a unique written product that practitioners in the policy and planning fields should be able to produce. Select a topic of interest from among the weekly discussion topics of the course. Research the current regulatory practices, including governmental positions, agency activities, and local initiatives, related to the topic. Evaluate the existing and consider new regulatory practices and positions and determine a recommended policy change or a vigorous defense of the status quo. Consider a potential audience for your recommendation. Develop a 6-10 page policy memo outlining your issue and your recommendation.

For guidance, refer to the “Writing a Policy Memo” guide from the University of Southern California Libraries Research Guides Series: <http://libguides.usc.edu/c.php?g=235034&p=1559842>

The policy memo assignment addresses the following student learning objectives:

- Sharpen academic writing skills. Prepare a clear, persuasive paper.
- Demonstrate understanding and thoughtfulness about a specific “real-world” issue.
- Demonstrate awareness of the cultural considerations surrounding the issue.

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- Choose and craft a document's content based on the needs of a particular audience, anticipating the needs and assumptions of that audience.
- Create original work that synthesizes research into a succinctly written document advocating change or a specific course of action.

EVALUATION METHODS

Your performance in this course will be assessed through the following, and your final grade will be determined by the percentages indicated:

Participation (includes attendance, engagement in discussion, civility, and respect) – 10%

Response Papers (5 total) – 10%

Policy Memo Topic Proposal – 10%

Annotated Resource List – 20%

Policy Memo (final) – 50%

Individual grading rubrics for the Response Papers, Policy Memo Topic Proposal, Annotated Resource List, and Policy Memo will be provided by the instructor during class.

Alliance programs utilize the follow standard grading policy well accepted by most US institutions.

Excellent	A	93-100%	Good	B+	87-89%	Acceptable	C+	77-79%	
	A-	90-92%		B	83-86%		C	73-76%	
				B-	80-82%		C-	70-72%	
						Unsatisfactory	D+	67-69%	
							D	63-66%	
							D-	60-62%	
							Failing	F	<60%

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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Any academic endeavor must be based upon a foundation of honesty and integrity. Students are expected to abide by principles of academic integrity and must be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work while studying abroad. Any academic work (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill an academic requirement must represent a student's original work. Any act of academic misconduct, such as cheating, fabrication, forgery, plagiarism, or facilitating academic dishonesty, will subject a student to disciplinary action.

Please refer to the Alliance for Global Education Code of Academic Integrity for a full description of Alliance standards of academic integrity, procedures for upholding these standards, and processes for violations of academic integrity. The Code of Academic Integrity is available at http://allianceglobaled.org/files/upload/pdf/code_of_academic_integrity.pdf.