



ENVS 403 -- Environmental Ethics and Law

COURSE SYLLABUS: Summer II 2025

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Janet Hull
Office Location: online
Office Hours: online M-S 10:00-5:00
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University Email Address: Janet.Hull@tamuc.edu
Preferred Form of Communication: email
Communication Response Time: 24 hours

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

1. *Selected Environmental Law Statutes, Educational Edition*. St. Paul: West Group (It is updated every year — the current edition or an edition that is two or three years old is O.K.)
2. Kubasek, N.K., G. S. Silverman (2005) *Environmental Law, 7th ed. (or newer)* Upper Saddle River, NJ:Prentice Hall (a newer edition doesn't matter)
3. Pojman, L.P., (2000) *Global Environmental Ethics*. Mountain View, CA : Mayfield Publishing Company

Software Required Microsoft Doc program, MAC or compatible program. **Submit assignments in a docx format, or pages if you use a MAC.**

Course Description

This course introduces the student to the various environmental ethical issues confronting societies and environmental professionals today. The course also provides an overview of environmental laws on environmental regulations and ways to navigate through these laws.

Prerequisites

None. It is helpful if you have taken ENVS 301.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course you will be able to:

- A. Describe the Federal and State-level legislative, executive, and judicial framework and hierarchy under which environmental laws and regulations are created and administered.
- B. Predict possible economic, political, societal, and environmental effects of existing and proposed environmental laws.
- C. Outline the essential provisions of all the major environmental laws.
- D. Locate and summarize the detailed Federal and State environmental regulations that apply to specific corporate, industrial, or client situations.
- E. Monitor changes and developments in environmental laws and regulations applicable to specific corporate, industrial, or client situations.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide you with a non-biased practical overview of environmental ethics, and a general practical and working knowledge of environmental laws and regulations. This prepares you for a potential career in Environmental Science and Field Engineering.

The mass of material and information required for Environmental Ethics and Law can be overwhelming — to EVERYONE! But, the object of the course is to get an overview of the mass of material and *most importantly* to be able to quickly find precisely what you need. It is important to stay aware of the continuous changes in environmental laws and regulations that can apply to you, your employer or to your client.

The course will be fairly intensive, and you will have to spend time searching the appropriate legal references---primarily on-line in the Code of Federal Regulations and in the Texas Administrative Code, and also in your big orange statutes text. *As a result of taking this course, you will develop an excellent sense of the entire complexity of the environmental regulatory system in a way that will prove invaluable within most environmental careers.*

- (1) In the first part of the course, you will learn about the structural framework of our legal system and how policies and laws are made and administered.
- (2) You will become familiar with the political and economic realities involved in creating and administering environmental laws.
- (3) During the greater part of the course, you will examine in detail environmental laws and regulations themselves. This viewpoint is not that of lawyers, but of the people who are responsible for overseeing compliance with State and Federal environmental regulations on behalf of a corporation, industrial facility, environmental consulting firm, or governmental agency,

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

This online course requires Microsoft Word or a compatible Word program for MAC, dependable hardware, and a VERY dependable server. No extra software or hardware is required.

Instructional Methods

You will be utilizing various forms of learning tools and environmental law records available on-line, as well as referencing your textbook and on-line discussions. You will be required to monitor specific government websites throughout this course, and I will email you those links when applicable. It is very helpful to actually visit or phone the county record offices with questions.

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

Assessments

Your final grade will be based on:

- A. Completing each Unit's agenda, lecture, and reading assignments.
- B. Completed homework assignments. The first Units 1-3 require mostly responding to the readings. Beginning with Unit 4, you will start detailing the U.S. Code, the Code of Federal Regulations, and the Texas Administrative Code. In the 5th Unit, you will be required to locate and summarize detailed regulations that apply to specific questions and given situations.
- C. Beginning with Unit 4 and for each Unit thereafter, you will provide a short report summarizing the most current EPA actions as found in the Federal Register and the most current TCEQ actions as found in the Texas Register.
- D. Pass one exam per Unit - no Midterm or Final. An exam schedule is provided in your Syllabus Tab Bar, and I will also email a Test schedule to you.
- E. There is NO TIME for make-up work if you fall behind. I do not give test make-ups or allow extra time for homework assignments, but as extra credit, **I will drop your lowest quiz grade and your lowest homework grade.**

Grades are based on:

- A. Homework (75% of course grade)
- B. Unit Quizzes (25% of course grade)

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Each Unit provides an overview of the Unit topics and the Unit objectives. When you click on a Unit, you will be taken to tips for the class requirements. Lectures consist of instructor emails, Zoom sessions and project tips.

Units:

1. Source of Environmental Law & Regulations — The framework under which environmental laws and regulations are created and administered.
2. The Litigation Process — The court system under which environmental controversies are decided.
3. Environmental Idealism vs Politics and Economics — The realities of efforts to protect our environment.
4. Overview of Environmental Law — A brief description of the major environmental statutes. An introduction to the CFR, TAC, and Federal Register.
5. National Environmental Policy Act — The mandates that Federal agencies must consider when assessing environmental impacts of their actions and requirements.
6. Clean Air Act — Which mandates are required for regional air quality standards and specific emission limits resulting from industrial processes.
7. Clean Water Act — The mandates for water quality criteria concerning bodies of water, as well as specific limitations for individual industries.
8. Safe Drinking Water Act — Standards the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sets for the maximum contaminant levels of public drinking water.
9. Toxicology & FIFRA — How the toxic effect of various chemicals is determined, and then an examination of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act.
10. Toxic Substances Control Act — Learning about banned PCBs and other toxic regulations.
11. Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) — How the standards were set for the exposure to toxins in the industrial workplace to provide worker

protection from toxicity.

12. Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) — Deals with the management of solid wastes and establishes a "cradle to grave" management system for the treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste.
13. Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA, "Superfund") — Outlines the cleanup of industrial containments and abandoned hazardous waste dump sites.
14. Endangered Species Act — Protects endangered and threatened species and their ecosystems.
15. Mining and Land Use Laws — Various laws to maintain public lands in a manner that will protect the quality relative to scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archeological values.

Late assignments are not accepted and there are no make-up exams, but I do offer extra credit for this class, which is ... I will drop your lowest quiz grade (one quiz) and your lowest homework grade (one assignment).

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

I check my email daily, so please email anytime with questions or concerns. Your project grades will be posted after the due dates close. Your grade average will be available in the first column in the grade book.

I really like teaching this course because I have worked in the field as a HAZWOPER engineer, firefighter, and environmental remediation project engineer *both domestically and internationally*. I was one of the first Americans to work on the remediation of the former Soviet army bases in Eastern Europe after Glasnost in the early 1990s.

All lecture materials for this course have come from my experiences in the field, and my report requirements are industry standards that I used when working in the field.

The time you spend for this course will be equal to the time spent for an on-campus course, yet this class is perfect for the on-line format. During future employment, any environmental investigation will be done outside of the office, so how you discipline yourself during this course will give you a hint on how well you will do when employed. How you organize your daily schedule is completely up to you, but, *as in the environmental field*, you must begin your project immediately so you **do not get behind**.

As long as the quality of your projects is up to my standards, you can complete and turn in your projects early for full credit.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Late assignments are not accepted, and I do not offer extra credit for this class.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx).
<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britanica.com/topic/netiquette>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/)
<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url: <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

University's Pandemic Response

"A&M-Commerce requires the use of face-coverings in all instructional and research classrooms/laboratories. Exceptions may be made by faculty where warranted. Faculty have management over their classrooms. Students not using face-coverings can be required to leave class. Repetitive refusal to comply can be reported to the Office of Students' Rights and Responsibilities as a violation of the student Code of Conduct.

*Students should not attend class when ill or after exposure to anyone with a communicable illness. Communicate such instances directly with your instructor. Faculty will work to support the student getting access to missed content or completing missed assignments.

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel