Course title: Environmental Management
Course code: ENVI 3004 BJCH
Programs offering course: Sustainable Development
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3
Contact hours: 45
Term: Spring 2020

Course Description

This course addresses the Chinese experience in managing environmental issues such as air and water pollution, energy and climate change, biodiversity, toxic waste and solid waste management, and regulatory strategies for risk assessment and management. It teaches students how to analyze and manage natural environments for ecosystem health and human benefit. Students then apply their knowledge to evaluate the efficacy of Chinese environmental management approaches at local, regional, and national scales. Lectures and class discussions are supplemented by field trips to relevant environmental facilities.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Understand management as an approach towards conservation of natural resources, protection of habitats and control of hazards
- Recognize the management principles enshrined in Chinese environmental laws and practices
- Compare and evaluate environmental management outcomes using sources and indicators obtained through secondary research
- Explore and analyze the successes and shortcomings of environmental management in the Chinese context

Course Prerequisites

Introductory course-work in environmental studies, public policy, or Chinese government would be beneficial but not required.
Methods of Instruction

The course will be delivered as lectures and extensive in-class discussion of environmental management textbook material, peer-reviewed publications about the Chinese context, published case studies, and data-sets and indicator-based reports. Additionally, students will have opportunities to visit relevant field sites, such as environmental NGOs, urban planning institutions, and waste management and processing sites.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. In-class Discussion Facilitation 15%
2. Mid-term Exam 25%
3. Concept Briefs (2) 20%
4. Case Study Analysis 25%
5. Class Participation 15%
   TOTAL 100%

Course Requirements

In-class Discussion Facilitation

Once during the term, each student will have to lead class discussion of the assigned reading material for the day. Students will have to sign up to lead discussion on a particular topic on a particular day in the beginning of the semester. By Sunday evening prior to the class session, student has to email the professor with a plan for the discussion. Successful discussion stimulates fellow students to actively engage with the reading material and evaluate the merit of the presented arguments. Half of the discussion facilitation grade is based on the quality of pre-discussion plan submitted to the instructor, while other half evaluates the discussion itself. If there are more students than class sessions available, students will have to work in pairs and the same grade will be awarded to both students in the team.

Mid-term Exam

Sit-down open books exam with short response (choose two questions out of three, up to 150 words each) and extended response questions (choose two questions out of three, each between 300 and 400 words).
Concept Briefs (2)

Students will be asked to submit two briefs (1000 words each) describing key concepts discussed in class. Instructor will identify which concepts should be addressed. The brief should define and describe the concept, explain its theoretical applications and extent to which the concept has been implemented in policy in China. Consistent citation format must be used, preferably MLA.

Case Study Analysis

On the last day of the program, students are required to submit a case study focusing on one or a set of environmental management concepts and tools discussed in class. The case study must examine the application of the concept in the Chinese context, and must draw on extensive desk-top research that extends beyond class reading materials. Expected length is 3000 to 3500 words. Consistent citation format must be used, preferably MLA. The use of a citation management tool is highly recommended.

Class Participation

Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed and on their own initiative.

Attendance

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program. Students must notify their instructor beforehand if they will miss class for any reason. Students are responsible for any materials covered in class in their absence. Students who miss class for medical reasons must inform the instructor and CIEE Academic Coordinator and provide appropriate documentation. Make-up opportunity will be provided to the extent this is feasible. Excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students will be marked as absent. Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event. Students who miss class for personal travel will be marked as
absent and unexcused. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided. Persistent absenteeism may lead to a written notification to the student’s home school, and/or dismissal from the program in addition to reduction in class grade. Students with unexcused absences exceeding 20% of the total course hours will fail the course.

N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1
Class: Orientation Week

Introduction to Environmental Management

Reading: Barrow, p.3-40.

Week 2
Class: Sectoral approach to Environmental Management: Micro-economics

Economics as the science that focuses on individual, firm, and public choice. In this session we will discuss how economic considerations shape individuals’ and firms’ choices and action.

Reading: Jaeger, p.35-61

Week 3
Class: Sectoral approach to Environmental Management:

Market Interactions and Market Failure

Individuals and firms interact in a marketplace. Effective market exchange ensures lowered costs and higher efficiency, ideally reducing environmental burden. Not all exchanges are accounted for and not all markets are efficient, leading to externalities and market failures.
Reading: Jaeger, p.72-82

Week 4
Class: Sectoral approach to Environmental Management:
Institutional Economics and the Governance of the Commons

Many successful and sustainable natural resource management systems do not work on market principles. Institutional economy theory helps explain sustainability of the commons where conventional economics expect a market failure.

Reading: Marshal, p.29-36.

Field trip to waste management plant

Week 5
Class: Sectoral approach to Environmental Management: Legislation

Legislative action sets environmental management goals and enables management tools and approaches.


First concept brief due by noon.

Week 6
Class: Sectoral approach to Environmental Management: Implementation of Laws

There are differences between how environmental governance is envisioned in legislation and implemented. Bridging implementation gap is key to successful environmental management.

Reading: Lazarus, p.311-374

Week 7
Class: Mainstreaming Environmental Management: Environmental Impact
Assessment

Environmental Impact Assessment, a key legal process that ideally leads to clearly and systematically available information but does not produce binding recommendations, is central to making individual projects and large initiatives accountable and acceptable to governments and the public.


Week 8
Class: Mid-term Exam

Following the exam, showing and discussion of excerpts from Under the Dome.

Week 9
Class: Environmental Law-Making in China

China claims a state history that reaches back five millennia, yet the current legal system is less than four decades old. Environmental legislation is among the crown jewels of China's legal code.

Reading: Feng & Liao, p. 1549–1558.

Week 10
Class: The Rise of Market Approaches to Managing Environment in China

China has embraced economic liberalization to encourage economic development. Market mechanisms are being trialed for environmental management to counter some of the harmful effects of development.

Reading: Nai et al., p.138–150.

Week 11
Class: The Role of the State-owned Sector of the Economy
State-owned enterprises have a special status in China’s economy. They play by both market and administrative rules. This gives state leverage over environmental decisions in large companies. Yet at the same time, these companies often have the administrative power to off-load externalities.


Week 12
Class: The Role of the Private Sector

Private companies are playing an increasingly important role in China’s economy. The state’s ability to influence their environmental management along with public expectation of corporate environmental responsibility are key factors in ensuring sound environmental performance of these companies.

Reading: Yang et al., p. 30–48.

Second concept brief due by noon.

Week 13
Class: The Environmental Management of Public Spaces

Urbanization is the major driver of China’s development, economic growth, and improvement of living standards. Managing the interplay between the market and policy while focusing on public benefit is the key challenge to managing the urban environment.

Reading: Wolch et al., p.234–244.

List any due dates for exams, papers, etc.

Week 14
Class: Environmental Impact Assessment in China
How to assess the impacts of individual developments as well as large-scale initiatives in the largest and most rapidly changing developing country?


Visit to the Legal Section of the Friends of Nature.

Week 15
Class: Environmental Management with Chinese Characteristics: Implementation Gaps

Government structures and internal sticks and carrots are key determinants of the successes and shortcomings of environmental policy in China.


Week 16
Class: Conclusion

Watch excerpts from hit propaganda film Amazing China and discuss the pathways that China can be expected to take in terms of environmental decision-making and management.

Case study due at noon on the last day of the program

Course Materials
Readings


Media Resources

Under the Dome, documentary by Chai Jing. 2015.

Amazing China, documentary. 2018.