

Course **Biology 538, Environmental Policy and Regulation**
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General Course Information

Lecture	T/TH, 3:00-3:15 in P148
Bio 538 <i>Web</i>	Blackboard Supplement (https://blackboard.sdsu.edu)

Office Hours

Tuesday and Thursday, 12:30-1:30 pm (before class)

If you cannot meet with me at the scheduled times, please arrange an appointment.

The best way to reach me is via email, but feel free to talk with me after class or contact me by phone.

Textbooks and Course Materials

(Required) Environmental Law and Policy, 2nd Edition by Salzman and Thompson. This environmental law text provides a general “big picture” discussion of the major environmental laws, highlighting the significant cases and readings that have helped shape the modern implementation and interpretation. This book will be supplemented by lectures in class, providing more detail on major environmental laws. Problems or questions are provided at the end of each section, and will be used to evaluate your understanding throughout the semester. They will often serve as in-class quizzes. Available at **SDSU Bookstore**.

*Additional supplemental readings will be provided throughout the semester. They will be posted on Blackboard or provided during class. Some of these assignments will include researching websites or other online materials.

General Overview

Providing a comprehensive review in environmental law is challenging. The laws are constantly being revised, and court cases often interpret the intent. In addition, a solid understanding of these laws requires a strong foundation in administrative law and procedure, Constitutional law, Torts, and common law (just to name a few). As you will find out, the law is also subject to interpretation. Unlike some aspects of science, the standard for interpretation is really dependent on the person(s)...and not everyone agrees. This makes teaching (and learning) the law somewhat difficult.

But don't let this scare you off! I expect a diversity of students in this course, with varied backgrounds in law and policy. Therefore, I will make sure that all the necessary background information is covered in as little or as much detail as needed by ALL students. The goal is not to force you to become environmental lawyers, but rather to help you, as scientists, better understand the law. As you will find out, many misconceptions and misinterpretations of the law abound in conservation biology and ecology. Hopefully this will assist you in your understanding and appreciation of the law, and provide a foundation on which to build your future careers.

After taking this course students should be able to:

- Apply basic concepts from environmental law to topics in areas like conservation or watershed management planning
- Demonstrate an ability to understand, research, and evaluate an environmental problem and apply environmental law concepts
- Understand how science and policy informs law, regulation, management, and decision-making
- Evaluate projects for their potential impacts to the environment and which environmental laws potentially apply to the project
- Recommend reasonable solutions to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential impacts, with an emphasis on reasonably feasible solutions
- Demonstrate the ability to discuss and evaluate environmental issues both verbally and written
- Apply experiences from other courses, internships, or employment to real-world situations

Grading Policy

I expect the majority of students will receive grades in the B range. Please remember that long-standing University policy considers a grade of A to be indicative of "outstanding achievement; available only for the highest accomplishment," while a grade of B indicates a "praiseworthy performance; definitely above average." Of course a C is considered average.

Attendance will be taken at each class. More than two unexcused absences may result in a reduction of your grade by half a letter. For example, if you miss multiple classes, and your score would have been a B+, your final grade may be lowered to a B. Participation in class discussions is an integral part of the learning process in a law course.

For most lectures, a number of students will be randomly assigned as "experts" for that subject area for that lecture. A portion of your grade (10%) will be based on your ability to be an expert on that subject, and discuss that day's materials. This doesn't mean that the rest of you can skip the readings for that day!

To make sure that everyone is keeping up with the readings and lectures, up to five unannounced quizzes will be given throughout the semester, mostly to judge your understanding of the subject matter, and to encourage regular attendance and preparation.

The legislative review assignment requires you to analyze proposed environmental legislation currently in the assembly or senate in California. This is an individual assignment that will be discussed in class.

The group project will be based on a case study and an analysis of environmental impact reports. Students will work in groups of 3-4, and individual grades will be based on the group's overall effort and write-up of their analysis.

A final written exam will be given at the end of the semester. This will be based on a couple of case studies or scenarios that you will be asked to critically evaluate. This will be open book, and open notes.

Your grades will be posted on Blackboard as they become available, allowing you (and me) to assess your progress throughout the semester. Please be sure to see me if you are having any difficulty in the course.

Final Grades will be calculated using the following:

"Expert" Day	25 points
Quizzes (5)	50 points
Legislative Review	25 points
Group Project	50 points
Final Exam	100 points

TOTAL 300 points

A = 100-95	C- = 73-70
A- = 90-94	D+ = 69-67
B+ = 89-87	D = 66-64
B = 86-84	D- = 63-60
B- = 83-80	F < 59
C+ = 79-77	
C = 76-74	

Notes on Grading

Please check the grade for each assignment for errors. I require that any concerns (errors, disputes) be brought to my attention within 2 weeks. Please double check your grade against the posted grades recorded on the Blackboard.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct has rarely been a problem, and warning you about the consequences may seem unnecessary and perhaps even offensive. The University takes standards of integrity very seriously. Please review the information on students' rights and responsibilities. The guidelines are on the website of the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities and the Judicial Procedures Office. I am very strict with regard to cheating and plagiarism.

Missed Quizzes and Assignments

If illness or other serious problem beyond your control prevents you from taking a quiz, you are expected to provide some kind of verification of the reason, such as a note from student health services. Missing a quiz because your employer wants you to work is not an adequate justification. Arrangements will be made so that you are not penalized for missing a quiz if you have a bona fide reason for having done so. However, no make-ups will be given for missed writing assignments, activities, and quizzes. Assignments will only be accepted in class. Absolutely **NO** assignments will be accepted by email. All assignments will be due at the beginning of class. If you cannot turn it in at that time, make sure you contact me to make arrangements, or have a friend drop it off. If you do miss a quiz or in class assignment for a valid and verified reason, your final course points will be adjusted so that you are not penalized for missing it. You are only allowed to miss one quiz during the semester (with a valid reason). If this becomes a problem, you must contact me as soon as possible.

Dropping

The last day to drop without penalty is **September 14th**. Unfortunately, the last day to drop without the risk of penalty comes very early in the semester. If you are unsure what to do, please feel free to talk with me about your concerns. Drop/Add procedures are listed on the SDSU website.

Study Tips

Ask Questions!	Ask questions in lecture. There is no such thing as a dumb question.
Make a Binder	Keep your notes, lecture handouts, and other information organized.
Be prepared	Read the appropriate sections of the book or supplemental materials <u>before</u> lecture. Come to class prepared for a quiz!
Learn Actively	Make study sheets, take notes on the book. Be an active learner.
Collaborate	Work together to solve problems.

Any changes to this Syllabus will be announced in class and updated on Blackboard

BIOL 538 - Academic Calendar

Date	Topic	Assignment Due/Reading
9/1	Introduction to the Socratic Method and Law	
9/3	What is Environmental Law?	Personal Information / Chapter 1
9/8	Environmental History, Economics, and Ethics	Chapter 2
9/10	Group Projects Discussion	Assigned Readings
9/15	NO CLASSES	
9/17	Common and Administrative Law	Chapter 3
9/22	NEPA	Chapter 11
9/24	CEQA/Group Projects	Assigned Readings
9/24	Air Law	Chapter 4
9/29	Air Law	Chapter 4
10/1	Water Law	Chapter 5
10/6	Water Law	Chapter 5
10/8	Endangered Species Act	Chapter 9
10/13	Habitat Conservation Planning & NCCP	Assigned Readings
10/15	Group Projects Discussion	None
10/20	Waste Law - Toxic Substances	Chapter 6
10/22	Waste Law - Waste Management	Chapter 7
10/27	<i>Waste Law Guest Speaker</i>	Assigned Readings
10/29	Group Presentations	Group Projects Due
11/3	Group Presentations	None
11/5	Energy Law	Chapter 10
11/10	Watershed Management	Assigned Readings
11/12	San Diego River Watershed	Assigned Readings
11/17	NAFTA	Chapter 8
11/19	<i>Guest Speaker</i>	Legislative Review Due
11/24	NO CLASSES	
11/26	NO CLASSES	
12/1	Environmental Law and Sustainability	Chapter 10
12/3	<i>Sustainability-Guest Speaker</i>	Assigned Readings
12/8	Global Climate Change Policy	Assigned Readings
12/10	Exam Review	None
12/15	Final Exam 1:00pm	Final Exam

An additional 100 points will be awarded throughout the semester in five quizzes.
This schedule is subject to change. You will be notified well in advance of any changes.