TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-CORPUS CHRISTI
College of Science & Engineering
Department of Physical & Life Sciences
Environmental Laws & Regulations
COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Title: ESCI 4301.001 - Environmental Laws & Regulations
ESCI 5302.001 - Environmental Laws & Regulations

Semester: Fall 2013 _CLASROOM Sections Only
Instructor: H.A. Tony Wood

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Official Room Assignment: Not Applicable (On-Line Course)

Class Hours: The course will meet weekly from 5:30-8:00 CST on Mondays.

Course Description: Environmental laws and regulations establish the parameters of environmental resource management for our society and establish the framework under which corporations and other organizations operate and under which environmental professionals work. This is an extremely important course for environmental science majors and is recommended for anyone expecting to work in areas related to environmental policy, regulation, or management. This course requires extensive readings from the text, weekly studies of regulatory agency websites, and a review of briefings and presentations each week. The successful student will gain an understanding of the major legal, regulatory, historical, and policy frameworks that define environmental programs and regulations in the United States. A practical review of environmental regulatory compliance and enforcement, as well as the successes of such programs will also be discussed. International environmental treaties, regulations, and agreements, and their implications for the United States may also be discussed as a part of this course.


Prerequisite: Successful completion of a high school or collegiate level course in U.S. Government, or an understanding of tri-partite multi-level Governments as practiced in the U.S. constitutional republic, or permission of the instructor.

Course Objectives: Successful participation and study in this course will enable students to:
1. Understand how environmental laws and regulations are developed.
2. Know which agencies regulate environmental laws.
3. Demonstrate how to locate specific environmental laws and regulations.
4. Understand the primary components of major environmental laws including CAA, CWA, RCRA, CERCLA and NEPA.
5. Read and interpret environmental regulatory permits and reporting forms.
6. Understand how environmental compliance inspections are conducted.
7. Know in considerable detail how environmental regulations affect one specific industry of the student’s choosing.

**Course Requirements:**
1. This is a traditional classroom course. However there is a parallel online course. If you are unable to attend lectures then it is the student’s responsibility to be familiar with the course materials anyway. Students may be able to cover the required subject matter and participation requirements by participating in online discussions.
2. Readings - A weekly reading assignment must be completed. Federal environmental laws will be studied individually, with a focus each week on one area of the law. Many of these readings will be directly from the textbook. Others will be special assignments by the instructor.
3. Briefings & Lectures - One or more PowerPoint briefing(s) will be provided each week by the instructor. Students are required to review the briefing(s) and will be responsible for knowing and understanding the content. The subject matter covered in classroom discussions may be incorporated into the tests.
4. Internet Research - Specific websites pertinent to the weekly topic will be identified each week. On other occasions the students will be given a topic and must research and be able to discuss relevant websites that they have found. Students must share these websites with other classmates and may be asked to discuss them.
5. Participation – Regular weekly class attendance is not mandatory but class participation is mandatory. This may be accomplished by engaging in course discussions in the classroom or on the course blog.
6. Course Assignments - There will be 3 major assignments: Current Events, Agency, and Industry
   a. Essay - A three-page, single spaced, essay describing an International, Federal, State, regional, or tribal regulatory agency with environmental responsibilities (other than the USEPA) will be required of each student. These essays should describe the roles and responsibilities of the selected agency, its organizational structure (with organization chart), and include contact information (address, phone, website, etc.). For extremely large agencies, a smaller subset of the agency should be chosen.
   b. Current Events Folder - Each student will prepare an environmental regulations current-events folder. Each student should contribute at least one article related to current events in environmental law and should post it to the online discussion board each week. These postings should relate to laws and regulations, not just environmental issues. The weekly posting in the folder should include the web citation and a brief discussion (1-3 paragraphs) explaining why this article is relevant to the course topic. Students should post their weekly current events for other students to see. (A minimum of 10 articles over 13 weeks are required.) The student should post a one-page listing of articles and their dates (like a Table of Contents) at the end of the semester. Identify your article, its link, and how many students commented on your article for each posting. This assignment to review articles and post them should be done weekly, not all at the same time or using the same resource(s). Each student should review the other student’s postings and make a substantive comment to at least two other student’s postings each week.
   c. Industry Report – Each student will select a specific industry within NAICS Code Sectors 11-33 for their focus over the entire semester. The student will profile this industry, its products, and its potential for affecting the environment. The student will research how each federal law we discuss could affect that specific industry, which regulations apply, and
what permits are required. Students should explore what engineering controls and other changes their industry has made, and at what cost, to assure compliance. Page limits: 10-20 pages, single spaced, completed in APA format.

7. Exams - There will be three major examinations in this course. The exams will be based upon the readings, briefings, assigned websites, current events, and class discussions. Makeup exams will be penalized by 10 points per week and will not be the same as the rest of the class took.

**Graduate Credit Requirements:**

In addition to the above requirements graduate students will be required to attend at least one environmentally oriented public meeting. The meeting should relate to natural resource regulation and/or management. Regulated and managed resources may include water, air, soil, or minerals. Regulatory issues may include resource management, waste, pollution control, or energy. The student will identify the resource and its relevance to this course, describe the hosting organization, and indicate the date and frequency of organizational meetings. The student will identify at least some of the key board members and stakeholders, describe one or more topics on the agenda in detail, and explain the expected outcome of the agenda item. Finally, the student must identify the relevance of the organization and its discussions to pertinent federal and state regulations. Possible examples of acceptable public meetings include meetings on specific environmental issues; or recurrent meetings with some environmental topics on the agenda such as city council, water board, municipal planning, parks, LEPC, or other similar meetings.

If a student is unable to attend any meetings related to the environment then alternative assignments may be discussed and mutually agreed upon with the professor. An example of a possible alternative assignment would be a thorough review of an environmental issue posted for public comment and making a personal written comment on the subject.

A short written report must be submitted after attending the meeting and a 12-25 slide PowerPoint briefing will be presented to the class between the 10th week and the end of the semester. This briefing will include discussions of the relevance of the meeting or comment, what the student gained from the experience, and what networking opportunities were encountered.

**General Information:**

**Academic Integrity and Honesty:** All students are expected to conform to college-level standards of ethics, academic integrity and honesty. By enrolling in this course, you agree to be bound by the Regulations and Procedures published in the TAMU-CC STUDENT HANDBOOK.

*Notice to Students with Disabilities:* Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability that requires such accommodations please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Driftwood 101, at 825-5816. If you need and qualify for disability accommodations in this online class, please notify me as soon as possible.

**ACADEMIC ADVISING:** The College of Science and Engineering requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in the Faculty Center.
*** Grade Appeal Process. As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamu.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

Evaluation Criteria:
- Discussion Participation 5%
- Environmental Agency Essay 10%
- Environmental Laws & Regs Current Events Notebook 10%
- Industry Report 25%
- Exam 1 15%
- Exam 2 15%
- Final Exam 20%

Course Outline:

TOPICS & TENTATIVE SCHEDULE
This schedule is intended to serve as general guidance. It will be expanded over the course of the semester, especially if current events offer opportunities for real-time lesson development. Student abilities, extended discussions on specific and current topics, or other factors may result in some adjustments to this schedule.

Week 1
- Introduction
- Discussion 1: Introductions & Expectations
- Briefing: Course Introduction & Expectations
- Syllabus Overview & Questions
- Overview of Textbook

Week 2
- Reading: Administrative Law (Chap. 1)
- Briefing: Environmental Compliance Inspections & Preparing for a Regulatory Inspection
- Industry Selection Due (NAICS Sectors 11-33)
- Discussion 2: Why and how do we regulate? For the industry you have selected, discuss which historical era of environmental regulation and management they are currently living in and why.
- Assignments: Select Agency for Essay
Week 3 – National Environmental Policy Act
- Agency Summary Essays Due
- Reading: National Environmental Policy Act and Environmental Impact Statements (Chap 2)
- Visit and explore the USEPA NEPA Website http://www.epa.gov/compliance/basics/nepa.html
- Discussion re: NEPA as it applies to the selected industry
- Review the course NEPA Briefing

Week 4 – RCRA & TSCA
- Reading: Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (Chap 3)
- Visit and explore the USEPA RCRA Websites
  - http://www.epa.gov/lawsregs/laws/rcra.html
  - NOTE: the sector information will be helpful to you in preparing your industry report throughout the semester.
- Discussion re: Hazardous waste generated and TSDF sites used by your industry
- Continue your current events blog every week. 10 of 13 are required.
- Quiz 1

Week 5 - CERCLA
- Reading: Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (Chap 4)
- Superfund Amendments & Reauthorization Act
- Discussion: Superfund sites near you

Week 6 Exam 1

Week 7 - CAA
- Reading: Clean Air Act (Chap 5)
- Discussion: The difference between stratospheric and tropospheric ozone

Week 8 - CWA
- Reading: Clean Water Act (Chap 6)

Week 9 – ESA & EPCRA
- Reading: Endangered Species Act
- Reading: Emergency Planning & Community Right to Know Act

Week 10
- Exam 2
- Grad student Presentations

Week 11
- Video: Frontline-Climate of Doubt
- Grad student Presentations

Week 12
- Grad Student Presentations
- Current Environmental Events Notebooks Due
- Industry Reports Due

Week 13
- Grad Student Presentations
- Review

FINAL EXAM