

ENV891 – Topics in Environmental Regulation
Distributional Impacts of Environmental and Energy Regulation
Spring 2021
M 12:00-1:15 pm Eastern Time
Field Auditorium
Grainger Hall

Faculty

Lori Snyder Bennear

Grainger Hall 5118

ENV891 explores current topics in environmental regulation. Each time the course is offered the instructor will select one topic to study in detail. Students may take the course more than one time for credit as long as the topic is different.

Course Summary – Spring 2021

For the Spring 2021 semester the focus of the course will be on measuring and assessing the distributional impacts of environmental and energy policies/regulations. The course will begin with an overview of what is meant by distributional impacts; how they are measured, including issues in measurement; and the statutory and executive orders that require distributional analysis for federal regulations.

Following this overview, we will delve into distributional impacts of many types of environmental and energy policies and regulations from policies governing extraction of resources to impacts of policies concerning consumption of goods/services.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course students will:

1. Understand how distributional impacts of environmental/energy policies are measured.
2. Understand the limitations and weaknesses in current measures of distributional impacts.
3. Know the key statutory and executive order requirements for distributional analysis for U.S. Federal regulations.

4. Understand the current literature on distributional impacts of many types of environmental and energy policies/regulations.

Course Requirements

Students must be able to attend all class sessions except in the case of illness or an unexpected and unavoidable conflict (e.g., death in the family NOT a conference you want to go to). The seminar is heavily dependent on student participation, which includes reading all required materials, preparing for class discussions, and productive contributions to class discussion. Each week there will be readings posted on the Sakai site as well as a set of questions to consider while reading the articles, book chapters, etc. The class period will be spent discussing the readings and making connections across topics.

Each week there will be a short assessment that must be completed by Monday at 11:59 pm. The assessments will cover readings from that week.

Students will be divided into 5 groups and each group will research, write a paper (fewer than 20 pages double-spaced) and make a 12 minute presentation on some aspect of the distributional impacts of climate policy. Students will complete a group evaluation exercise to ensure that all students contribute to the final proposal and presentation. Grades will be given to the group, except in cases where the group evaluation reveals significant disparities in effort.

Grading:

25% Class Participation

15% Weekly Assessments

30% Group Paper

30% Group Presentation

Schedule

January 25— Course Overview and Introduction to Distributional Impacts

February 1— Regulatory Requirements for Measuring Distributional Impacts

February 8— Distributional Impacts of Extraction

February 15— Distributional Impacts of Generation

February 22 – Distributional Impacts of Transmission Infrastructure – Pipelines and Wires

March 1 – Distributional Impacts of Disposal – Hazardous Waste and Coal Ash

March 8 – Distributional Impacts of Household Exposures – Lead and other Hazards

March 15 – Distributional Impacts of Household Exposures – Efficiency

March 22 – Distributional Impacts of Consumption – Product Standards

March 29 – Distributional Impacts of Consumption – GMOs

April 5 – Distributional Impacts of Markets – Electricity Restructuring

April 12 – Wellness Day

April 19 – Presentation of team projects