

Princeton University
Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs
Science, Technology and Environmental Policy (STEP) Program
Fall, 2002

WWS-584
Methods in Science, Technology and Environmental Policy
Room 014 Robertson Hall
Mondays 7:00 – 10:00 PM
(first class meets Friday September 13, 2002)

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Overview: As science and technology grow more pervasive in daily life and as the natural environment is increasingly stressed by human activities, it grows ever more important for many policy decisions to be informed by sound science. This course presents a set of basic theories, methods and tools for analyzing technical policy issues with an emphasis on environmental issues. Topics include: order-of-magnitude estimation; modeling for policy evaluation; risk assessment and risk communication; and analysis of science assessments for policy makers on stratospheric ozone depletion, climate change and long-range transport of air pollution.

The goal of this course is to improve the students' ability, confidence and judgment in the use of science in policy applications. The course is intended both for students with significant technical training as well as for those with less technical background but with an interest in better understanding how science can be effectively used to inform policy making. Students should leave the course with an increased understanding of how technical information can be used to inform the policy process, an ability to ask questions necessary to differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate claims, and the confidence to do so.

Prerequisites: Students should be comfortable with mathematics and statistics at the level of WWS 507. In addition, some exposure to basic chemistry would be useful as would familiarity with microcomputer tools, including spreadsheets and graphical packages. *Familiarity* is all that is required, however. The tools necessary for analysis of the issues covered in the course will be taught as needed.

Course format: There will be one three-hour meeting per week divided, very roughly, between a lecture, discussion and practical application. There will also be a precept each week to prepare for and go over homework.

Homework: There will be homework assignments approximately every other week which will include back-of-the-envelope calculations, computer modeling exercises, and technical policy memos.

Final Project: The course will culminate in a final project that makes use of the techniques taught in the course. The project will involve a technical analysis in support of specific policy recommendations. Depending on the diversity of student interest, this project will be part of a larger course project or will be an independent paper.

Grading: Grades will be based on homework, class participation and presentations, an oral mid-term exam and the final project. The oral mid-term will be adjusted to the background and interests of each student. The following percentages will be used:
Homework: 30%
Final Project: 30%
Class participation and presentations 25%
Oral midterm exam 15%

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Week 1: Friday September 13. Introduction and Overview.

Class:

Course overview. The role of science, technology and environmental issues in modern society. How is science used (and misused) in policy making?

Precept:

Review of basic science and math topics.

Required Readings:

E.O. Wilson, *The Future of Life* (2002)
Chapter 2 "The Bottleneck", pp.22-41;
Chapter 7 "The Solution", pp. 149-189.

Frank von Hippel, *Citizen Scientist* (1991)
"Scientists as Citizens", pp. 3-15
"Peer Review of Public Policy", pp. 16-29;
"The Advisors Dilemma", pp. 30-39.

MODELING MODULE:

Computer models are becoming increasingly pervasive tools for analyzing complex phenomenon to inform policy decisions. However, it is often difficult to determine the accuracy of their predictions. In this module we will construct and evaluate simple models in order to demystify the modeling process and learn how to evaluate their results. We will start with "back-of-the-envelope" and order-of-magnitude estimation, and from there developing steady-state, computer-spreadsheet, and stock and flow models. The culmination will be the use of the integrated assessment RAINS-EUROPE model which was used by the European community in their negotiations to control acid rain. Emphasis will be placed both on constructing and evaluating models, and on their use and misuse in the policy process. Modeling exercises will be oriented around environmental problems with background on air and water pollution and risk assessment provided in lectures.

Week 2. Monday September 23.

Class:

Use and misuse of basic quantitative methods. General approaches and simple dynamics: box models, steady-state and non- steady-state models, stocks and flows. Applications to air and water pollution.

Precept:

STELLA introduction, tutorial and modeling session.

Required Readings:

Harte, J. (1985) Consider a spherical cow: a course in environmental problem solving, Chapter 1, p. 1-44.

Soltzberg, L., The Dynamic Environment, computer models to accompany Consider a spherical cow, pp. 1-22, 52-67.

Reference Reading:

High Performance Systems (1992), STELLA II: Introduction to Systems Thinking (High Performance Systems, Hanover, NH, chapters 1-6 (pp. 1 – 102)

Week 3. Monday September 30.

Class:

Complex models are becoming commonplace in a diverse range of technical and non-technical policy areas. To what extent are these models useful, and to what degree do they obscure important components of the situation? How can we evaluate them? How much can we rely on the answers they provide?

Precept:

Testing the stability and utility of a simple global change forecast model. Introduction to the World3 model.

Required Readings:

Meadows, D. H., Meadows, D.L. and Randers, J. (1992) *Beyond the limits*.

Week 4. Monday October 7.

Class:

Air pollution resulting from fossil fuel combustion - aerosols, acid rain, smog. Inter-connections between energy, air pollution, and climate change.

Precept:

Overview of links between energy use, climate change and air pollution, particularly acid rain formation. Introduction to the RAINS (Regional Air Pollution Information and Simulation) model.

Required Readings:

Graedel, T. E., Crutzen, P.J. (1997) Atmosphere, Climate and Change,
Chapter 3 “Chemistry in the Air”, pp.34-57.
Chapter 5 “Changing Chemistry”, pp. 89-111
Chapter 6 “Predicting the Near Future”, pp.113-140.

Supplementary Reading:

Graedel, Thomas E. and Paul J. Crutzen. *Atmospheric Change: an Earth Systems Perspective*. New York: W. H. Freeman and Company. 1993.

Week 5. October 14.**Class:**

Description of local and long-range transport of air pollution. Introduction to the integrated assessment model RAINS for analyzing alternative strategies to reduce acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone in Europe. RAINS combines a variety of information on energy technologies, sulfur dioxide emissions, transport, impacts and economics that are relevant to the development of cost-effective emission control strategies in Europe. It was used as a tool in the international negotiations of the Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP) agreement.

Precept:

Tutorial on RAINS model.

Required Readings:

Skim information at: <http://www.iiasa.ac.at/~rains/index.html>

RISK ASSESSMENT MODULE:

Science and technology decision making routinely involves uncertainty and the evaluation of hazards. This module introduces a set of risk assessment tools commonly employed in public health, environmental, military and industrial applications. We will examine probabilistic and exposure assessment methods. We will also explore the critical step of risk prioritization and communication, both as a tool for ‘public interest science’ and as it is utilized to legitimize/evaluate/inform political decisions.

Week 6. October 21.**Class:**

Methods for estimating and prioritizing risks.

Readings:

Articles are in:

Glickman, T. S., Gough, M. (eds.) Readings in Risk,

Morgan, Granger *Probing the Question of Technology-Induced Risk*, p.5-16.

Morgan, Granger, *Choosing and Managing Technology-Induced Risk*, p. 17-29.

Fischhoff, B., C. Hope, S. R. Watson, *Defining Risk*, p. 30-41.

Kelman, S. *Cost-benefit analysis: an ethical critique*, pp. 129-137.

Precept:

Preliminary discussion of course project

FALL BREAK

Week 7. November 4.

Class:

Risk/benefit analysis and cost/benefit analysis. Estimating exposure, dose and response to toxins.

Required Reading:

Vose, D. *Monte Carlo Risk Analysis Modeling*, in Fundamentals of Risk Analysis and Risk Management, Lewis Publishers, 1996.

Cifuentes, L., et al. Hidden Health Benefits of Greenhouse Gas Mitigation, *Science*, 293, 1257-1258, 2001.

Hall, J. V., et al. *Valuing the Health Benefits of Clean Air*, *Science*, vol. 255, pp. 812-816, 1992.

Supplementary Reading:

Rabl, Ari, and Spadaro, J. Public Health Impact of Air Pollution and Implications for the Energy System, *Ann. Rev. Energy Environ.* 25:601:627, 2000.

Pope, C.A., et al., Lung Cancer, Cardiopulmonary Mortality, and Long-term Exposure to Fine Particulate Air Pollution., *JAMA*, 287, 1132:1141, 2002.

Kammen and Hassenzhal, Should We Risk It? pp. 122-152.

Precept:

Crystal Ball and Monte Carlo laboratory Session

Week 8. Monday November 11.

Class:

Risk communication and risk policy

Required Readings:

Articles are in:

Glickman, T. S., Gough, M. (eds.) Readings in Risk.

Plough, A., Krimsky, S. *The emergence of risk communication studies: social and political context*, pp. 223-231.

Sandman, P. M. *Getting to Maybe: Some communications aspects of siting hazardous waste facilities*, pp. 233- 245.

SCIENCE ASSESSMENTS FOR POLICY MAKING MODULE

The scientific community is increasingly being asked to prepare state-of-the-science summaries to inform policy-makers of the current understanding of technical issues. How influential are these assessments? What is the best way to make use of them? How can they best inform policy decisions?

Week 9. November 18

Class:

What are the role of science assessments? How can they be used effectively in the policy process? Overview of major mechanisms for obtaining science assessments.

Precept:

Description of effective design of a technical policy memo.

Required Readings:

Morgan MG, Houghton A, Gibbons JH. Science and government - Improving science and technology advice for Congress, *Science*, 293 1999-2000, 2001.

Cash, David and Clark, William. From Science to Policy: Assessing the Assessment Process. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Faculty Research Working Papers Series, RWP01-045, November 2001.

Sarewitz, Daniel. Frontiers of Illusion: Science, Technology and the Politics of Progress, chapter 5: The Myth of Authoritativeness, 1996, p. 71-96.

Week 10. November 25, Stratospheric Ozone Depletion and the Montreal Protocol

Class: International panels of experts on the science of ozone depletion, technology options to replace CFCs, effects of stratospheric ozone loss and the economics of substitutes were used to evaluate the impacts of stratospheric ozone depletion, and the feasibility and costs of phasing out the production of CFCs. The Montreal Protocol is one of the few international environmental success stories. Why did it work so well? What can we learn from this of relevance to other international environmental treaties?

Week 11. December 2, Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Class: What is the IPCC? How is it different than other science advisory panels? How much of decisions regarding climate are based on science and how much on politics? How certain are we climate change is occurring relative to our certainty regarding stratospheric ozone loss?

Precept: Workshop session for class project.

Reading:

Parson, Edward. The Technology Assessment Approach to Climate Change, Issues in Science and Technology, National Academy of Sciences, XVIII,4, 65-72, 2002.

Summary for Policymakers. Climate Change 2001: The Scientific Basis, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2001. pp. 1-18. Also, skim the next chapter: Technical Summary, pp. 21-79. *Choose one area with which to be sufficiently familiar that you can summarize the issue for the class.*

Summary for Policymakers. Climate Change 2001: Synthesis Report, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, pp. 1-34, 2001.

Week 12. December 9, Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (cont.)

Class: Concluding lecture and discussion.

READING PERIOD

Final presentations will be made during reading period.

Required Texts:

Graedel, T. E., Crutzen, P.J. Atmosphere, Climate and Change, Scientific American Library, New York, 1997.

Harte, John. Consider a Spherical Cow: A Course in Environmental Problem Solving, University Science Books, 1988.

Soltzberg, L.J. The Dynamic Environment, Computer Models to Accompany 'Consider a Spherical Cow', University Science Books, 1996.

Glickman, T.S., Gough, M. (eds.) Readings in Risk, Resources for the Future, Baltimore, MD, 1990.

Von Hippel, Frank. Citizen Scientist, Simon and Schuster, 1991.

Wilson, Edward O. The Future of Life. Alfred A. Knopf, NY, 2002.

Recommended Texts (All of the following material is on reserve in Stokes Library):

Kammen, D. M., Hassenzahl, D. M. Should We Risk It? Exploring Environmental, Health, and Technological Problem Solving, Princeton University Press, 1999.

High Performance Systems, STELLA II: Introduction to Systems Thinking, High Performance Systems, Hanover, NH, 1992.

Climate Change 2001, The Scientific Basis, Contribution of Working Group I to the third assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Edited by J.T. Houghton, et al., Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Climate Change 2001 : Impacts, Adaptations, and Vulnerability, Contribution of WGII to the third assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, edited by McCarthy. et al., Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Climate Change 2001: Mitigation, Contribution of Working Group III to the third assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Edited by Metz, et al., Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Climate Change 2001: Synthesis Report, Contribution of Working Groups I, II, and III to the third assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, edited by Robert Watson, Cambridge University Press, 2001.