Course Description and Objectives:
A full generation of Americans has come of age since the original Earth Day in 1970. In that time, the Environmental Protection Agency, and hundreds of other state and local government regulatory agencies were created and expanded; the U.S. Congress and state legislatures have passed scores of wide-ranging, ecologically-oriented laws; our nation has entered into treaties and agreements with other nations to address some of the pressing environmental quality concerns that cross international boundaries; the American public and media’s concern and attention toward these issues have grown and been transformed; and a seemingly countless number of environmentally-concerned interest groups and think tanks have emerged and evolved, among so many other significant developments.

With ever-expanding populations both domestically and globally, technological advances and innovations, and potentially depleting natural resources, the 21st century promises to present new environmental challenges and opportunities to governments, businesses, and citizens both here and abroad.

Our primary purpose in this course is to examine in depth the environmental policy-making process, or cycle, and to determine how this process informs our broad understanding of the American political system and political culture (values and ideals). While this is a course centered around the study of American Politics, we will utilize at various times historical, sociological, philosophical, economic, legal, scientific, and approaches of other disciplines to enrich our understanding of the topics explored.

Through assigned readings, lectures, class discussions and activities, required videos, written homework, a midterm examination, critical examination of classmates’ work, and a final research paper (topic subject to instructor’s approval), we will 1) analyze, compare, and contrast the federal, state, and local policy-making processes for varied environmental issues; 2) explore the intersection between science, ethics, and policy; and 3) investigate the perspectives, resources, and strategies of cooperative and competing stakeholders in these political struggles (elected officials, environmental activists, business leaders, agricultural interests, government regulators, impacted residents or employees, etc.). While emphasis will often be placed on the American West, and the state of California in particular, students will have an opportunity to explore other interests through their final research papers and presentations.

While improving reading comprehension skills on matters of historical and contemporary environmental policy importance, students should also develop critical thinking skills by
exploring the frameworks, political models, theories, and evidence discussed, as well as cultivate their research, oral presentation, and writing capabilities.

**Required Texts:**

*Note: Additional required reading/videos will be announced, distributed or viewed in class, posted online via WebCT, and/or placed on reserve at the Walter Stiern Library. Students with known WebCT login difficulties must seek to resolve these issues with E-Learning Services (661-654-2315) as soon as possible.*

**Evaluation:**
25% - Homework & Written Class Exercises
25% - Midterm
20% - Presentations & Written Critiques
30% - Final Paper (12-15 typed, double-spaced pages) – requirements to be discussed in class; due during assigned exam period

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings (announced in class and/or posted on WebCT), and homework assignments by the designated deadlines before class meetings. Your concerted preparatory efforts and attentive class participation are a critical component of the overall learning environment for this course, and your final course grade will likely directly reflect the amount of work that you put in.

Academic dishonesty (cheating or plagiarism) will not be tolerated, and will at a minimum result in a grade of “F” on the assignment, exam, or final paper. Students will be required to submit their final papers through a designated course webpage on turnit.com (details to follow).

**Course Outline:** (subject to change)

**Week of Monday March 26 (no class Friday – Cesar Chavez Holiday)**
- Course Introduction; Policy-making Process
  - Rosenbaum, Ch. 1, 2 (partial)

**Week of Monday April 2**
- Defining Problems; Policy-making Process (cont’d)
  - Layzer, Ch. 1
  - Rosenbaum, Ch. 2 (cont’d)
  - Handout - Reisner, *Cadillac Desert, Ch. 2*

**Week of Monday April 9**
- Political Institutions and Actors; Air & Water Pollution
  - Rosenbaum, Ch. 3, 6
  - Layzer, Ch. 2
Week of Monday April 16
- Toxic Wastes, Risk Assessment, and Environmental Justice
  Layzer, Ch. 3
  Rosenbaum, Ch. 7, 4; Handout on Buttonwillow

Week of Monday April 23
- Climate Change & Global Policymaking
  Layzer, Ch. 11
  Rosenbaum, Ch. 10

Week of Monday April 30
- Regulatory Economics
  Rosenbaum, Ch. 5
  Layzer, Ch. 14

Week of Monday May 7
- Midterm Examination (Friday, May 11th)
  Layzer, Ch. 18

Week of Monday May 14
- Case Study Topics TBA ; Research Paper Activities

Week of Monday May 21
- Case Study Topics TBA ; Research Paper Activities

Week of Monday May 28 (no class Monday – Memorial Day Holiday)
- Presentations

Week of Monday June 4 (last day of classes)
- Course Wrap-up