UAB
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Environmental Governance

Code: 106782
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Environmental Sciences	OP	4

Contact

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the end of this document.

Prerequisites

This is an introductory subject in aspects of political science, public policies and governance. Consequently, no prior academic requirements can be set for its follow-up. However, the habit of reading news related to politics and administration in the written or digital press and a participatory political culture on the part of students are considered favorable.

Due to bibliographical requirements, the student must also have reading skills in English. On the other hand, the continuous assessment -with tutorials and seminars- of this subject makes attendance essential in most of its sessions. Other forms of follow-up will be considered exceptional and must be agreed with the teacher before the start of the course.

Objectives and Contextualisation

We will start assuming that the State is not the only political actor in the development of environmental policies and the promotion of sustainable development. In this sense, it seems much more appropriate to talk about environmental governance, understood as that network of political actors (public and private) and interactions between these actors, which allows decisions to be made that affect environmental policies and sustainable development.

The introductory and very synthetic nature of this subject limits the scope, but not the transcendence of its objectives. To this end, a strategic approach is needed in the design of its contents: it will not be so much about delving into technical or descriptive aspects of the subject (Political Science/Administrative Science) as about preparing the student for a political understanding of environmental problems and sustainability. The collective and conflictual (political) nature of environmental problems requires an approach that is facilitative and oriented towards transformation.

The study and understanding of the governance processes that favor the transition towards sustainability is, in short, the main objective of this subject.

More explicitly and specifically, we can list the objectives that derive from it:

Understand and assess the political nature of environmental problems and conflicts; of sustainable development as a political, economic, social and cultural commitment for the future. Identify and study the main

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political actors, their resources and instruments in the management of environmental problems and sustainability. Understand the concept of "environmental governance" in order to favor processes of "transition towards sustainability".

Learning Outcomes

1. CM41 (Competence) Apply the principal mediation techniques and key strategies from environmental conflict negotiation processes in their proper context.
2. CM43 (Competence) Analyse the inequalities based on sex/gender that different political and/or economic models of environmental management can generate.
3. KM54 (Knowledge) Recognise the extent to which economic and political factors play a role in the management of the main contemporary challenges in environmental sciences.
4. KM56 (Knowledge) Recognise advanced tools for the management of environmental problems such as the sustainable development objectives, the circular economy, degrowth and environmental negotiation.
5. SM53 (Skill) Incorporate the different types of economic and social knowledge that characterise environmental issues.
6. SM54 (Skill) Critically analyse the different political and economic models of environmental management.

Content

BLOCK 1: POLITICS AND SUSTAINABILITY

1. What is politics? Conflict management and provision of public goods. Sustainability as a public good.

2. The tragedy of the commons as a metaphor for the political management of sustainability. Sustainability and governance of the commons.

3. Politics and political power: resources and strategies. Political power, legitimacy and coercion.

4. The political system: political actors, institutions and decisions. The concept of governance.

BLOCK 2: POLICIES AND SUSTAINABILITY

5. What are public policies? Political system and public policies. Sustainability and environmental policies.

6. Who makes public policies? Political actors, resources, interests and belief systems.

7. Networks of actors and policies. The concept of a promoting coalition.

8. How are policies made? Cycle and phases of elaboration.

BLOCK 3: ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

9. The concept of governance. Environmental governance and environmental policy.

10. Environmental governance and transitions towards sustainability.

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes

Type: Directed			
Theoretical classes	38	1.52	CM43, KM54, KM56, SM53, SM54, CM43
Type: Supervised			
Text and case discussion seminars	10	0.4	CM43, KM54, KM56, SM53, SM54, CM43
Type: Autonomous			
Study	38	1.52	CM43, KM54, KM56, SM53, SM54, CM43
Text reading	30	1.2	KM54, KM56, SM53, SM54, KM54

The teaching method proposed for this subject aims to ensure that students acquire the necessary skills and abilities to achieve the aforementioned objectives. Learning will be promoted through participatory forms in class, combining conventional teaching with case studies and reading seminars.

The following types of activities will be considered:

Directed activities:

Directed activities are activities carried out in the classroom, with the presence of the teacher, and correspond to theoretical classes, which will have a participatory component on the part of the students, and for which attendance is considered necessary.

Supervised activities:

These correspond to reading seminars and case studies.

To follow the reading seminars, the student will have at their disposal an electronic reading dossier with guaranteed bibliographical links. On the indicated day, and in a group, students will have to answer some questions about the proposed readings; then these responses will be shared either in the form of debate, analysis or commentary.

Attendance at case studies and reading seminars is mandatory and any absence must be duly justified.

Likewise, the practices that form part of the assessment are also considered supervised activities.

Autonomous activities:

Autonomous activities are all those activities that the student does on his or her own and in accordance with the requirements of the course in order to successfully pass the subject, such as basic and complementary readings, study of class notes or all those other activities that complement the training achieved in this course.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Classroom participation	10%	3	0.12	CM41, CM43, SM53,

				SM54
Exams (two midterms and a retake if applicable)	40%	6	0.24	CM41, CM43, SM53, SM54
Work and participation in case studies and reading seminars	20%	10	0.4	CM43, KM54, KM56, SM54
2 individual exercises/essays	30%	15	0.6	CM41, CM43, KM54, SM54

The assessement of the subject will be carried out according to the following items:

Exams

There will be two tests on the contents of the subject and which will include both the syllabus and the readings worked on in the seminars. A mid-term exam will be held during the course, which will release material for the final exam, and a final exam. These tests will be worth 40% of the final grade for the course and can be recovered at the retake exam at end of the course. A grade lower than or equal to 4 prevents the average of the grade with the rest of the course items, and therefore entails failing the subject.

Work and participation in case studies and reading seminars

Attendance, adequate preparation of texts and participation in reading seminars will be taken into account and graded, representing 20% of the final grade, and will not be recoverable.

Individual exercises/practices

Throughout the course, two exercises/practices will be carried out, which students will prepare and defend orally in the classroom, and which will be worth 30% of the grade (15% each exercise/practice). If they do not pass them, they can be retaken at the end of the course in addition to the retake exam

Class participation

Attendance and participation in terms appropriate to the content of the subject in regular classes will be taken into account and graded, representing 10% of the final grade, and will not be retaken.

SINGLE ASSESSMENT AND GRADING OPTION

According to article 117.2 of the UAB Academic Regulations, the assessment of students who are re-taking the course may consist of a single synthesis test. This synthesis test will consist of a written exam, which will include an additional practical part, and the delivery and oral defense of an essay that will be determined by the subject teacher sufficiently in advance. Students that re-take the course can take advantage of this option, and to do so they will need to contact the teacher.

The synthesis test does not serve to increase the grade obtained through the general continued system of assessment.

Bibliography

Basic manuals in political science and public policy:

Vallès, J. M.; Martí i Puig, S. (2015): *Ciencia Política*. Barcelona: Ariel

Subirats Joan, Peter Knoepfel, Corinne Larrue, Frédéric Varone (2008): *Análisis y gestión de políticas públicas* . Barcelona: Ariel.

Subirats, J.; Dente, B. (2014) *Decisiones públicas*. Barcelona: Ariel.

Bibliography related to environmental policies, environmental conflicts and environmental governance:

Bibliography related to the environmental aspect of public policies and environmental conflicts will form the content of the reading seminars, and will be collected in an electronic dossier with bibliographical links that will be provided during the course. However, we consider that the following references can be considered as interesting readings for this subject:

Alfama E. et alt. (2007) *Per una nova cultura del territori? Mobilitzacions i conflictes territorials*, Icària: Barcelona.

Casademunt, A. (1998): *L'interès empresarial de les polítiques ambientals*. Barcelona:IEC

Dente, B. (ed.) (1995): *Environmental policy in search of new instruments*. London:Kluwer Acadaemic Publishers.

Dietz, T; Stern, P.C. (eds.) (2008): *Public Participation in Environmental Assesment and decision making.* The national Academic Press. Washington, D.C.

Font, J., Font, N. i Subirats, J. (2002): "Las Agendas 21 Locales; la experiencia de Barcelona en perspectiva comparada", en Blanco, I y Gomà, R. (eds.), *Gobiernos Localesy Redes Participativas*, Barcelona: Ariel.

Ostrom, Elinor (1990): *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action,* Cambridge University Press. (Trad.)*Elinor Ostrom* (*2000*),. *El gobierno de los bienes comunes. La evolución de las instituciones de acción colectiva*, México, UNAM-CRIM-FCE

Tello, E.; Jover, G. (2019) "Polítiques i conflictes ambientals a Catalunya 1972 - 2017" cap. 5 (pp. 83 - 98) a Gomà, R.; Subirats, J. (Coords.) (2019) *Canvi d'època i polítiques públiques a Catalunya*. Barcelona:Galàxia Gutenberg.

Jan-Peter Voss, Dierk Bauknecht, René Kemp (2006):*Reflexive governance for sustainable development,* Edward Elgar Publishing.

Software

There is no specific software for the subject.

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this link. To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PAUL) Classroom practices	1	Catalan	first semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	1	Catalan	first semester	morning-mixed