Environmental Institutions
ESM 248, Winter 2018
Professor: Mark Buntaine (buntaine@bren.ucsb.edu)
Class meeting: Tuesday / Thursday 12:30-1:45 (Bren 1424)
Office hours: Flexible, email to schedule (Bren 4422)

No Class Meeting: Th 2/15
Final Mini-Conference: TBD

Course Summary

Institutions are rules, both formal and informal, that shape interactions between individuals, groups, and organizations. Because institutions exist in a vast array of forms at many different levels, they affect nearly every aspect of environmental management. This course provides tools that can be used to analyze informal, local, national, and international institutions. By recognizing the myriad of rules that affect the design, implementation, and effectiveness of environmental management activities, you will be equipped to design successful strategies to address environmental problems in many settings.

Critical to all types of institutional analysis are the concepts of rule-making, enforcement, and monitoring. Institutions such as national constitutions, cultural practices, or organizational procedures constraint and shape how rules are made. For any rule to affect behavior, some entity must be willing to impose costs for non-compliance or provide benefits for compliance. Mechanisms of enforcement include social pressures, market demand, legal sanctions, and reputational status. To be able to enforce rules, information about compliance must be available. Monitoring produces this information and comes about through dense social relationships, government audits, private certification schemes, and voluntary reporting requirements, among many other possibilities. Institutional analysis seeks to diagnose the ways that behaviors can be shifted in desirable directions through rule-making, monitoring, and enforcement strategies. As we will see, environmental policies and management activities are seldom effective if they are not nested within supporting institutions.

Course Goals

• Analyze how formal and informal institutions affect individual and organizational behaviors in a variety of settings;
• Explore innovations in rule-making, enforcement, and monitoring, and their effects on environmental management;
• Assess the opportunities for institution building and reform at the community, domestic and global levels;
• Complete professional tasks that use institutional analysis;
• Develop professional communication skills related to institutional analysis;

Evaluation

Mini-Projects: The main goal of this course is to use institutional analysis to complete tasks found in professional settings. As such, the course is built around four mini-
projects, which will be outlined in separate documents. For each of the mini-projects, you are encouraged (but not required) to collaborate with up to two classmates. You may only collaborate with any single person one time over the four mini-projects. Everyone in a group must take full ownership of the final project and will receive the same grade, since I have no way to distinguish individual contributions. Choose your collaborators carefully.

Participation: Your active participation is important for the success of this course. Unlike a traditional lecture course evaluated by exams, sessions have been designed to build skills through active participation, discussion, and activities. I expect that you will closely read all of the assigned articles and documents before coming to class and that you will be prepared to engage in all discussions and activities. In addition, you will be required to prepare professional presentations for some mini-projects, the quality of which will factor into both your participation and assignment grades. You are expected to attend all course sessions. Talk to me beforehand if you need to miss class for a legitimate reason, otherwise absences will negatively affect your participation grade.

Mini-Project #1 (Institutional profile) 20%
Mini-Project #2 (Institutional response) 20%
Mini-Project #3 (Monitoring brief) 20%
Mini-Project #4 (Institutional proposal) 20%
Participation 20%

Assignment completion policy: You must complete all assignments to pass the course.

Re-grades: I take student evaluation seriously and do not entertain requests to re-grade assignments unless I receive a formal, written request for a re-grade that compellingly documents a serious oversight on my part. A serious oversight on my part indicates that the entire assignment should receive further attention. Your score may go up or down if I decide that an assignment needs this kind of attention, so plan accordingly. That being said, I strongly encourage you to meet with me to discuss the substance of my comments about your mini-projects.

Academic Honesty: I expect you to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. This means only turning in work that is your own and properly citing all information and ideas that you draw from others. Any assignment that does not adhere to UCSB academic honesty guidelines will not receive credit and will be referred to campus judicial procedures. See: http://judicialaffairs.sa.ucsb.edu/AcademicIntegrity.aspx
Key for types of class sessions: Discussion, Lecture, Activity, Presentations

Unit 1: Institutional Forms and Features

Session 1 (Tu 1/16) – Institutional roots of environmental problems (D)

North, Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance, Ch. 1


Discussion: Come prepared to describe an environmental problem that you care about and one reason (there may be many) that the problem has not been solved.

Session 2 (Th 1/18) – Types of institutions (L/A)


Ostrom, Governing the Commons, Ch. 2

Activity: Working in small groups, identify the most important institutions involved in producing the outcome that is assigned to your group. Bring laptops.

Session 3 (Tu 1/23) – Presentations of institutional profiles (P)

Examples of institutional profiles, recommended reading:


Mini-project #1 (Institutional Profile): identify the institutional features that affect the current situation and outcomes of an environmental resource of your choice and submit a 4-5 page institutional profile. Due Friday 1/26 @ 5pm.

Unit 2: Rule-Making

Session 4 (Th 1/25) – Self-organized institutions (L/D)

Ostrom, Governing the Commons, Ch. 6.

**Session 5 (Tu 1/30) – Governments as rule-making institutions (L/A)**


Activity: In groups, identify the advantages, disadvantages, and challenges of working through governmental legislation as a way of address the assigned environmental problem. Bring laptops.

**Session 6 (Th 2/1) – Participation and rule-making (A)**


Activity: Participatory decision-making in action. Details will be posted on GauchoSpace.

**Unit 4: Enforcement**

**Session 7 (Tu 2/6) – Strategy of enforcement (D/L)**


Suggested extra reading:

Environmental Protection Agency. 2016. National Enforcement Initiatives. Available at: [https://www.epa.gov/enforcement/national-enforcement-initiatives](https://www.epa.gov/enforcement/national-enforcement-initiatives)

**Session 8 (Th 2/8) – Market-based enforcement (D)**


Additional suggested reading:


*Mini-project #2 (Institutional Response): Analysis of an Eco-Label from the perspective of a firm or an NGO. Write a 3-4 page strategic assessment about how the firm or NGO should behave with respect to the Eco-Label based on the institutions it establishes. Due Friday 2/16 @ 5pm.*

**Session 9 (Tu 2/13) – Legal enforcement (L)**


*No Class on Th 2/15*
Session 10 (Tu 2/20) – Social enforcement (D)


Unit 3: Monitoring

Session 11 (Th 2/22) – Strategy of Monitoring (L)


Read in detail about one EPA compliance monitoring program: [https://www.epa.gov/compliance/compliance-monitoring-programs](https://www.epa.gov/compliance/compliance-monitoring-programs)

Suggested extra reading:


Session 12 (Tu 2/27) – Citizen Monitoring (L)


Session 13 (Th 3/1) – Innovations in Monitoring (Poster Session)

Background reading for some ideas:


Read the challenge: [http://www.wcuavc.com/](http://www.wcuavc.com/)

Mini-project #3 (Monitoring Brief): Write a 2-page memo to a policy-maker of interest explaining how deficiencies in monitoring arrangements are contributing to an environmental problem and suggesting ways to improve monitoring. **Due Monday 3/5 @ 5pm.**

**Building Institutions**

**Session 14 (Tu 3/6) – Institutional Failures (L/A)**


**Session 15 (Th 3/8) – Institutional Change (D)**


**Session 16 (Tu 3/13) – Development assistance and government reform (L)**


**Session 17 (Th 3/15) – Building global institutions (L)**


**Special Mini-Conference: Final Presentations**

Mini-Project #4: Create a 4–5 page proposal for building and/or reforming an institution to manage an environmental problem. Address rule-making, monitoring, and enforcement, including trade-offs between these components of institution building. **Due Friday 3/23 @ 5pm.**