

PIA2224: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Environmental Issues and Sustainable Development

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

2224

Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

The course aims to nurture critical thinking of Environmental Issues and Sustainable Development, related to Hong Kong and the region. It introduces the environmental, planning, and other services provided by the Hong Kong government, societal actors and parties in the region and beyond. More importantly, it highlights the causes of and solutions to sustainability challenges, along scientific, political, economic and social dimensions. The course will explore the rationale, policies, and organization in forming synergies in the pursuit of better quality of life. Comparative case studies between Hong Kong and other metropolitan areas around the world will offer a global perspective to the students in assessing and synthesizing best practices. By taking the course, the students are prepared to engage in debating contemporary sustainability issues from a more informed, analytical perspective.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Describing stakeholders and significance of environmental challenges as well as decision-making processes for solution finding	25	x	x	
2	Analysing and evaluating the provision of environmental, planning and other services to the Hong Kong residents and visitors from a political, social, economic, and scientific perspective	30	x	x	
3	Targeting a specific issue in Environmental Issues and Sustainable Development and creating an issue paper by adopting normative, economic, and institutional analysis	45	x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Class discussion and debate	Offer an opportunity for students to Listen to and appreciate alternative views and arguments Clarify and critically assess key concepts and arguments through exchange and interaction with others	1, 2, 3	0.5 - 1

2	Lectures	These are organized thematically to enable students to Appreciate major energy and environmental challenges and their impact on sustainability Analyse environmental issues from scientific, economic, institutional, managerial, and political perspectives	1, 2, 3	2 - 3
3	Tutorials	These cover a range of activities, including role play, debates, presentations, and open discussions to facilitate students to Relate abstract theories and concepts to analyse and assess real-life environmental issues Engage in critical evaluation of decision-making processes and interventions for addressing environmental challenges Develop the sensitivity to contextual factors and the respect for diverse perspectives in approaching a same environmental issue Sharpen their critical thinking and problem-solving skills	1, 2, 3	1
4	Film screening and the use of multi-media aids	Documentary films illustrating the need for harmony between human and nature, partnerships among environmental actors to move forward on environmental agenda, and diversity in challenges faced and approaches taken	1, 2	0.5
5	Individual essays (response papers)	Reading notes and reflection on the cultural, scientific, economic, and political aspects of environmental policy and governance.	1, 2	N.A.

6	Issue paper	Create an issue paper, integrating and applying political, economic, and institutional analysis to a specific environmental issue.	1, 2, 3	N.A.
7	Fieldtrips and site visits	Expose students to the real life setting in which environmental, planning, and other services are arranged. Organizations representative of different sectors, government, private company, think tank, and non-governmental organizations are selected for those fieldtrips and site visits.	1, 2	N.A.

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("-" for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Discussion / Debate	1, 2, 3	5	-	Yes
2	Group Presentation	1, 2, 3	30	-	No
3	Reading notes / reflection	1, 2	10	-	Yes
4	Issue paper	1, 2, 3	25	-	No
5	Test	1, 2, 3	30	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Discussion / Debate

Criterion

Knowledge/Understanding

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Participants demonstrate consistent depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding by incorporating relevant and accurate details to support the group's position.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Overall participants demonstrate depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding by incorporating relevant and accurate details to support the group's position.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Some participants demonstrate a depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding by incorporating relevant and accurate details to support the group's position.

Marginal (D)

Few participants demonstrate a depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding by incorporating relevant and accurate details to support the group's position.

Failure (F)

Participants do not demonstrate a depth and breadth of knowledge and understanding by incorporating relevant and accurate details to support the group's position.

Assessment Task

Discussion / Debate

Criterion

Ability to respond to questions from the audience

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Each member of the group effectively and thoroughly responded to audience questions and demonstrated understanding of the issues.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Some members of the group effectively and thoroughly responded to audience questions and demonstrated understanding of the issues.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Members of the group responded to audience questions but failed to demonstrate understanding of the issues.

Marginal (D)

Members of the group failed to respond to audience questions nor demonstrate understanding of the issues.

Failure (F)

Members of the group are not willing to respond to audience questions.

Assessment Task

Presentation / discussion

Criterion

Organization

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Presentation effectively draws in the audience, expands on the group's goal or thesis, and concludes with a well-planned ending.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Presentation draws in the audience, expands on the group's goal or thesis, but does not conclude with a well-planned ending.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Presentation draws in the audience and concludes with a well-planned ending, but need improvement on expanding the group's goal or thesis.

Marginal (D)

Presentation is weak in either its introduction, expansion of detail, or conclusion.

Failure (F)

Presentation totally unstructured.

Assessment Task

Presentation / discussion

Criterion

Content

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Presentation consists of well-researched concepts supported by well-researched and articulated details/illustrations.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Presentation consists of well-researched concepts but not necessarily supported by well-researched and articulated details/illustrations.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Presentation is scant in the use of well-researched concepts, though there is evidence of well-researched and articulated details/illustrations.

Marginal (D)

Presentation does not consist of well-researched concepts nor supported by well-researched and articulated details/illustrations.

Failure (F)

Presentation does not define any concepts, provides no evidences, does not come to any conclusions.

Assessment Task

Presentation / discussion

Criterion

Use of presentation tools

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Effective use of presentation tools, including the use of links, tables and charts etc.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Moderately effective use of presentation tools.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Not very effective use of presentation tools including spelling mistakes and wrong information.

Marginal (D)

Ineffective presentation tools, including, spelling mistakes, wrong information, absence or inappropriate use of tables and charts, illegibility etc.

Failure (F)

Unacceptable

Assessment Task

Presentation / discussion

Criterion

Ability to respond to questions from the audience

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Each member of the group effectively and thoroughly responded to audience questions and demonstrated understanding of the issues.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Some members of the group effectively and thoroughly responded to audience questions and demonstrated understanding of the issues.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Members of the group responded to audience questions but failed to demonstrate understanding of the issues.

Marginal (D)

Members of the group failed to respond to audience questions nor demonstrate understanding of the issues.

Failure (F)

Members of the group are not willing to respond to audience questions.

Assessment Task

Reading notes / reflection

Criterion

Knowledge/Understanding

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Demonstrate very good understanding about the reading materials.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Demonstrate good understanding about the reading materials.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Demonstrate fair understanding about the reading materials.

Marginal (D)

Demonstrate little understanding about the reading materials.

Failure (F)

Demonstrate very little understanding about the reading materials.

Assessment Task

Reading notes / reflection

Criterion

Synthesis

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Very good synthesis and comparison across different readings.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good synthesis and comparison across different readings.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Fair synthesis and comparison across different readings.

Marginal (D)

Little synthesis and comparison across different readings.

Failure (F)

Very little synthesis and comparison across different readings.

Assessment Task

Reading notes / reflection

Criterion

Reflection

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Relate very well the readings to real life environmental issues.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Relate well the readings to real life environmental issues.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Relate the readings to real life environmental issues.

Marginal (D)

Slightly relate the readings to real life environmental issues.

Failure (F)

Do not relate the readings to real life environmental issues.

Assessment Task

Issue paper

Criterion

Understanding of concepts, relevance and integration of materials

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

All important materials clearly understood & presented. All materials relevant, examples are well chosen and presented; evidence of wide scope of reading of the subjects.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Most important points presented. Little irrelevant materials, fairly adequate illustration with examples; essential literature utilized in support of the arguments.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Some understanding of basic knowledge demonstrated. Little integration of materials & literature.

Marginal (D)

Very limited understanding of basic knowledge demonstrated. Occasionally irrelevant materials presented, some inappropriate examples, generally lacking in support from appropriate literature.

Failure (F)

Little understanding evident. Mostly irrelevant, totally lacking in support from appropriate literature.

Assessment Task

Issue paper

Criterion

Analysis and evaluative component

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

High standard of rigorous analysis and evaluation of issues & concepts

Good (B+, B, B-)

Analysis fairly adequate; study is linked to wider literature

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Superficial analysis of the basic materials

Marginal (D)

Insufficient analysis of basic materials

Failure (F)

Lacking in any analysis

Assessment Task

Issue paper

Criterion

Structure and methodology

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Very well structured in terms of its planning and execution of ideas. Methodology well constructed & implemented.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Appropriate structure developed. Methodology appropriate and followed.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Poor structure & weak logic in presentation. Weak methodology.

Marginal (D)

Lack of structure, not systematically or logically presented. Methodology not clearly set out or followed.

Failure (F)

Totally lacking in suitable structure. Methodology lacking or inappropriate.

Assessment Task

Issue paper

Criterion

Overall Quality of written presentation

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Clear, well argued and good use of illustration and other supporting information such as tables, graphs, etc.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Some appropriate illustration and other supporting information such as tables, graphs, etc.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Generally acceptable standard of presentation but some limitations.

Marginal (D)

Generally acceptable standard of presentation but some significant limitations.

Failure (F)

Unacceptable

Assessment Task

In class exam

Criterion

Content

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Provide very good answers to the questions.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Provide good answers to the questions.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Provide fair answers to the questions.

Marginal (D)

Provide acceptable answers to the questions.

Failure (F)

Provide unacceptable answers to the questions.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Environment, air pollution, water pollution, land-use, transport, governance, issue framing, stakeholder analysis, cost-benefit analysis, policy-making, public participation, intervention, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, environmental justice, quality of life, sustainable development.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Chan, Raymond K. H. 2008. "Risk, reflexivity and sub-politics: Environmental politics in Hong Kong." <i>Asian Journal of Political Science</i> no. 16 (3):260 - 275.
2	Civic Exchange. 2008. <i>A price too high: The health impacts of air pollution in Southern China</i> . Hong Kong: Civic Exchange.
3	Fay, Marianne, and World Bank. 2012. <i>Inclusive green growth : the pathway to sustainable development</i> . Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
4	Hedley, Anthony J., Sarah M. McGhee, Bill Barron, Patsy Chau, June Chau, Thuan Q. Thach, Tze-Wai Wong, Christine Loh, and Chit-Ming Wong. 2008. "Air pollution: Costs and paths to a solution in Hong Kong—Understanding the connections among visibility, air pollution, and health costs in pursuit of accountability, environmental justice, and health protection." <i>Journal of Toxicology & Environmental Health: Part A</i> no. 71 (10):544-554.
5	Lam, Kin-che, and Yi-tak Teresa Chung. 2012. "Exposure of urban populations to road traffic noise in Hong Kong." <i>Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment</i> no. 17 (6):466-472.
6	McNeill, Donald. 2014. "Airports and territorial restructuring: The case of Hong Kong." <i>Urban Studies</i> no. 51 (14):2996-3010.
7	Powell, Simon, Christine Loh, and Peiyuan Guo. 2010. <i>Falling up! Water pricing must meet true costs</i> . Hong Kong: CLSA.
8	Shove, Elizabeth, and Gordon Walker. 2010. "Governing transitions in the sustainability of everyday life." <i>Research Policy</i> no. 39 (4):471-476.
9	Steg, Linda, Jan Willem Bolderdijk, Kees Keizer, and Goda Perlaviciute. 2014. "An integrated framework for encouraging pro-environmental behaviour: The role of values, situational factors and goals." <i>Journal of Environmental Psychology</i> no. 38:104-115.
10	Taylor, C. M., S. J. T. Pollard, A. J. Angus, and S. A. Rocks. 2013. "Better by design: Rethinking interventions for better environmental regulation." <i>Science of The Total Environment</i> no. 447:488-499.
11	United Nations Development Programme. 1997. <i>Governance for sustainable human development: A UNDP policy document</i> . New York: United Nations.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Carson, Rachel. 1994. <i>Silent spring</i> . Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
2	Fay, Marianne, and World Bank. 2012. <i>Inclusive green growth : the pathway to sustainable development</i> . Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
3	Satterthwaite, David. 2013. "The political underpinnings of cities' accumulated resilience to climate change." <i>Environment and Urbanization</i> no. 25 (2):381-391.
4	Seik, Foo Tuan. 1998. "A unique demand management instrument in urban transport: The Vehicle Quota System in Singapore." <i>Cities</i> 15 (1):27-39.
5	Mazmanian, Daniel A. 2006. <i>Achieving air quality: The Los Angeles experience</i> . In <i>Task Force on Environmental Governance of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development</i> , edited by CCICED. Beijing: CCICED.
6	Weischer, Lutz. 2013. <i>Pioneering renewable energy options: Thailand takes up the challenge (Inside stories on climate compatible development)</i> . London: The Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN).
7	Hughes, Sara. 2013. "Authority structures and service reform in multilevel urban governance: The case of wastewater recycling in California and Australia." <i>Urban Affairs Review</i> no. 49 (3):381-407.
8	Kamal-Chaoui, Lamia, Fabio Grazi, Jongwan Joo, and Marissa Plouin. 2011. "The implementation of the Korean Green Growth Strategy in urban areas." In <i>OECD Regional Development Working Papers 2011/02</i> . Paris: OECD Publishing.
9	Koontz, Tomas M., and Craig W. Thomas. 2006. "What do we know and need to know about the environmental outcomes of collaborative management?" <i>Public Administration Review</i> 66:111-121.

10	Weible, Christopher M., and Richard H. Moore. 2010. "Analytics and beliefs: Competing explanations for defining problems and choosing allies and opponents in collaborative environmental management." <i>Public Administration Review</i> no. 70:756-766.
11	Cottrell, Jacqueline, Richard Bridle, Yongqiang Zhao, et al. 2013. <i>Green revenues for green energy: Environmental fiscal reform for renewable energy technology deployment in China</i> . Manitoba, Canada: International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD).
12	Frankfurt School-UNEP Centre/BNEF. 2013. <i>Global trends in renewable energy investment 2013</i> . Frankfurt: Frankfurt School of Finance & Management GmbH 2013.
13	Lall, Somik V., Nancy Lozano-Gracia, O.P. Agarwal, David Dowall, Michael Klein, and Hyoung Gun Wang. 2013. <i>Planning, connecting, and financing cities-now : Priorities for city leaders</i> . Washington, DC: World Bank.
14	UNEP. 2012. <i>Green Economy Briefing Paper: Finance</i> . Châtelaine / Geneva, Switzerland: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
15	World Economic Forum. 2013. <i>The Green Investment Report - The ways and means to unlock private finance for green growth</i> . Geneva: World Economic Forum (WEF).
16	Hoornweg, Daniel, and Perinaz Bhada-Tata. 2012. <i>What a waste: A global review of solid waste management</i> . In <i>Urban Development Series</i> , edited by Urban Development & Local Government Unit. Washington, DC: World Bank.
17	Konisky, David M. 2009. "Inequities in enforcement? Environmental justice and government performance." <i>Journal of Policy Analysis and Management</i> no. 28 (1):102-121.
18	Lai, Pong-Wai, Lai-Yan Woo, Kin-Che Lam, Wai-Ying Lee, and Tung Fung. 2007. <i>Siting and community response to locally unwanted land uses: A literature review</i> . Hong Kong: Centre for Environmental Policy and Resource Management, The Chinese University of Hong Kong.
19	Zhang, Junfeng, Denise L. Mauzerall, Tong Zhu, Song Liang, Majid Ezzati, and Justin V. Remais. 2010. "Environmental health in China: progress towards clean air and safe water." <i>The Lancet</i> no. 375:1110-1119.
20	Viel, Jean-François, Mathieu Hägi, Erika Upegui, and Lucie Laurian. 2011. "Environmental justice in a French industrial region: Are polluting industrial facilities equally distributed?" <i>Health & Place</i> no. 17 (1):257-262.