Course title: ENV 323H1 - Ontario Environmental Policy  
Winter Term 2023 (January 1, 2023 – April 30, 2023)  
Instructor: Jim Whitestone (jim.whitestone@utoronto.ca)  
Teaching Assistant: Lisa Mychajluk (lisa.mychajluk@utoronto.ca)  
Class schedule: Lectures, Monday, 10 am - 12 pm. For 2023 this course will be given live with recordings posted.  
Room No.: tbd  
Office hours: Mondays 2:30 – 4:30 pm, Room (tbd)  

Course description: Introduces students to public policy and institutional foundations of public policy in Canada, with an emphasis on environmental policy in Ontario. Provides an “insider’s” perspective on how environmental policy has been developed in Ontario.  

In this course students will be given a detailed glimpse into the internal world of the Ontario Government. This glimpse will be set in the context of current theories about the nature of government policy in advanced liberal democracies and the roles of the various competing interests or “stakeholders”.  

In particular, students will learn:  
• the over-all Ontario government organization as it pertains to environment, natural resources and energy, both in its current form and its evolution over the past twenty odd years;  
• the more detailed organization of the relevant departments – Environment, Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Municipal Affairs, Natural Resources, Energy; inter-ministry coordinating bodies; provincial agencies; the powerful central bodies (Finance, Cabinet Office and Treasury Board); and relevant administrative tribunals;  
• the internal processes used to develop and implement policy in these organizations; and,  
• the key skills used by professionals there - options papers and briefing notes. – and the application of these to specific policy issues.  

Objectives  

It is hoped that students will use the course as an opportunity to develop, with the assistance of an experienced environmental policy professional who has a detailed knowledge of Ontario environmental policies, an Options Paper that would be suitable for presenting to a decisionmaker (Cabinet) on an environmental topic of personal interest.  

The development of the paper involves four stages:
1. a short presentation of the topic as a Proposal to help each student to formulate the core environmental issue and identify suitable options and related background information;
2. the writing of a “briefing note” – a condensed version of the Options Paper;
3. mock Cabinet meeting at which some students will present their briefing notes and other students will roll-play various Cabinet members while providing feedback reflecting the various stakeholders that they represent; and
4. the writing of the finalized paper reflecting feedback on the initial proposal and briefing note including from the mock Cabinet meeting.

The specific objectives of the course are that students will:
- demonstrate the ability to write a Briefing Note;
- demonstrate understanding of key public policy concepts through the Readings Log; and,
- demonstrate the ability to write an Options Paper while being sensitive to the various perspectives/stakeholder interests of the decisionmaker (Cabinet).

**Weekly Topics**

The first 6 weeks provide the basics of what policy is and how it is developed and brought into effect in a “Westminster” style liberal representative democracy (“LRD”). The next 6 classes look at key policy areas in more depth. The last class is a summary of the course and examines the future of environmental policy in Ontario.

**WEEK 1**  Introduction
**WEEK 2**  Basic Civics – liberal parliamentary democracy
**WEEK 3**  The Canadian and Ontario institutional context
**WEEK 4**  Key Ontario Organizations Part 1 - The Central Ministries that Influence Environmental Policy
**WEEK 5**  Key Ontario Organizations Part 2 – The “Line” Ministries with Environmental Policy Responsibilities
**WEEK 6**  Decision-Making on the Environment
Reading week Feb 20-24
**WEEK 7**  Overview of Environmental Policy Issues by Media - Air, Land & Water
**WEEK 8**  Key Issues - Great Lakes and Waste Policy
**WEEK 9**  Key Issues - Climate Change
**WEEK 10**  Key Issues - Infrastructure (transportation, energy)
**WEEK 11**  Key Issues - Infrastructure cont’d (water) and Biodiversity
**WEEK 12**  Wrap up - summary of the course and the future of environmental policy in Ontario
ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

The assignments and their shares of the course grade are:
Options Paper – 35
Briefing Note - 25
Readings Log – 20
Proposal – 10
Mock Cabinet Committee Presentation/Feedback - 10

These are described in more detail below.

Proposal

Prepare a brief proposal (no more than two pages in a format provided by instructor) for a topic area that will become the subject of the Briefing Note and Options Paper. Consultation with the instructor is strongly recommended. The Proposal is due by Week 3 (January 20).

Briefing Note

Each student will submit a Briefing Note on a topic of interest chosen with the assistance of the instructor. Briefing Notes typically use the following headings: Issue, Background, Proposal, Comments. They should be short (two pages, maximum of three) and concise. They are meant to provide decisionmakers (e.g. a Minister, such as the Minister of Environment, a Mayor or city councillor or a company president) with a quick summary of an issue and will be marked according to their clarity, concision and accuracy as well as the above general criteria. The deadline for submission is Week 6 (February 17).

Readings Log

Each student will submit a set (six readings) of short summaries of the readings (total words, about 2,700) drawn from the Reading List or supplemental readings on the website. The deadline is March 31 but the assignment may be handed in at any time. Each summary has two brief components: a précis and a statement of the student’s main response to the main points of the reading.

Options Paper

In the practice of public policy, the “workhorse” of policy analysis and development is the Options Paper. Some variant of the Options Paper is used to develop policy and to present issues to decisionmakers. In Ontario, the Cabinet Submission Guidelines represent the implementation of the format for the Ontario Cabinet. The format of Options Papers includes the following key headings: Issue, Background, Options, Evaluation and Recommended Option. Students will be asked to write an Options Paper on topics proposed by the instructor or on a subject of particular interest, with permission. The paper should not exceed 15 double-spaced typed pages and should
follow acceptable style guidelines (Kate Turabian’s guide is recommended). The deadline is April 24.

Mock Cabinet Minister Feedback

Students will each be assigned a role of either a Deputy Minister (e.g. Deputy Minister of the Environment) presenting an environmental policy proposal to a Cabinet Committee (Environmental Policy Committee of Cabinet) or a Cabinet Committee Member (Other Ministers such as Industry, Energy, Transportation etc.).

The student assigned to the role of the Deputy Minister presenting an environmental policy proposal will prepare and present a short policy proposal to the Cabinet Committee based on their briefing note along with a proposed cabinet minute (1/2 page summary based on briefing note + short proposed minute).

The students assigned to the role of Cabinet Committee Member will be assigned a ministerial portfolio such as Industry, Energy, Transportation etc. and will prepare a question reflecting the impact of the proposal on their portfolio and based on the presenting Minister’s/student’s briefing note along with a recommendation for the proposed cabinet minute (1/2 page question on briefing note circulated in advance + short proposed minute). Time will be provided in classes week 8 through 12 to conduct the mock cabinet sessions and with the deadline for the written proposals/questions + proposed minute/recommendation due April 24.

Evaluation criteria:

The primary criteria used in evaluating written work will be:

1. Mechanics: Your work must be completely free of grammatical errors, spelling errors or major factual errors. References can be in any style but the same format must be used consistently and they must be accurate.
2. Writing style: Your papers should be written in a clear and unambiguous style which assists, rather than impedes, communication with the reader.
3. Structure: Your written work should have a clear focus, provided by the research question, and a structure which logically flows from that focus.
4. Precision and accuracy: Precision means saying exactly and specifically what you mean, avoiding ambiguity and vague generalities. Accuracy refers to absence of major factual errors.
5. Analysis: Your analysis should display understanding of the topic and, based on that understanding, originality of thought.

The primary criteria used in evaluating oral presentations are the following:

1. Success in communicating key concepts succinctly and accurately, thereby demonstrating sound understanding of the work being presented.
2. Mechanics of communication, such as manner of speaking (including good diction and tone), structure of the presentation and level of organization.
3. Ability to respond appropriately and fairly to questions and contribute to and stimulate unstructured discussion among peers.

Lateness: All written assignments received after the due date will be penalized 0.5% per day of lateness.

Handing in assignments: assignments will be handed in electronically through Quercus.

Remarking: Marking will be done by the teaching assistant and approved by the instructor. Any disputes should be discussed with the Teaching Assistant first. Any remaining disputes will be reviewed by the instructor.

NOTE: Students must keep all notes from their research and draft versions of their essays. These materials may be required to receive a grade (in accordance with University policies on Plagiarism).

Medical Certificate & Documentation Supporting Extensions, etc.
Students who are absent from academic participation for any reason (e.g., COVID, cold, flu and other illness or injury, family situation) and who require consideration for missed academic work have been asked to record their absence through the ACORN online absence declaration.

A student who is registered with Accessibility Services, or otherwise provides appropriate documentation to their college registrar, may receive a Registrar’s Letter attesting to his/her legitimate need for an extension or other consideration, which you should accept in lieu of the student providing you with the supporting documentation directly. This protects the student’s personal information, makes it easier for him/her to request and get appropriate consideration, and relieves you of having to secure private information about the student that is contained in supporting documentation.

Accessibility Needs:

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/task_levels/accessibility-and-academic-accommodations/

The University is committed to developing an accessible learning environment that provides reasonable accommodations to enable students with disabilities to meet the essential academic requirements of the University’s course and programs.

Please be aware of the academic accommodation policies and resources page on the Provost’s website: https://www.viceprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/students/academic-accommodation/

Accessibility Remote/Online Learning information and resources are available at:
PLAGIARISM
Please note that according to the University’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, it is an offence for a student to:
1. “represent as one’s own any idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work, i.e., to commit plagiarism.”
2. “submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.
3. “submit for credit any academic work containing a purported statement of fact or reference to a source which has been concocted.”


See also the handout “How Not to Plagiarize,” Margaret Proctor, 2009, available online at http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize

Cases of suspected plagiarism will be addressed in accordance with the procedure established by the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters.

Message on Academic Integrity

The University of Toronto is committed to the free and open exchange of ideas, and to the values of independent inquiry. Academic integrity is fundamental to our university community’s intellectual life. What does it mean to act with academic integrity? U of T supports the International Center for Academic Integrity’s definition of academic integrity as acting in all academic matters with honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. For an Indigenous perspective on these values, you might also like to read more about the Seven Grandfathers approaches to academic integrity.

In our Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, the University has identified academic offences that run counter to those values, and that are in opposition to our mission to create internationally significant research and excellent academic programs. This code outlines the behaviours that constitute academic misconduct, the processes for addressing academic offences, and the penalties that may be imposed. You are expected to be familiar with the contents of this document. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

- In papers and assignments:
  - Using someone else’s ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
  - Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
o Making up sources or facts.
o Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment (this includes o working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work).

• On tests and exams:
o Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
o Looking at someone else’s answers.
o Letting someone else look at your answers.
o Misrepresenting your identity.
o Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

• Misrepresentation:
o Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) doctor’s notes.
o Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from me or other available campus resources like the College Writing Centres (https://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science/), the Academic Success Centre, or the U of T Writing Website.”

Evaluating Student Work

Students will be evaluated on the course requirements according to the information in the assignment document. Students will be provided with evaluation criteria for each assignment. Overall grades will be assessed in accordance with the University’s description as provided in the Academic Handbook as discussed below.

Letter Grade Definition
A+ Outstanding performance, exceeding even the A described below.
A. Exceptional performance: strong evidence of original thinking; good organization, capacity to analyze and synthesize; superior grasp of subject matter with sound critical evaluations; evidence of extensive knowledge base.
B. Good performance: evidence of grasp of subject matter; some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature.
C. Intellectually adequate performance: student who is profiting from her or his university experience; understanding of the subject matter and ability to develop solutions to simple problems in the material.
D. Minimally acceptable performance: some evidence of familiarity with subject matter and some evidence that critical and analytic skills have been developed.
E. Inadequate performance: little evidence of even superficial understanding of the subject matter; weakness in critical and analytic skills; with limited or irrelevant use of literature.