

Market Implications of Environmental Regulations

Harris School of Public Policy
University of Chicago
Course number 36935

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Information About This Course

Background and Goals

Environmental policy, like all policy enactments, can lead to intended and unintended market consequences. This course will focus on several iterations of federal and Illinois's energy efficiency policies, examining both the intended and unintended consequences of the enacted laws, with insight from the professor in navigating those law changes over the years in a successful energy efficiency firm with over \$5M of annual revenue and 30 employees. A heavy emphasis from other Harris alumni on navigating policy in the marketplace will be emphasized.

We will also explore how federal and other federal and regional/state incentive programs have similarities and differences. We will explore several international regulations as well, seeking to find trends that lead to the optimal outcomes in terms of efficiency and progress.

While most of the market has seen the desired outcomes of the laws, there are also "bad actors" and unintended consequences that develop in various ways. These will have an equal weight in focus as the positive outcomes as learning from the mistakes of others can only make our growth in energy efficiency programs more successful.

- This course will meet in person at the Keller Center.
- The majority of course days will end with a panel of Harris Alumni and industry professionals who will detail their experiences. This will both help Harris students learn, see a path, but also meet alumni that can help them in their career progress post Harris.
- There will be a final exam worth 40% of the final grade, based on a collective notes taken by the course led by the TA.
- There will be small group exercises with a chance to interview individuals involved in navigating or directing policy around the world, including Africa, Asia, England, Mexico, Guatemala, Chile, South Africa, India, Pakistan and Norway via zoom. There will be a formatted interview process, and each of the candidates for interview will be screened prior by the professor. You will present as a group to the class on the following : what is the law, and what are the intended and the unintended consequences of this policy. This will be 40% of the final grade - but you are only graded on your personal contribution.
- Attendance is required in person each week. There will be a quiz at the start of each class on the previous notes, which will be a collective 20% of the grade.

Student assignments

Students can pick the policy of interest and present, with a maximum of 3 students per policy. First come, first served in terms of selection. Interview will be done in a group, as well as presentation, but grading is on individual contributions only.

Required Reading : [Oil and Honey](#) by Bill McKibben

Oct 2: Course Introduction and Expectations

- First Half. Course Introduction, expectations. Introduction to State of Illinois Laws. Timelines, revisions of laws for Energy Efficiency over the years
- Second Half. Norway Policy. Why is it different and what are the impacts?

Oct 9: Electrification Policy in Early Stages

- First Half.. Electrification Policy in Illinois. Various ways funds flow to support electrification. Case Study - Challenges around electrification for the Oak Park Temple VRF Heat Pump Installation
- Second Half - Harris Alumn Jake Edie on the grid throughout the US

Oct 16: How Entity Status impacts organizational outcomes

- First Half. Different types of entities. LLC, Corporation, nonprofit, L3C, Benefit Corporation. What do these entities do, what policies create them, and why?
- Second Half. Harris Alumn Jordan Berman Cutler - Navigating Changes in Federal Administrations

Oct 23: Local Ordinance and Bad Actors

- First Half: Group projects assigned, time with groups to navigate the policy of choice and get feedback on direction of the topic.
- Second Half: Harris Alumn Josh Ellis on the history of water policy and social justice in Chicagoland

Oct 30: Regulators, Mount Up

- First Half:. Lobbying in Springfield with environmental groups and success/failure of those efforts. Differences between the ideal policy as we learn at Harris, and what the actual laws entail. Examples of bad actors and unintended consequences of policy.
- Second Half. Harris Alumn Alaina Harkness on Blue Economy

Nov 6: Group Presentations continued

- First Half. Small Group discussion on Oil and Honey by Bill McKibben
 - What is the agreed up temperature we need to avoid hitting and where are we in 2025
 - Where do we go from here?
- Second Half. Harris past student Jonathan Sack. Chicago Politics and Policy

Nov 13: Local, State and National Lobby Efforts for Environmental Policy

- First Half. Navigating Illinois law as a business Founder/CEO since 2025

- Second Half. Group presentation work with team

Nov 20: Group presentations

- First Half. Continued group work.
 - Who in each group is presenting what topic, including intended consequences, unintended consequences, summary of the law, and changes to improve the policy
- Second Half. Harris Alumni Panel: Recent, mid career and end of career perspectives

Nov 26: Thanksgiving Week - No Class

Dec 4: Technical Side of Electrification

- First Half. Cost of inaction. Technical dive into electrification
- Second Half. EV trips in California vs Midwest and South. Challenges of Fuel Switching

Dec 11: Final Exam Group Presentations

Grading policies and procedures

The course will be graded based on quizzes (40%), final exam (40%), and attendance (20%)

Instructor Office Hours

Office hours are available on TBD. These will be remote zoom meetings, or phone calls and/or emailed questions. Setting up time in advance is highly encouraged.

Teaching assistant(s) and/or graders

TBD

Teaching and learning in person, dual-modality, and/or remote environments

I expect everyone to make each of the course lessons in person. Courses will not be recorded or have a remote option.

General Resources Available to Students

Include any texts and links as desired:

- [Harris Academic Support Programs and Handbook](#)
- [Student Wellness](#)
- [University Learning Resources](#)

Harris School and University of Chicago Policies

Include any text and links as desired to highlight or emphasize issues related to academic integrity, disability accommodations, diversity and inclusion, and video and audio recordings.

- [Harris School Policies](#)
- [University General Policies](#)
- [University Academic Policies](#)
- Policies on audio and video [recordings](#) and [deletion](#)