Environmental Institutions  
ESM 248, Winter 2019  
Professor: Mark Buntaine ([buntaine@bren.ucsb.edu](mailto:buntaine@bren.ucsb.edu))  
Class meeting: Monday / Wednesday 2 - 3:15 (Bren 1424)  
Office hours: Flexible, email to schedule (Bren 4422)  

No Class Meetings: M 1/7, W 1/9, M 1/14  
Make-Up Class Meetings: F 1/18, F 2/1, F 3/1  
Final Mini-Conference: M 3/18 4-7pm (scheduled exam period) or 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 anticipate 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 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 reputation. 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 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.

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/or 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, due: Tuesday 1/29 @ 5pm) 20%
Mini-Project #2 (Institutional response, due: Friday 2/16 @ 5pm) 20%
Mini-Project #3 (Monitoring brief, due: Tuesday 3/5 @ 5pm) 20%
Mini-Project #4 (Institutional proposal, due: Friday 3/23 @ 5pm) 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 the linked guidelines.

Key for types of class sessions: Discussion, Lecture, Activity, Presentations
Unit 1: Institutional Forms and Features

Session 1 (W 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 why that the problem has not been solved.

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

Ostrom, Governing the Commons, Ch. 2

Osei-Tutu, P. (2017). Taboos as informal institutions of local resource management in Ghana: Why they are complied with or not. Forest Policy and Economics, 85, 114-123.

NO CLASS, M 1/21, Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Session 3 (W 1/23) – Institutional profile (A)

Examples of institutional profiles, recommended reading:


Mini-project #1 (Institutional Profile): identify the institutional features that affect the current status of an environmental resource of your choice and submit a 4-5 page institutional profile. **Due Tuesday 1/29 @ 5pm.**
Unit 2: Rule-Making

Session 4 (M 1/28) – Self-organized institutions (L/D), Matt Potoski

Ostrom, Governing the Commons, Ch. 6.


Session 5 (W 1/30) – Governments as rule-making institutions (L/A), Sarah Anderson


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 (F 2/1) – Participation and rule-making (A)


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

Session 7 (M 2/4) — Inequities in rule-making


Unit 3: Enforcement

Session 8 (W 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

Session 9 (M 2/11) – Market-based enforcement (D)


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 10 (W 2/13) – Legal enforcement (L)


NO CLASS, M 2/18, President’s Day

Session 11 (W 2/20) – Social enforcement (D)


Unit 4: Monitoring

Session 12 (M 2/25) – Strategy of Monitoring Compliance (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)

Session 13 (W 2/27) – Citizen Monitoring (L)


Session 14 (F 3/1) – Innovations in Monitoring (Poster Session)

Background reading for some ideas:


Mini-project #3 (Monitoring Brief): Write a 2-page memo to a policy-maker of interest suggesting ways to improve monitoring of an environmental problem. Due Tuesday 3/5 @ 5pm.

Unit 5. Building Institutions

Session 15 (M 3/4) – Institutional Failures (L/A)


Session 16 (W 3/6) – Institutional Change (D)


Session 17 (M 3/11) – Development assistance and government reform (L)


Session 18 (W 3/13) – 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 3/22 @ 5pm.