

ECON 675
Environmental Economics
Fall 2025

Instructor: Hong Kim, Ph.D.

E-mail: hkim6773@umd.edu

Zoom office hours: Sundays, 8:00-9:00pm, or by appointment

Class location: TYD 2106

Class meets: Mondays, 6:30 to 9:15pm, with a 15-minute break between 7:30 and 8:15

No class on October 13

Class is not cancelled on the Monday before Thanksgiving, November 24

Teaching Assistant: Nobuyuki Furuta

E-mail: nfuruta@umd.edu

Office hours: TBD

Texts

Required:

Market and the Environment, Nathaniel Keohane and Sheila Olmstead, Island Press

Supplemental: Additional academic papers and book chapters will be provided.

Course Overview

This course covers the interdependence between the environment and the economy. The goal of the course is to show how economic theory provides guidance to finding solutions to serious environmental problems such (e.g., global warming, ozone depletion, air and water pollution) at different scales (global, regional). This course examines market failure and applies microeconomic principles to markets for environmental resources. Methods of measuring the damage that results from polluting activities, and the benefits of improving environmental quality, are examined. I will implement the most current environmental issues and policies as examples during the course. We will also explore the proper role of government in the regulation of the environment and managing natural resources.

Course Objectives

Our program has 7 general learning outcomes for students:

- 1. Ability to understand, evaluate and analyze economic data**
- 2. Ability to understand and interpret statistical evidence from economic data**

3: Ability to apply empirical evidence to assess economic arguments

4: Ability to apply macroeconomic theories to policy discussions

5: Ability to apply microeconomic theories to policy discussions

6: Ability to communicate economic ideas to a broader audience

7: Ability to evaluate the effectiveness of policy programs using sound economic techniques

The learning outcomes that pertain to this course are 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7.

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Apply the concept of market failure and apply microeconomic principles to understand and analyze environmental and natural resource issues.
- Identify and evaluate a range of environmental policy tools to address environmental and natural resource issues.
- Understand how economic tradeoffs and incentives influence individuals and firms in developing environmental policies.
- Develop written and presentation skills in communicating environmental economic concepts, applications, and perspectives.
- Be able to use a cost-benefit analysis to assess U.S. government environmental policies and environmental policies of other countries.
- Be able to use sound economic tools/methodologies to help societies achieve their environmental goals.

Prerequisites

To enroll in this course, students must have completed ECON 641 (Microeconomic Analysis) and be either currently enrolled in or have completed ECON 645 (Empirical Analysis III: Econometric Modeling and Forecasting).

Before the First Class

Please write a few paragraphs telling me: (1) why you are enrolled in the MS in Applied Economics program, (2) what was your undergraduate major and why you chose it, (3) your career goals, (4) what you hope to get out of this course, and (5) anything else you'd like to tell me about yourself. Please send your response to me by email before the first class.

Graded Course Components

There are 5 grade components to the course. The 5 components and their relative weights in the course grade are: problem sets (15%), weekly online discussions (5%), midterm exam (25%), final exam (30%), and research paper and class presentation (25%).

Problem Sets (15 course points)

There will be 3 problem sets. Problem sets will be distributed one week prior to their due date (see course schedule for due date). The purpose of the problem sets is to provide you with the opportunity to practice and apply what you learned in classes and to prepare for the midterm and final exam. The problem sets will include theoretical problems and empirical assignments. You can work with other classmates on the problem sets; however, you should write up your answers independently from other classmates. Verbatim answers will be detected and will be penalized. They must be submitted electronically via ELMS/Canvas. The problem sets will contribute 15% of the total course grade.

Weekly Online Discussion (5 course points)

I will post a question/series of questions relevant to the course material every Tuesday morning on the course's ELMS/Canvas site. The online discussion will be open until 11:59 PM the following Monday night. I will check in at least once a day to participate and respond. Your contributions to the discussions will be graded on a scale of 0 to 5 points. The grading rubric will be posted on the course's ELMS/Canvas site. At the end of the semester, I will average each student's scores.

Midterm Exam (25 course points)

The midterm exam (90-minute test) will be administered in class and will include all relevant cumulative course material through the previous week.

Final Exam (30 course points)

Because economics is a progressive subject, all course material builds upon previous work. For this reason, the final exam (2 hours) will also be cumulative in nature, although questions will be more heavily focused on the second half of the course. The midterm and final exam are both open notes, open book, and open internet (excluding use of AI tools). Students are advised to make a compact sheet or two of the most important formulas for quick reference. Students should not communicate with anyone except the instructor during the exam. Students who spend a lot of time leafing through books and web pages will run out of time.

Research Paper and Class Presentation (25 course points)

Students will prepare one research paper (see course schedule for due date). The research paper will be modeled on empirical/practical economic research and will be on any environmental economics topic. Your research paper should motivate a particular economic question, describe

the related literature, and motivate and undertake an empirical analysis, and you should conclude your research paper with a set of recommendations. Students will present their research paper to the class at the last two meetings of the term. Since the objective of this course is to learn and apply tools of economic analysis, the research paper assignment will provide an opportunity for application of these skills in a “real-world” setting. Your paper should be at least a 10-page (double-spaced, 12-point font) analysis. We will allocate 10 minutes per presentation. Your presentation will be scheduled during the last two weeks. The paper and presentation will contribute 25% of the total course grade. Students will submit the research paper and presentation assignment in 4 installments (see the Schedule for due dates):

- Topic Proposal (2 points)
- Outline of the research paper, 2-3 pages (3 points)
- Class presentation (8 points)
- Final research paper (12 points)

More information about the research paper and presentation, including grading rubrics, will be provided in class and on the course ELMS/Canvas site.

Final Course Letter Grades

At the end of the semester, I will add up each student’s course points. This will be a number between 0 and 100. I do not grade on a curve. Numerical course grades will be translated into letter grades as follows:

93-100	90-92	80-89	70-79	60-69	50-59	40-49	30-39	20-29	10-19	0-9
A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	F

Other Standard Policies for the Program and the University of Maryland

Policies related to all graduate courses at the University of Maryland are posted on this page of the Graduate School's website:

<https://gradschool.umd.edu/faculty-and-staff/course-related-policies>

Please familiarize yourself with these policies related to academic integrity, non-discrimination policy, accessibility, absences and accommodations, grading, academic standing, grievance procedures, and other important policies.

Email: The University has adopted email as the primary means of communication outside of the classroom, and the instructor will use it to inform students of important announcements. The University creates an "@umd.edu" email address for every graduate student. All official UMD communications will be sent to students at their "@umd.edu" email address. Students are responsible for reading their @umd.edu email, including ELMS/Canvas Announcements that are sent to the class. Students should make sure that ELMS/Canvas Announcements and messages are forwarded to an email address that they check regularly. Failure to check email, errors in forwarding email, and returned email due to "mailbox full" or "user unknown" will not excuse a student from missing announcements or deadlines. The instructor will do their best to respond to emails within 36 hours.

Workload: Mastering the material covered in this course requires a significant amount of work outside of class. Students should expect to spend more time outside of class than in class – typically at least twice as much time.

Academic Progress: The graduate school requires that students maintain a GPA of at least 3.0. Students whose cumulative GPA falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation by the graduate school. Students on academic probation must ask the program's director to petition the graduate school if they want to remain in the program. The petition must include a plan for getting the student's GPA up to at least 3.0. Students who do not live up to their plan can be forced to leave the program without having earned the degree. Note: a grade of "B" corresponds to a GPA of 3.0. A grade of "B-" corresponds to a GPA of 2.7.

Excused Absences: If you miss any class meetings for any reason, you are still responsible for all material covered during the meeting you missed. It is your responsibility to work with study partners, the teaching assistant, and the instructor to make sure you catch up on the missed material. Instructors routinely facilitate things by posting lecture notes, etc. If you need to miss an exam or other graded course requirement because of illness, injury, or some other emergency, follow the doctor's orders and get documentation. Get in touch with the instructor as soon as you're able – preferably prior to missing the exam or deadline. Communicate with the instructor to make up the course requirement as soon as possible. You are entitled to recover before you make up the course requirement, but you are not entitled to extra days to study beyond the time the doctor's note says you've been incapacitated. If you are incapacitated for more than a week or so beyond the end of the term, your grade in the course will be an "Incomplete." In such cases,

you must negotiate a plan with your instructor for completing the course requirements. Once you meet the course requirement, the instructor will change your "I" to the appropriate letter grade.

School Closings and Delays: Information regarding official University closing and delays can be found on the campus website and the snow phone line: (301) 405-SNOW (405-7669). The program director will also announce cancellation information to the program as an announcement on the program's ELMS/Canvas site. This will generally be done by 1:00 p.m. on days when weather or other factors are an issue. When classes need to be canceled during the semester, we make every effort to schedule makeup classes.

UMD Counseling Center: Sometimes students experience academic, personal, and/or emotional distress. The UMD Counseling Center in Shoemaker Hall provides comprehensive and confidential support services that promote personal, social, and academic success. The cost of these services is covered by the fees you already paid when you registered for classes, and there is no additional charge if you use the services. Proactively explore the range of services available, including the Counseling Service, Accessibility and Disability Service, and the Testing Office, all described at <http://www.counseling.umd.edu/>

Graduate Academic Counselor: The UMD Graduate School also has an academic counselor available to support students who are having difficulty navigating mental health resources on campus, are considering a leave of absence, and/or need assistance finding mental health care off campus. The Graduate Academic Counselor also facilitates bi-weekly Graduate Student Circle Sessions, which provide an opportunity to learn about resources and connect with other graduate students. Students can learn more about the Graduate Academic Counselor by going to: <https://gradschool.umd.edu/gradcounselor>

Course Evaluations: Near the end of the term, you will receive an email inviting you to submit a voluntary and anonymous course evaluation. Your feedback on courses will be very helpful in improving the quality of instruction in our program.

Access to Morrill Hall and Morrill 1102: Morrill Hall is locked every day from 7:00 p.m. - 7:00 a.m. Your university ID gives you swipe access to the back door of the building. There is keypad access to the door of Morrill 1102. The code will be shared with students by the program coordinator.

Tentative Schedule

	Date	Deadlines	Topics Covered	Assigned Readings
Class 1	9/08/2025		<p>Course Introduction Economy and Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Economics vs. Ecological Economics • Market Efficiency and Market Failure • Justification for Government Intervention (Property Right and Coarse theorem) • Internalization of pollution and optimal pollution control • Natural Resource Economics in Short • Economic Sustainability in Short 	<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keohane and Olmstead, Chapter 1 • Costanza and O’Neill, <i>Introduction: Ecological Economics and Sustainability</i> <p>Optional Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youli and Xiongyi, <i>The Models for Internalization of Environmental Costs in Tech-Eco Assessment</i> • European Environmental Agency, <i>Economy and the Environment</i>, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IF9YsVpZnSE
Class 2	9/15/2025		<p>Market Failure and Welfare Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Externalities, Public Goods, Tragedy of the Commons • Optimal Pollution Control Level • Marshallian and Hicksian Demand Curves • Consumer Surplus, Producer Surplus, Compensating Variation, Equivalent Variation, Willingness to Pay, Willingness to Accept 	<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keohane and Olmstead, Chapters 2, 4-5 • Tuncel and Hammit, A New Meta-Analysis on the WTP/WTA Disparity • Varian’s Consumers’ Surplus chapter

Class 3	9/22/2025		<p>Measuring Environmental Benefits Part 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stated Preference Method • Contingent Valuation Method • Mean WTP estimation with Logit regression output 	<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keohane and Olmstead, Chapter 3 • Carson, “Contingent Valuation and Lost Passive Use: Damages from the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill” • Donovan and Nicholls, “Estimating Consumer Willingness to Pay a Price Premium for Alaska Secondary Wood Products” • OMB, “Guidance on Agency Survey and Statistical Information Collections” <p>Optional Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kim and Cho, “Estimating Willingness to Pay for Reduced Copper Contamination in Southwestern Minnesota” • Hanemann, “Welfare Evaluation in Contingent Valuation Experiments with Discrete Response”
Class 4	9/29/2025	<p>Research Topic Proposal Due on September 9/29/2025</p>	<p>Measuring Environmental Benefits Part 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revealed Preference Method • Weak Complementarity • Production Function Approach • Hedonic Approach • Travel-cost methods 	<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keohane and Olmstead, Chapter 3 • Kim, Helfand, Howitt, “An Economic Analysis of Ozone Control in California’s San Joaquin Valley” • Aljazeera, “Hedonic Valuation of Marginal Willingness to Pay for Air Quality in Metropolitan Damascus”

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jan Spacek, “Individual single-site travel cost for Czech Paradise Geopark” ● Chau, Wong, Lam, “How do people price air quality: empirical evidence form Hong Kong” ● Train, “Recreation Demand Models with Taste Differences over People” ● Haab, Hicks, Schnier, and Whitehead, “Angler Heterogeneity and Species-specific Demand for Marine Recreational Fishing.” <p>Optional Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Berman and Kim, “Endogenous On-Site Time in the Recreation Demand Model”
Class 5 & 6	10/06/2025 & 10/20/2025	1 st Problem Set Due on 10/13/2025	<p>Measuring Environmental Benefits Part 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Benefits Transfer and Meta-Analysis ● Value of Statistical Life (WTP and Cost of Illness Approach) ● Non-Fatal Illness Valuation (Cost of Illness Approach) ● Non VSL Valuation Methods ● No class on Oct 13. 	<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Johnston and et al. “Chapter 2: Introduction to Benefit Transfer Methods” ● Department of Transportation, “Guidance on VSL 2016 Adjustment” ● Visusi, “Using data from the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries to estimate the value of a statistical life” ● Hjerpe, Hussain, and Phillips, “Valuing type and scope of ecosystem conservation: A meta-analysis” <p>Optional Readings:</p>

Master of Science in Applied Economics, University of Maryland – College Park

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Viscusi and Aldy, “The Value of Statistical Life: A Critical Review of Market Estimates Throughout the World”
Class 7	10/27/2025		<p>Midterm Exam (6:30 – 8:00PM)</p> <p>Introduction to Regulations and Cost-Benefit Analysis</p>	
Class 8	11/03/2025		<p>Environmental Regulations and Cost-Benefit Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regulatory Impact Analysis ● Regulatory Flexibility Analysis ● EPA’s CBA Example 	<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keohane and Olmstead, Chapter 3 ● OMB Circular A-4, “Regulatory Impact Analysis a Primer” ● EPA’s Regulatory Impact Analysis on Ambient Ozone Standards (Chapters 1, 5 and 6 only)
Class 9	11/10/2025		<p>Environmental Regulations and Cost-Benefit Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Regulatory Impact Analysis ● Regulatory Flexibility Analysis ● EPA’s CBA Example 	<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keohane and Olmstead, Chapter 8,9, and 10 ● Kim, “The Effectiveness of Alternative Emission Control Policies in the San Joaquin Valley of California. ● IMF, “Taxes and Tradable Permits as Instruments for Controlling Pollution: Theory and Practice.
Class 10	11/17/2025	2 nd Problem Set Due On 11/13/2025	<p>Environmental Policy Instruments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tradeable Emission Permit ● Tradeable Ambient Permit ● Tradeable Localized Permit ● Real-World Applications 	

Master of Science in Applied Economics, University of Maryland – College Park

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Administration and Enforcement ● Comparison of Policy Instruments 	
Class 11 & 12	11/24/2025 & 12/01/2025	Research Paper Outline Due on 11/24/2025	<p>Exhaustible and Renewable Natural Resources – Petroleum and Fishery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supply of Nonrenewable Resources ● Economics of Nonrenewable Resources ● Principles of Renewable Resources Management ● The Economics of Fisheries ● Policies for Sustainable Fisheries Management 	<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keohane and Olmstead, Chapter 6, 7, 9 and 10 ● Introduction to Dynamic Model by Tuft University Press ● Dewees, “Effects of Individual Quota Systems on New Zealand and British Columbia”
Class 13	12/08/2025	Student Presentations on 12/01/2025	<p>Macro-Environmental Economics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sustainable Economic Development ● Greening the National Income Accounts ● Green Net National Product ● Guanine Saving ● Ecological Footprint ● Research Paper Presentation 	<p>Required Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keohane and Olmstead, Chapter 11 ● Ecological Footprint (http://www.footprintnetwork.org/our-work/ecological-footprint/) ● Adjusted Net Saving (https://snbchf.com/global-macro/net-national-savings/) ● Harris, Roach, and Codur, “Economics of Global Climate Change” ● Stavins, “Addressing Climate Change with a Comprehensive U.S. Cap-and-Trade System” <p>Optional Reading:</p>

Master of Science in Applied Economics, University of Maryland – College Park

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OECD, “Sustainable Development Linking Economy, Society, and Environment” ● Alfsen, Hass, Tao, and You, “International Experience with Green GDP”
Class 14	12/15/2025	<p>Student Presentations on 12/08/2025</p> <p>3rd Problem Set Due on 12/08/2025</p>	<p>Climate Change Economics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Causes and Consequences of Climate Change ● Economics of Climate Change Policy Options <p>Climate Change Policies in Practice</p> <p>Course Recap and Conclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Harris, Roach, and Codur, “Economics of Global Climate Change” ● Stavins, “Addressing Climate Change with a Comprehensive U.S. Cap-and-Trade System”
Class 15	12/18/2025	Final Research Paper Due on 12/21/2025	Final Exam	