Module Descriptor

Title	Governing the Environment		
Session	2026/27	**Status**	
Code	MPAL11011	**SCQF Level**	11
Credit Points	30	**ECTS (European Credit Transfer Scheme)**	15
School	School of Education & Social Sciences		
Module Co-ordinator	M. Melidis		

Summary of Module

Our planet faces a complex web of environmental issues, unlike anything we've seen before. Climate change, vanishing species, polluted environments, and dwindling resources all pose serious threats. To address these challenges, everyone - from governments to businesses and individuals - needs to take responsibility. Importantly, environmental problems can't be solved in isolation from social issues. They're influenced by a combination of local and global factors, including international events, national politics, social movements, and economic forces. This course will explore how we govern environmental issues, analyze different environmental philosophies, institutions, policy tools, and green strategies and examine how environmental concerns are addressed at national and international level. Ultimately, it will investigate what is required to create a more sustainable society.

In this regard, the module addresses some of the UN SDGs (e.g. 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 17) fostering a critical approach to global challenges. The SDGs are universal objectives aimed at benefiting everyone and through these, students will gain a deeper understanding of worldwide issues, such as taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; promoting just and inclusive societies; and revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development.

The course will offer a comprehensive overview of environmental concepts, governance, and policy issues, including the latest environmental goals. Students will have the opportunity to discuss current environmental debates and analyze recent international policy developments. While there are no formal requirements, a background in politics, international relations, or human geography would be helpful.

Module Delivery Method	On-Campus[1] ☒	Hybrid[2] ☐	Online[3] ☐	Work -Based Learning[4] ☐
Campuses for Module Delivery	☐ Ayr ☐ Dumfries	☐ Lanarkshire ☒ London ☐ Paisley	☐ Online / Distance Learning ☐ Other (specify)	

Terms for Module Delivery	Term 1	☒	Term 2	☒	Term 3	☒
Long-thin Delivery over more than one Term	Term 1 – Term 2	☐	Term 2 – Term 3	☐	Term 3 – Term 1	☐

Learning Outcomes	
L1	Demonstrate a critical understanding of the role and perspectives of different actors involved in environmental policy and display knowledge of the complexities of addressing environmental policy across policy sectors and governance scales.
L2	Exhibit the ability to critically analyse academic literatures and debates on environmental politics.
L3	Think in inter-disciplinary ways about the impact of environmental policy and relevant policy processes and develop creative responses to contemporary environmental problems.
L4	Exhibit the ability to critically analyse different concepts, themes, and issues in environmental politics and interact with fellow students in a cooperative manner.
L5	Reflect and evaluate the effectiveness of policy, and understand the reasons for and barriers to policy intervention.

Employability Skills and Personal Development Planning (PDP) Skills	
SCQF Headings	**During completion of this module, there will be an opportunity to achieve core skills in:**
Knowledge and Understanding (K and U)	SCQF Level **11** Students will develop critical knowledge and understanding of academic literature and concepts in environmental policy and governance. They will also demonstrate ways to advance sustainability, frame inter- and transdisciplinary discussions on sustainable development, environmental justice and equity, and highlight issues of national and global concern.
Practice: Applied	SCQF Level **11**

[1] Where contact hours are synchronous/ live and take place fully on campus. Campus-based learning is focused on providing an interactive learning experience supported by a range of digitally-enabled asynchronous learning opportunities including learning materials, resources, and opportunities provided via the virtual learning environment. On-campus contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[2] The module includes a combination of synchronous/ live on-campus and online learning events. These will be supported by a range of digitally-enabled asynchronous learning opportunities including learning materials, resources, and opportunities provided via the virtual learning environment. On-campus and online contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[3] Where all learning is solely delivered by web-based or internet-based technologies and the participants can engage in all learning activities through these means. All required contact hours will be clearly articulated to students.

[4] Learning activities where the main location for the learning experience is in the workplace. All required contact hours, whether online or on campus, will be clearly articulated to students

Knowledge and Understanding	Students will apply knowledge and understanding of environmental governance issues in class-based discussions, online forums, and in assessment practice.
Generic Cognitive skills	SCQF Level **11** Students will develop a range of academic and professional skills including those relevant to critical reflection on assessing evidence on environmental governance and policy issues.
Communication, ICT and Numeracy Skills	SCQF Level **11** Students will engage with a range of modes of communication, oral, and numeracy skills in class and online
Autonomy, Accountability and Working with Others	SCQF Level **11** Students will have opportunities to work in groups and will work autonomously to discuss and debate environmental governance issues. In addition, they will be encouraged to share their own experiences with environmental problems. They will also learn to show understanding and empathy when working with others (interpersonal skills). Collaboration will promote the building of peer relationships, foster peer interactions, and involve students in different discussions enabling them to understand different perspectives and to give and receive feedback.

Prerequisites	**Module Code**	**Module Title**
	Other	
Co-requisites	**Module Code**	**Module Title**

Learning and Teaching	
In line with current learning and teaching principles, a 30-credit module includes 300 learning hours, normally including a minimum of 54 contact hours and a maximum of 72 contact hours.	
Learning Activities During completion of this module, the learning activities undertaken to achieve the module learning outcomes are stated below:	**Student Learning Hours** (Note: Learning hours include both contact hours and hours spent on other learning activities)
Lecture/Core Content Delivery	36
Tutorial/Synchronous Support Activity	18
Independent Study	246
TOTAL	300

Indicative Resources

The following materials form essential underpinning for the module content and ultimately for the learning outcomes:

- Carter, N. (2018). *The politics of the environment: Ideas, activism, policy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Connelly, J., Smith, G., Benson, D., & Saunders, C. (2012). Politics and the Environment: From Theory to Practice (3rd Edition, pp. xvii–xvii).
- Dryzek, J. S. (2022). The politics of the earth: Environmental discourses. Oxford University Press.

- Evans, J. P. & Thomas, C. (2024). *Environmental governance*. 2nd Edition, Routledge.
- McCormick, J. (2017). Environmental Politics and Policy (1st ed.). Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

Morin, J. F., Orsini, A., & Jinnah, S. (2020). Global Environmental Politics: Understanding the Governance of the Earth. Oxford University Press, USA.

(N.B. Although reading lists should include current publications, students are advised (particularly for material marked with an asterisk*) to wait until the start of session for confirmation of the most up-to-date material)

Attendance and Engagement Requirements

In line with the Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure, Students are academically engaged if they are regularly attending and participating in timetabled on-campus and online teaching sessions, asynchronous online learning activities, course-related learning resources, and complete assessments and submit these on time.

For the purposes of this module, academic engagement equates to the following:

This module requires attendance and active student engagement. In-class activities are formative assignments geared towards accomplishing the learning outcomes. As per UKVI regulations students have to attend all classes (see UWS Student Attendance and Engagement Procedure - 2026). If a student will not be able to attend a class, the student must contact the module lecturer and coordinator beforehand.

Equality and Diversity

The University's Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Procedure can be accessed at the following link: UWS Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Code.

The module also abides to the MPA programme EDI policy meaning that it has included inclusivity in four areas: a) Designing course material b) Inclusive Teaching in class c) Assessment and d) Providing extra support to the students. Additionally, the module includes the following:

Empathy, EDI & Decolonisation

Learning in a supportive and inclusive environment is absolutely essential. Treating each other with respect is fundamental to our learning community. Harassment, bullying, intimidation and discrimination (for example racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, sexual discrimination) go against all we stand for and will not be tolerated. If any of you have experienced or witnessed any of the above we encourage you to report it either to me or to the University. That will ensure the situation is addressed and you can get the support you might need. Be assured, the situation will be handled in a sensitive way and confidentiality protected.

Empathy and EDI:

- **Diverse Case Studies:** Use case studies that showcase the environmental challenges faced by communities of colour, low-income communities, and those in developing countries. Focus on people and communities impacted by pollution, resource scarcity, or climate change.
- **Inclusive Role-Playing Activities:** Design role-playing exercises that consider the diverse voices within stakeholder groups. For example, ensure representation of women, minorities, and Indigenous voices within a community affected by a policy.
- **Videos and Documentaries:** Showcase the fragility of the natural world and the impact of human actions.
- **Intersectionality:** Explore how environmental issues intersect with social inequalities like race, class, and gender.

- **Focus on Shared Values:** Frame environmental issues around values students care about, like public health, economic security, or cultural preservation.
- **Acknowledge Different Viewpoints:** Encourage respectful discussions about the challenges and complexities of environmental policy.
- **Empowerment and Action:** End with discussions on solutions and ways students can get involved in environmental advocacy.
- **Diversity:** Highlight the strengths that students bring from their diverse backgrounds and experiences.
- **Create a Safe Space:** Foster a classroom environment where students feel comfortable expressing diverse viewpoints and experiences related to the environment.
- **Self-reflection:** Continuously reflect on your own biases and legacy embedded in environmental policy discourse.

Decolonisation:

- **Challenge Eurocentrism:** Critically examine the underlying assumptions in dominant environmental discourses, such as the separation between humans and nature.
- **Equity and Justice:** Centre on environmental justice principles; highlight how environmental degradation disproportionately affects marginalized communities; move beyond solely Western scientific metrics for environmental success, explore indicators that value diverse cultural and ecological perspectives.
- **Community-based Conservation:** Showcase successful models of environmental management led by indigenous communities and local stakeholders.
- **Representation:** Ensure the curriculum reflects diverse voices and perspectives on environmental policy. Include works by scholars of colour, women, and those from the Global South.
- **Accessibility:** Consider the needs of students from different backgrounds when designing assessments. Offer resources and support for students with disabilities or those who may not have a strong environmental science background.
- **Inclusive Language:** Avoid language that reinforces stereotypes about different cultures and their connection to the environment.

(N.B. Every effort will be made by the University to accommodate any equality and diversity issues brought to the attention of the School)

Supplemental Information

Divisional Programme Board	Social Sciences
Overall Assessment Results	☐ **Pass / Fail** ☒ **Graded**
Module Eligible for Compensation	☐ **Yes** ☒ **No** **If this module is eligible for compensation, there may be cases where compensation is not permitted due to programme accreditation requirements. Please check the associated programme specification for details.**
School Assessment Board	PG Social Sciences
Moderator	A. Karoutas
External Examiner	C MacRae
Accreditation Details	
Module Appears in CPD catalogue	☐ **Yes** ☒ **No**

Changes / Version Number	

Assessment (also refer to Assessment Outcomes Grids below)
The module includes a formative assessment in the form of two essay outlines: one for a regular essay (500 words) and another for a reflective essay (500 words).
Assessment 1: Written Assessment - Essay (70%) (3500 words)
Assessment 2: Reflective Essay (30%) (1500 words)
Assessment 3
(N.B. (i) Assessment Outcomes Grids for the module (one for each component) can be found below which clearly demonstrate how the learning outcomes of the module will be assessed. (ii) An indicative schedule listing approximate times within the academic calendar when assessment is likely to feature will be provided within the Student Module Handbook.)

Component 1							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**
Written assessment	☒	☒	☐	☒	☐	70	

Component 2							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**
Reflective essey	☐	☐	☒	☐	☒	30	

Component 3							
Assessment Type	**LO1**	**LO2**	**LO3**	**LO4**	**LO5**	**Weighting of Assessment Element (%)**	**Timetabled Contact Hours**
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		
Combined total for all components						100%	hours

Change Control

What	**When**	**Who**
Transferred to new module template	28 Mar 25	M. Melidis
Amended for ILQR	29 June 2026	A Gouglas
