This course focuses on the many kinds of organizations that make up the larger field of environmentalism in the United States: mainstream, national advocacy organizations as well as state and local ones; innovative community-based organizations and movements; new forms of partnerships among local stakeholders, as well as on larger scales (across a region or ecosystem), or among environmental groups and business and trade associations.

We look at a broad range of arenas, including watersheds, sustainable communities, environmental justice and urban health, ecosystem restoration, land trusts, ecosystem partnerships, community forests and farms. We also examine civic action to reverse and mitigate global warming impacts and look at new organizations and initiatives, as well as how some of the older national groups have been transforming their strategies to combine broad civic action with various other policy tools. We examine environmental regulation, but focus particularly on those areas where community-based and other approaches are leading to regulatory innovations and how some regulatory and other public agencies are reinventing themselves. We examine both conflict and collaboration in environmental disputes, with special attention to how empowered citizens and communities can move from conflict to forms of collaboration that make sustainable improvements. And we pose a larger question throughout: how can civic environmentalism strengthen American democracy?

**Case Study Method.** We will place much emphasis on the case study method in class, and students will be expected to present case studies from the readings (or from their own research, should they so choose). These case study presentations can also be done in teams. The Chicago Wilderness Controversy will be the basis for a week-long class exercise in alternative dispute resolution for resolving conflicts with deep-seated differences in interests, values, and competing “constructs” of nature. These class presentations and exercises are central to our Oral Communication requirement, and students will receive guidance for oral case study, PowerPoint, and other forms of presentation as well. Professor Sirianni and other students in the class will provide constructive feedback to help you refine your presentation skills. See the last two pages of this syllabus below for a basic case-study presentation guide.

**Service Learning:** students have the option of combining the usual reading, presentations, and writing with internships and other forms of active civic engagement.
Students must work out a specific agreement (on community engagement and course writing) with Prof. Sirianni in order for this work to count as part of the grade for Soc 175b. Students can also use this course to help survey and decide upon spring or summer internships.

**International Projects:** while this course is limited to the U.S. in its core readings (due to the professor’s own limitations of expertise), students are welcome to develop projects and presentations with an international scope that are broadly in line with the themes of civic environmentalism, community-based and sustainable development, and climate action.

**Laptop and cell phone policy:** since all students deserve a distraction free environment, all laptops and cell phones are to be shut off and placed out of view during class. If a student needs to be available for emergency information, such as a family illness, please see instructor for special permission.

**Course Requirements**

The class will combine lectures, discussion, and presentations. Students are expected to do all readings before each session (including those cases that other students are presenting), to participate actively in discussions, and to present case material on various occasions.

There will be 2 writing assignments (approximately 20 pages total), and at least two presentations (including the Chicago Wilderness Controversy exercise):

1. **Midterm essays (10 pages), due Oct 12 (in class)**
2. **Final essays (10 pages), due Dec 13 (3pm, in my mailbox in Pearlman)**

**Required readings:** these include books available in the bookstore, and occasional articles and pdfs supplementing these (some not listed here).

**Bookstore:**


Sept 5: Introduction:

Syllabus, requirements, major themes

Reading:


Sept 5-12: The Environmental Movement, Regulation, and Public Policy: the Formation and Growth of the Major Organizations

The development of the environmental movement and the policy system from the 1960s. Mainstream environmental groups and the big national organizations. Command-and-control regulation. Public values and public opinion. The changing politics of environmental regulation. The emerging issue of climate change and how mainstream environmental organizations have responded to it.

Required Reading:


September 19-Oct 3: Environmental Justice and Citizen Action on Toxics

The rise of grassroots anti-toxics and environmental justice (EJ) movements. Racism and environmental harm. Local anti-toxics struggles and the role of women. The policy framework of Superfund. NIMBY ("Not In My Backyard") and beyond. Case studies from urban and rural communities, as well as the EPA’s Office of Environmental Justice.

Required Reading:


Oct 9-17: Street Science as Coproduction: Local and Professional Knowledge as Sources for Turning Community Conflict into Community Collaboration

Citizens as scientists using local knowledge, and melding this with professional science (“street science”). The emergence of the “collaborative EJ problem solving model.” The role of community-based organizations, local health and planning departments, schools of medicine and public health, universities.
Required Reading:


MIDTERM ESSAYS DUE: Oct 22 (10 pages)

Oct 22-31: The Watershed Movement


Required Reading:


Peruse:

River Network: [www.rivernetwork.org](http://www.rivernetwork.org)
EPA Watershed Academy: [www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/wacademy/](http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/wacademy/) (peruse course listing and webcasts)

Nov 5-14: The Land Trust Movement

Land trusts have emerged as an important component in conservation over the past half century, with notable growth especially in recent years. We will look at the major organizations (national, state, local, international) in the land trust movement (e.g. The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, Land Trust Alliance) and the promises and pitfalls of the land trust as a set of organizational tools.

Reading:


Nov 19-Dec 3: Grassroots Ecosystem Management: the Opportunities and Challenges of Collaboration on Land in the West

**Required Reading:**


**Dec 5-10: “Restoring Nature”**

The restoration movement. The ethics and politics of “restoring nature.” Chicago Wilderness and Volunteer Stewards Network.

Background: Film: Edens Lost and Found: Chicago: City of Big Shoulders

This 2006 documentary examines how a major American city has been developing a strategy for sustainability, including citizens, watershed groups, government and others collaborating and innovating together. Chicago’s Climate Action Plan.

Dispute resolution class exercise/project: based on Chicago Wilderness controversy.

**Required Reading:**


Joanne Vining, Elizabeth Tyler, and Byoung-Suk Kweon, “Public Values, Opinions, and Emotions in Restoration Controversies,” chapter 7 in *Restoring Nature* (143-161).

Peruse:

Chicago Wilderness: [www.chicagowilderness.org](http://www.chicagowilderness.org)

Volunteer Stewardship Network (Illinois Nature Conservancy):

[www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/illinois/volunteer/art9844.htm](http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/illinois/volunteer/art9844.htm)

**Final essays (10 pages), due Dec 20 (12 noon), in my mailbox in Pearlman**
CASE PRESENTATION GUIDE
Soc 175b: Environmental Organizations

The main goal of a case presentation is to present enough of the basic architecture of a case, plus some engaging details, to help trigger a discussion among the class. You should be completely familiar with all the details, concepts (some of which might be from earlier chapters of a book or lecture), and dynamics of the case (i.e. progression over time) in order that you can help facilitate (I will also pitch in), but do not necessarily have to put this all down on your handout or PowerPoint. In some cases, you might wish to do this, so that you can easily recall, but don’t take everyone through every detail. That would be boring. The more that you present architecture and then lead to questions and discussion back and forth, the better. The goal is for you to be able to lead a dynamic discussion. A team presentation should have a smooth and dynamic transition from one member to another (thus rehearse or at least discuss division of responsibilities). A team presentation often has more opportunity for creative transitions and fun exercises. But whether individual or team, establish your presence and authority over the room.

There is no one right way to present a case study, but here are some basics in thinking about the architecture you want to construct.

- **The problem:** what is the problem or conundrum that has brought the actors to the point of searching for new solutions? Is a specific threat (environmental hazard, risk) to the community, or some part of the community (some racial or ethnic group)? Has the community become stalemated, stuck in conflict or in the courts? Is the problem that the old tools of regulation aren’t working well? Or that some actors dominate the political and regulatory system? Of course, there may be a number of interacting problems. Don’t be overly technical or longwinded on this, you can always elaborate further in the discussion. **WHAT IS THE CORE DRAMA?** (And how does it carry through the whole case presentation?)

- **Historical background, identity of community:** what is the history of the community, different factions, ethnic/racial/economic divisions (if relevant)? Are there historical layers of tradition, problem accumulation, sources of common identity or conflict extending back many years? Newcomers and old timers in community? Past patterns of discrimination, housing segregation that might help explain the problem?

- **Key players:** what are the key organizations involved in the drama? Who are the key individuals that take leadership, and what enables them to do so, to help move others towards a different/higher ground?

- **Framing:** how were the issues framed or reframed in the process? What slogans and rhetoric were employed (e.g. environmental racism/justice, community preservation, ranching traditions, community renewal, human rights, species rights/protection, conflict/collaboration).


• **Existing tools:** what tools for regulation or community action have been used before in this community to address this or similar problems? Are they working? Why or why not?

• **New tools:** what new tools and approaches do citizens and stakeholders develop to try to address the problem? For example: land trust, transit-oriented planning and community development, watershed partnership, multi-stakeholder ecosystem management, urban agriculture or aquaculture, university-community partnership, environmental education, community visioning.

• **Key participants and stakeholders:** what were their self-interests? Who joined together in these efforts? How did they manage to collaborate (or not), engage broad organizational memberships, manage to deal with their traditional adversaries, reinvent themselves and their traditional missions? Did they develop a set of common values and interests? How did they create a broader ethic of stewardship? Build relationships? Get government bureaucracies to change their practices?

• **Resources:** what financial resources and community assets are available for the new initiatives, and from which sources? Are new funding tools developed?

• **Networks:** are there broader networks (social movement, professional, business association, government) that enable local actors to work effectively in solving problems and developing new approaches?

• **Results:** what were the results of these new efforts and innovations? Impact on environment, and how measured? Impact on community, and how measured? How did the stakeholders develop mutually acceptable measures?

• **Politics:** what are the dynamics of local (city, county) politics (elections, districting, ethnic/racial exclusion), as well as state and national politics (if relevant) as these dynamics impact problem solving?

**EVERYONE’S RESPONSIBILITY:** all students are responsible for the reading of that class and to help make the presentation and discussion go well. If presenter(s) throw out a question to elicit discussion, others should be able to pick up the thread, help catalyze further discussion, add to the analytic toolbox. We are all invested in everyone’s presentations going as well as possible and providing assistance and feedback.