Overview of Subject
This course expands the vision, analytic skills, and experiences of students interested in environmental law as well as students interested in environmental health. The readings, classroom activities, and projects expose students to a variety of current, real-world challenges which integrate (or could be more effective if they did integrate) environmental law and health.

The focus is on the students’ projects for non-profit, governmental, and other organizations which want and need your assistance. The projects cover a range of issues, analytic skills, and advocacy opportunities. Students will work with experienced people in organizations within Illinois, around the U.S., and in foreign countries. Each student will chose two different projects. The students will perform research on laws and health studies; review information from the organizations; analyze proposals, data, strategies and arguments; and draft memoranda, legislation, briefs and other documents for the organizations.

Each project will culminate in a class presentation and written work product useful to the sponsoring organization. Several representatives of sponsoring organizations will give presentations at classes.

In addition, we will work during five classes in teams on two projects. These projects are large, interdisciplinary and challenging.

Prerequisites
Strong interest in environmental policies, health and decision-making

Helpful (but not required) courses include administrative law, environmental law, environmental health, epidemiology, ecosystems sciences, and environmental economics

Course Objectives
The purpose of exploring connections between environmental law and environmental health is to help students understand:
• How working on many environmental challenges benefits from an interdisciplinary approach
• How environmental laws, regulations, court decisions and governmental programs rely on public health analyses and advocacy
• How environmental health analyses need to consider and address legal frameworks and legal advocates

Assignments

Written Work:
Two major projects -- Students will choose from a list of projects and organizations. Students will work on the projects with contacts at the organizations as well as the professor. For each project, there will be a final paper intended for use by the organization (about 15 pages), and a midterm progress report reflecting the student’s research and analysis (about 5 pages).

For one of a student’s two projects, the student will be paired with another student. We will seek teams of students with diverse perspectives.

Students are expected to work about eight hours per week on their projects.

Short papers – Students will submit two short papers (about 2 pages each) on themes and insights developed from the readings and classroom activities.

Additional Assignments:
Students will present their major projects to the class in the last weeks of the semester.

Also, students are expected to engage actively in classroom discussions and other activities.

Readings
The readings will focus on recent developments in environmental law, environmental health, and ecosystems. No textbook will be used. Readings will be sent by email in advance of class.

Attendance Policy/Participation
Each student is expected to attend and participate in class. Class participation constitutes about 10 percent of the grade. You will lose points for unexcused absences or failure to participate frequently with meaningful comments and questions. Excessive absences or tardiness will result in additional reductions of a student’s grade.

Tentative Schedule

1. Aug. 29
• discussion of health studies in environmental legal proceedings and environmental impact statements
• description of projects and sponsoring organizations

2. Sept. 5
• student selection of projects
• discussion of recent student reports and how they were used by sponsoring organizations
• roles of environmental health professionals and environmental lawyers in preparing for and responding to extreme weather events

3. Sept. 12
• state and foreign constitutional rights to healthy environment – air quality, water quality, biodiversity, and other degradation
• scope of a right to a “healthful environment” as applied to various current environmental health issues

4. Sept. 19
• federal and state constitutional rights to healthy environment – climate change
• Guest presenter from Our Children’s Trust

5. Sept. 26
• standard of reasonable care for hospitals regarding environmental toxins; lead in water and soil
• expert testimony by health professionals in environmental tort litigation

6. Oct. 3
• advocacy – environmental health issues in shaping environmental law
  Guest presenter from Union of Concerned Scientists
• sustainability and health impacts in corporations/securities law
• first short paper on themes

7. Oct. 10
• team work on United Nations Development Program (UNDP) platform -- financing solutions for sustainable development with focus on biodiversity (BIOFIN)
• drafts of midterm reports due

8. Oct. 17
• team work on website for community solar power projects
  *Develop a website that would facilitate pro bono services by practicing lawyers to assist communities in pursuing community-level solar installation programs. Collect case studies, model provisions, analyses of health and environmental benefits, and other information. Draft guides and presentations.*
• Guest presenters from municipalities and practicing lawyers

• continue team work on UNDP BIOFIN case studies
• Guest presenter from UNDP BIOFIN

10. Oct. 31
• continue team work on community solar website

11. Nov. 7
• finish work on UNDP BIOFIN drafts
• second short paper on themes

12. Nov. 14
• presentation of student projects

13. Nov. 28
• presentation of student projects
• Guest presenter and commenter from Colorado Department of Transportation

14. Dec. 5
• presentation of student projects
• drafts of final project documents due

Dec. 18 – final project documents due

NO PHONES, EMAIL, SOCIAL MEDIA or other non-class activity -- you will lose participation points

Grading
Two final reports on projects  50 points each
Two presentations on projects  25 points each
Two midterm progress reports on projects  20 points each
Two short papers on themes  10 points each
Class participation  20 points

MPH Program Competencies
This course will target several MPH program competencies:
• Identifying the major environmental and occupational hazards that pose a risk to individuals’ health through their interaction with the environment (Core)
• Performing and using statistical analyses of health data to inform community assessments and evaluations (Core)
• Using epidemiologic data and research to describe the pattern of diseases in communities and identify risk factors for diseases and for health disparities (Core)
• Applying systems thinking to identify policy approaches to improve health of populations (Core)
• Applying participatory strategic planning models to the development of public health plans for the prevention and control of disease (Core)
• Applying evidence-based frameworks to public health practice and problem solving (Concentration)
• Applying participatory strategic planning models to the development of public health plans for the prevention and control of disease (Concentration)
Assistance for Students

Please notify me if I need to make any additional accommodations to best serve you. I am more than happy to do so.