

Course Change Request

Date Submitted: 09/05/26 3:18 pm

Viewing: **EVPP 529 : Communicating Science for Policy ~~Environmental Science Communication~~**

Last approved: 05/15/21 5:01 am

Last edit: 09/05/26 3:18 pm

Changes proposed by: kakerlof

Catalog Pages referencing this course

[Civil and Infrastructure Engineering, BS](#)

[Climate Science, MS](#)

Select modification type:

In Workflow

1. **ESP GR Committee**
2. **ESP Chair**
3. **SC Curriculum Committee**
4. SC Assistant Dean
5. Assoc Provost-Graduate
6. Registrar-Courses
7. Banner

Approval Path

1. 08/24/26 11:43 am
Amy Fowler
(afowler6):
Approved for ESP
GR Committee
2. 08/24/26 12:03 pm
Gad Perry
(gperry23):
Approved for ESP
Chair
3. 08/28/26 3:13 pm
Jennifer Bazaz
Gettys (jbazaz):
Rollback to Initiator
4. 09/23/26 10:39 am
Amy Fowler
(afowler6):
Approved for ESP
GR Committee
5. 10/02/26 7:54 am
Gad Perry
(gperry23):
Approved for ESP
Chair

History

1. May 15, 2021 by
Tory Sarro (vsarro)

~~Simple~~

Substantial

Are you completing this form on someone else's behalf?

No

Effective Term: Spring 2027

Subject Code: EVPP - Environmental Science & Policy

Course Number: 529

Bundled Courses:

Is this course replacing another course? No

Equivalent Courses:

Catalog Title: Communicating Science for Policy ~~Environmental Science Communication~~

Banner Title: Communicating Sci for Pol
~~Environmental Sci Communicatn~~

Will section titles
vary by semester? No

Credits: 3

Schedule Type: Lecture

Hours of Lecture or Seminar per
week: 3

Repeatable: May only be taken once for credit (NR)
GRADUATE ONLY

Default Grade
Mode: Graduate Regular

Recommended
Prerequisite(s):

Recommended
Corequisite(s):

**Required
Prerequisite(s) /
Corequisite(s)
(Updates only):**

Registrar's Office Use Only - Required Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s):

And/Or	(	Course/Test Code	Min Grade/Score	Academic Level	)	Concurrency?

**Registration
Restrictions
(Updates only):**

Registrar's Office Use Only - Registration Restrictions:

Field(s) of Study:

Class(es):

Include

Limited to students with a class of Senior Plus (SCRRCLS_ONLY_SP)

Limited to students with a class of Non Degree (SCRRCLS_ONLY_ND)

Limited to students with a class of Advanced to Candidacy. (SCRRCLS_ONLY_DC)

Limited to students with a class of Graduate. (SCRRCLS_ONLY_GR)

Limited to students with a class of Junior Plus (SCRRCLS_ONLY_JP)

Level(s):

Include

Enrollment limited to students with a level of Non-Degree (SCRRLVL_ONLY_ND)

Limited to undergraduate level students. (SCRRLVL_ONLY_UG)

Limited to graduate level students only. (SCRRLVL_ONLY_GR)

Degree(s):

Exclude

Non-Degree Undergraduate Degree students may not enroll. (SCRRDEG_NO_NDU)

School(s):

Catalog

Description:

Communicating ~~environmental~~ science for policy is inherently challenging, ~~challenging~~ whether in academia, the public policy realm, or with ~~to~~ the general public. The aim of this course is to expose students to the multiple ways ~~environmental~~ science can be communicated to decision-makers, ~~communicated~~. Such exposure will be made both through a theoretical approach by examining science communication and policy literature, as well as through practical, hands-on activities and assignments. Students plan and carry

out their own policy engagement, from defining a policy problem and analyzing its actors through written policy products and oral briefings.

Justification:

****Changes made in this revised submission (September 5, 2026)****

The College of Science Curriculum Committee approved EVPP 429 and held EVPP 529 pending revision, asking that the proposal state what is changing and why, and that the EVPP 529 syllabus carry learning outcomes differentiated from the undergraduate outcomes. The changes below respond to that review.

1. Learning outcomes: revised and expanded to ten. Three have no undergraduate counterpart: literature synthesis, team leadership and course facilitation, and real-world engagement.
2. Differentiation between course levels: a new section below sets out the graduate expectations against the four categories named in Policy 3002. Both syllabi now carry a table summarizing the differences between the two course numbers.
3. Assignments: each of the six portfolio assignments carries an added graduate requirement, stated in the EVPP 529 syllabus.
4. Real-world engagement: required at the graduate level and graded within the engagement portfolio. It remains optional extra credit in EVPP 429.
5. Grade distribution: the EVPP 529 weighting adjusted to accommodate the required engagement.
6. Syllabus corrections: chapter exercise citations updated; prescribed page lengths removed from the assignment descriptions.

****Differentiation between course levels****

EVPP 429 and EVPP 529 are cross-level listed under University Policy 3002. Separate syllabi are submitted for each course number. Each states its own learning outcomes and expectations, and each includes a table summarizing the differences between the two.

Graduate expectations are differentiated in the four ways Policy 3002 names.

*Additional and more sophisticated reading. The weekly non-textbook reading is required for EVPP 529 and optional for EVPP 429. Graduate discussion posts must engage both the chapter and that reading and explain how the reading supports, complicates, or extends the chapter's argument; a post addressing only the chapter does not earn full credit. Graduate students also select two further readings of their own choosing, drawn from chapter reference lists or the course background list, and discuss and present on them.

*Research projects and more complex assessment. Each of the six portfolio assignments carries an added graduate requirement: primary-source documentation of the actor map, a synthesis of what each of the four policy-process frameworks adds and where they point to different timing, identification of the governing statutory text, identification of the evidence quality or synthesis framework typically used in the student's field, if any, and of the three types of uncertainty in their evidence, adaptation of the policy product across two venues, and a written post-briefing analysis. The portfolio reflection describes how the engagement aligns with the scholarly literature on science communication, public policy, and/or evidence use.

*Course facilitation. Graduate students lead the team case studies and present their self-selected readings to the class.

*Experiential activities. Graduate students must carry out an engagement with a decision-maker or issue actor (a meeting, public comment, testimony, published commentary, or practitioner interview) and document and reflect on it. This remains optional extra credit for undergraduates. Credit rests on the quality of preparation, conduct, and reflection, not on whether the decision-maker responded.

Prerequisites, credit hours, and course content are unchanged and remain comparable across the two levels, consistent with Policy 3002 sections B and C. The pairing of 429 with 529 is one level apart, within the range the policy permits.

****Summary of changes in the initial submission (August 23, 2026)****

1. Title: from “Environmental Science Communication” to “Communicating Science for Policy.”
2. Catalog description: revised to match the course’s policy-engagement focus.
3. Required text: a new open-access textbook (Routledge, 2026) replaces readings previously assembled from scattered chapters and articles. No textbook cost to students.
4. Assessment: six short applied assignments replace the term research paper. They are revised after instructor feedback and submitted as a final portfolio with a reflective essay.
5. Unchanged: course number, credit hours, prerequisites, cross-listing, delivery mode, and staffing.

EVPP 429/529 is being retitled from “Environmental Science Communication” to “Communicating Science for Policy,” with a correspondingly revised catalog description, a new required textbook, and a restructured set of assignments. The course number, credit hours, prerequisites, cross-listing, delivery mode, and staffing are unchanged. The revised title and description describe what the course has become in practice: a course on how research evidence reaches and is used by decision-makers, rather than on public communication broadly. The existing title has led students to expect a course in media or outreach, and the change will improve fit between enrolled students and course content at registration. The framing has also been broadened from environmental science to science generally, because the underlying skill gap—researchers are increasingly expected to produce work with societal impact, yet receive no formal training in policy engagement—applies across disciplines. Environmental applications remain prominent, and students select issues from their own fields.

Both course numbers are required courses in College of Science programs. EVPP 529 is one of four core courses in the Science Policy Graduate Certificate (SC-CERG-SCPO), alongside COS 510, COS 515, and POGO 794. EVPP 429 is required pre-internship coursework in the Science and Technology Policy Minor (SCTP), alongside COS 315, COS 411, a GOVT course, and a one-credit seminar. Both programs are built around placing students in policy internships. The certificate requires 120 clock hours in a federal government office, and the minor is designated a Workforce-Ready Minor requiring career-relevant assignments. The revised course serves both more directly than its predecessor. It is organized around communicating evidence to decision-makers, and its assignments produce the working documents—policy memos, one-pagers, briefings, meeting requests—that students will be expected to write during those internships and in

subsequent employment. Both course numbers continue to carry 3 credits and satisfy the same requirements; the catalog entries for both programs will need updating to the new course title, with no change to their credit totals or requirements.

The course adopts *Communicating Science for Policy: A Guide for Engaging Decision-Makers* (Routledge, 2026), an internationally authored textbook written for this audience, replacing readings previously assembled from scattered chapters and articles. The book is available open access, eliminating textbook costs. (In the interest of full disclosure, I am the lead author of the textbook, but receive no royalties from open access downloads of the textbook.) Assessment in the course shifts from a term research paper to six short applied assignments that are revised after instructor feedback and then submitted as a final portfolio with a reflective essay. Engaging a decision-maker or issue actor is required at the graduate level and available as optional extra credit of up to 5% at the undergraduate level, resting on preparation, conduct, and reflection rather than on whether anyone responds.

Does this course cover material which crosses into another department? No

Learning Outcomes:

1. Compare competing conceptualizations of science communication for policy in the scholarly literature, distinguish it from related activities, and evaluate the goals, objectives, and tactics available to researchers who engage in it.
2. Construct and defend an analysis of a policy problem relevant to their own research, drawing on primary sources such as legislative records, agency dockets, and organizational filings, and account for competing definitions of the problem held by the actors involved.
3. Select and justify a role for engaging decision-makers, weigh the assumptions and limits of the frameworks used to make that choice, and defend their selection against a competing framework in the literature.
4. Appraise a body of evidence against formal quality and synthesis criteria, distinguish aleatory, epistemic, and ontological uncertainty and say which of them further research can reduce, and communicate the evidence—including its quality, limits, and uncertainties—faithfully and usably.
5. Choose, draft, and deliver formal and informal policy communication appropriate to a specific audience and venue, and adapt one body of evidence across two venues, explaining what changes and why.
6. Analyze how institutional design shapes the use of evidence across legislatures, executives, courts, advisory bodies, and publics, compare the entry points that two different national systems open to researchers, and identify where to engage.
7. Apply the course information and skills to real-world situations, and design an evaluation plan with a theory of change, indicators, and workable measures for judging whether their communication had its intended effect.
8. Find, synthesize, and assess peer-reviewed literature beyond the assigned course readings, and judge how far it applies to communication practice.
9. Lead a team-based analytic project and guide the class's engagement with scholarly material, structuring the inquiry and taking responsibility for the final product.
10. Plan, carry out, and evaluate an engagement with a decision-maker or issue actor, and explain where the result differed from the plan.

Will this course be scheduled as a cross-level cross listed section? Yes

Please use the **Additional Attachments** button to attach two syllabi for review, one undergraduate and one graduate, preferably as separate documents. These should be provided in order to demonstrate the difference in expectations and assessments for undergraduates and graduates taking the course.

Attach Syllabus

[\[CLEAN\] EVPP_529_SPRING_2027_090526.pdf](#)

[\[TRACKED\] EVPP_529_SPRING_2027_090526.pdf](#)

Additional Attachments

[\[CLEAN\] EVPP_429_SPRING_2027_090526.pdf](#)

[\[TRACKED\] EVPP_429_SPRING_2027_090526.pdf](#)

**Specialized Course
Categories:**

Have you reached out to the Libraries to determine whether there are adequate resources to support your course? If not, please email Meg Meiman, Associate University Librarian for Learning, Research, and Engagement at mmeiman2@gmu.edu.

No

**Additional
Comments:**

The course will substantively focus on an open-access book and materials developed by the course's professor, KL Akerlof.

**Reviewer
Comments**

Jennifer Bazaz Gettys (jbazaz) (08/28/26 3:13 pm): Rollback: Per the email conversation.

Key: 6247