

Course Change Request

Date Submitted: 08/23/26 1:54 pm

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

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

Last edit: 08/23/26 1:54 pm

Changes proposed by: kakerlof

Catalog Pages
referencing this
course

[Civil and Infrastructure Engineering, BS](#)
[Climate Science, MS](#)

Select modification type:

Simple
Substantial

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

History

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

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 (SCRRVLV_ONLY_ND)

Limited to undergraduate level students. (SCRRVLV_ONLY_UG)

Limited to graduate level students only. (SCRRVLV_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:

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. Optional extra credit of up to 5% is available for engaging a decision-maker or issue actor, resting on preparation, conduct, and reflection rather than on whether anyone responds. Graduate and undergraduate requirements remain differentiated, with separate syllabi provided.

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

Learning Outcomes:

1. Explain what science communication for policy is, how it differs from related activities, and what goals, objectives, and tactics are available.
2. Identify a policy problem relevant to their research, map the actors who shape it, and assess where the issue sits in the policy process.
3. Select and justify a role for engaging decision-makers, and recognize the ethical, legal, and institutional considerations that role entails.
4. Communicate research 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.
6. Describe how legislatures, executives, courts, advisory bodies, and publics differ in their use of evidence, and identify entry points for engagement.
7. Apply the course information and skills to real-world situations, and assess whether their communication had its intended effect.

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

[EVPP_529_SPRING_2027_082326.pdf](#)

Additional Attachments

[EVPP_429_SPRING_2027_082326.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

Key: 6247