

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW PRACTICUM: COURSE SYLLABUS

University of Houston Law Center
Spring 2026

6:00 – 7:20 p.m. Tuesdays & Thursdays
Room: 213

Professor Jason A. Hill
Office hours: Tuesdays after class starting at 7:30 p.m. or
by appointment (including evenings)
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Course Subject Matter: This course will overview key areas of practice within environmental law such as regulatory counseling and permitting, litigation, enforcement, policy advocacy, and environmental aspects of commercial transactions. The course will begin with lectures and practice scenarios from different areas of environmental law, and later include visits from practicing attorneys and professionals, who will detail their practices, and may provide examples of live projects and cases for class discussion. These speakers may include private practice attorneys, former federal and state agency attorneys, in-house counsel, NGO counsel, and others.

Course objectives: To prepare students the business of law and how to counsel clients on environmental law matters and ways to assure or enforce environmental compliance strategies and obligations.

Textbook: I will provide a collection of selected readings to students. I will also try to have these materials posted on a class website or email them to students ahead of class.

Office Hours: I'll make myself available after class Tuesday, so my office hours are Tuesdays at 7:30 pm to 9 pm. My preference is that you email me in advance of Tuesday's class to let me know if you intend to take advantage of office hours, and if that time does not work for you, I am happy to make other arrangements. I can also rely extensively on e-mail queries to help students.

Grading and Explanation: Final grades will be based on class attendance and participation, in-class assignments, work product for clients, any class presentations of that final work product at the end of the semester, and participation in discussions with special guest visitors to the class. If you wish, I will allow students to provide a self-evaluation of their own work and their project team members - but this additional input is wholly voluntary.

Attendance: I will follow the Law Center attendance policy. You will not be allowed to submit your final project unless you attend 80% of the classes. While I will grant excused absences, I cannot grant an excused absence that will drop your total attendance below 80 percent. Be professional, and contact me in advance of class if you can't attend. Please contact me immediately if personal circumstances will create attendance problems for you.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI): The practice of law has rapidly embraced AI over the last couple years, and knowledge of AI technologies, as well as skillful, responsible use of AI is, therefore, an essential skill that students entering the workforce need. Clients are starting to require that certain tasks be done by AI rather than associates. There is a real-world need for students coming out of law school that have mastery of AI technology. The course will cover the use of AI in the practice of environmental law, which will include an assignment on the using AI. The use of AI to complete other classroom assignments and projects is highly encouraged, but not mandatory. However, **I ask that you include a statement on any assignment in which you use AI that explains how you used it as part of your final work product.**

Syllabus Subject to Change: The practice of environmental law is constantly evolving, as such the syllabus changes from year to year. For example, there was considerable focus on climate change and environmental justice issues and no focus on AI when I started teaching this course. In addition, the practice of environmental law is governed by new developments in this space; throughout the semester we will respond to any new developments, last spring led to many new changes in policy, necessitating supplemental materials throughout the semester. While this semester will likely be less dynamic than the first few months that a new administration brought last spring, the pace of new developments in the environmental law space can still be expected to unfold quickly this spring.

In addition, schedules change and new opportunities arise throughout the semester for guest speakers. While I believe I have lined up a great slate of speakers this semester, dates for all the speakers has not been firmly established yet, and may need to be adjusted since most are practicing attorneys. If you have someone you would like to have present to the class, please let me know, and we can see about accommodating the request.

SCHEDULE

| No . | Date | Topics | Guest Speaker(s) | Assigned Readings | Extra Resources and Comments |
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| | | MASTER TRACKING LIST FOR PROJECTS | | | |
| 1. | Jan. 20, 2026 | Introduction: Course Overview and Review of Work Process | | Lecture | |
| 2. | Jan. 22, 2026 | <p>1. Career Options: Jobs in Environmental Law</p> <p>2. Networking: It's Not What You Know, It's Who You Know</p> <p>3. Business Development: Being a Lawyer without Clients, Is Kinda Like Being Unemployed</p> | | <p>Environmental Law Careers full-working-draft-2.pdf (harvard.edu) (p. 7-25; 34-40)</p> <p>Business Development Article</p> <p>Lecture</p> | <p>Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources (americanbar.org)</p> <p>State Bar of Texas Environmental & Natural Resources Law Section (texenrls.org)</p> <p>Houston Bar Association (hba.org)</p> <p>Student Organizations - University of Houston Law Center (uh.edu)</p> |
| 3. | Jan. 27, 2026 | Practical Career, Networking, and BD Advice | Potential Guest Speaker: TBD | <p>2026 LinkedIn Guide for Lawyers - Headline Examples, Profile Tips & More (tealhq.com)</p> <p>Leveraging LinkedIn for Lawyers: How to Turn Connections to Clients LinkedIn</p> | |
| 4. | Jan. 29, 2026 | Finding Jobs and Interviewing | Potential Guest Speaker: Roseanna Baber Hill | Any Reading in Preparation of Guest Speaker will be assigned the week before class | |

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| 5. | Feb. 3, 2026 | Application of Artificial Intelligence to the Practice of Environmental Law | Guest Speaker: Henal Patel | Any Reading in Preparation of Guest Speaker will be assigned the week before class | AI Assignment Given |
| 6. | Feb. 5, 2026 | Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence | Guest Speaker: Samir Suresh Patel Professionals Holland & Knight | ABA issues first ethics guidance on a lawyer's use of AI tools | |
| 7. | Feb. 10, 2026 | NEPA: Drafting and commenting on Environmental Review Documents | | Workshop reviewing NEPA Document as a class Draft Proposed Program Federal Register Notice for National OCS Program | Comment Docket for OCS Program BOEM Website on OCS Program |
| 8. | Feb. 12, 2026 | Regulatory Comments and Rulemaking | | National Primary Drinking Water Regulation for Perchlorate Wyoming Coal Program Lecture | Pending Regulations Regulations.gov |
| | Feb. 17, 2026 | Environmental Litigation: APA vs. De Novo 1. FOIA: Getting What the Agency Has 2. Complaints and Answers | | FOIA Online Draft FOIA request (Word and .pdf) Guidance for Compiling AR e1282fw5.pdf (fws.gov) | |

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| | | 3. Administrative Records 4. Discovery | | Guidance for Compiling AR U.S. Attorneys' Bulletin Vol 48 No 01, Environmental Justice (pp. 8-12) | |
| 9. | Feb. 19, 2026 | Environmental Litigation 1. Briefing on the Merits 2. Trial 3. Appeals | | Research Assignment: Find a Complaint Challenging a Project, and Merits Briefs of the Parties Workshop: Class Review of Briefs | Environmental Litigation 1. Briefing on the Merits 2. Trial 3. Appeals |
| 10. | Feb. 24, 2026 | Recent Developments in Environmental Law | Potential Guest Speaker on Alaska Issues: Jessie Brown | This week is reserved for covering new developments that occur during the spring semester. Reading will be supplemented before class. | |
| 11. | Feb. 26, 2026 | Recent Developments in Environmental Law | | This week is reserved for covering new developments that occur during the spring semester. Reading will be supplemented before class. | |
| 12. | Mar. 3, 2026 | Texas Environmental Agencies | Guest Speaker: Caleb Shook | Any Reading in Preparation of Guest Speaker will be assigned the week before class | |
| 13. | Mar. 5, 2026 | Federal Public Lands | Guest Speaker: Michael Williams | A Primer on Public Land Law The Federal Land Policy and | Federal Lands and Related Resources: Overview and Selected Issues for the 118th Congress Congress.gov Library of Congress |

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| | | | | Management Act of 1976 | |
| 14. | Mar. 10, 2026 | Environmental Non-Profits | Guest Speaker: Kym Meyer | Southern Environmental Law Center | |
| 15. | Mar. 12, 2026 | | Potential Guest Speaker: TBD | Any Reading in Preparation of Guest Speaker will be assigned the week before class | |
| | March 16-20 | SPRING BREAK | | | |
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| 17. | March 24, 2026 | Federal Lobbying | Guest Speaker: Stephen Reynolds | Any Reading in Preparation of Guest Speaker will be assigned the week before class | |
| 18. | March 26, 2026 | In-House Practice | Guest Speaker: Will Sims | Any Reading in Preparation of Guest Speaker will be assigned the week before class | |
| 19. | March 31, 2026 | Offshore Wind | Guest Speaker: Joshua Belcher | Any Reading in Preparation of Guest Speaker will be assigned the week before class | Offshore Wind Pause Restarting Offshore Wind |
| 20. | Apr. 2, 2026 | | Potential Guest Speaker: TBD | Any Reading in Preparation of Guest Speaker will be assigned the week before class | |
| 21. | April 7, 2026 | | Potential Guest Speaker: TBD | Any Reading in Preparation of Guest Speaker will be assigned the week before class | |

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| 22. | April 9, 2026 | | Potential Guest Speaker: TBD | Any Reading in Preparation of Guest Speaker will be assigned the week before class | |
| 23. | April 14, 2026 | Writing break and individual review of projects | | | |
| 24. | April 16, 2026 | Writing break and individual review of projects | | | |
| 25. | April 21, 2026 | Writing break and individual review of projects | | | |
| 26. | April 23, 2026 | Writing break and individual review of project | | | |
| 27. | April 28, 2026 | Writing break and individual review of project | | | |
| 28. | April 30, 2026 | Writing break and individual review of project | | | |
| 29 | May 5, 2026 | Writing break and individual review of project - Last Day of Class | | | |
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