

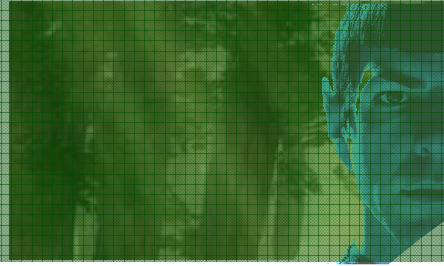
FNP-32306
Economic Aspects of
Forest and Nature Conservation



Course syllabus

Forest and Nature Conservation Policy Group
Wageningen University

March – April 2011



Profile of the course

This course offers a deeper insight into the practical field of economics in forest and nature conservation and its theoretical implications. The focus of economics is on the question how people (individuals) choose to use their scarce resources in an attempt to satisfy their unlimited demands. In this course the central focus will be on the analysis, understanding and application of (individual) human decision-making with regard to the use, management and conservation of nature and forests. The course first of all focuses on the understanding of (individual) decision-making and decision-making processes. Because decision-making situations differ (e.g. resource type, available information, presence of conflicting views), in the second part of the course different types of decision situations in forest and nature conservation will be discussed. In the third part, the possibilities and limitations of the different decision-making approaches in the different decision situations will be investigated. Different topics from forest and nature conservation will be used as examples to reflect on related theory and practice, such as forestry markets, rentseeking, the Faustman formula, conflicts, war and power. The course will not be limited to a certain region, thus including Dutch/European/global applications and examples.

Learning outcomes

After successful completion of the course, you are expected to be able to

- describe the theoretical and practical field of economics in forest and nature conservation
- analyze current issues in forest and nature conservation from an economic perspective
- describe and explain some of the most important (individual) decision-making approaches in forest and nature conservation
- describe and explain the different types of decision situations in forest and nature conservation
- describe and explain the extent in which different decision-making approaches can be used in the context of forest and nature conservation
- analyze and assess decision-making in different decision situations in forest and nature conservation
- design a strategy to influence decision-making in an actual situation in forest and nature conservation

Principal themes of the contents

The course exists out of the following themes

- *Economics in forest and nature conservation*: Economics, agency, scarcity, decision-making, rational choice, decision-making theory, normative/positive economics
- *Decision situations*: Certainty, risk, uncertainty, ignorance
- *Decision-making approaches*: Rational choice, public choice
- *Trivial systems*: Mechanistic systems, cybernetic systems, chaotic systems, terra incognita
- *Non-trivial systems*: Individual systems, cooperative games, non-cooperative situations, strategic games
- *Decision-making in the practice of forest and nature conservation*: Markets, rentseeking, conflicts and war, power, war, lobby and actions



Assumed prerequisite knowledge

FNP-21306 Management of Forest and Nature Organizations

Continuation course

MSc Thesis Forest and Nature Conservation Policy

Coordinator and lecturers

Dr. ir. M.A. (Marjanke) Hoogstra, Marjanke.Hoogstra@wur.nl, Forest and Nature Conservation Policy Group, GAIA Building/room B309, phone: 486206

Guest lecturers:

Ir. M. (Maarten) Punt, Forest and Nature Conservation Policy Group

Prof. dr. B. (Bas) Arts, Forest and Nature Conservation Policy Group

Others to be determined

Language of instruction and examination

English

Educational activities

The course includes different learning activities:

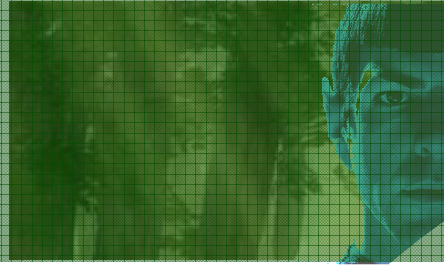
- preparing for and attendance of lectures on the topics indicated above
- self-study and preparation for examination
- a group assignment

Communications

In addition to the classes, contact is made by using the website of the course (<https://portal.wur.nl/personal/hoogs001/fnp-32306/index.htm>). This website provides access to various course materials such as PowerPoint presentations, assignments, calendar. This website should be visited regularly as news and new documents will be added frequently. You are responsible to make sure that you check this regularly so that key announcements are not missed, etc. In case you have questions and/or remarks (either positive or negative), it is always possible to contact me (the course coordinator) during the classes, by phone, through e-mail or visit.

Assessment strategy

The extent to which you reached the learning objectives will be tested by (1) a 3 hour final individual written exam and (2) a group assignment. The final exam will count 60% and the group assignment 40% towards your final grade. You need to have a minimum partial grade of 5.5 for *both* components. In case you have a grade lower than 5.5 for the final exam, several options exist during the year to take a re-exam. In case your group assignment is graded lower than 5.5, an additional assignment has to be carried out to be graded with a 5.5 or higher.



Learning objectives	Assessment method	
	Written exam	Group assignment
▪ describe the theoretical and practical field of economics in forest and nature conservation	X	
▪ analyze current issues in forest and nature conservation from an economic perspective	X	
▪ describe and explain some of the most important (individual) decision-making approaches in forest and nature conservation	X	
▪ describe and explain the different types of decision situations in forest and nature conservation	X	
▪ describe and explain the extent in which different decision-making approaches can be used in the context of forest and nature conservation	X	X
▪ analyze and assess decision-making in different decision situations in forest and nature conservation	X	X
▪ design a strategy to influence decision-making in an actual situation in forest and nature conservation		X

Final exam

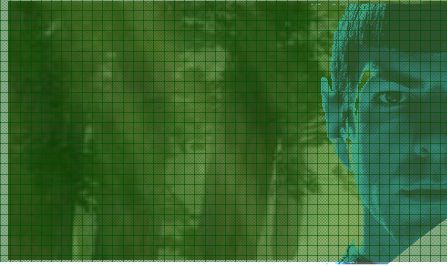
The exam is an open book exam with open questions and will cover all material included in lectures and reading assignments. A list of topics and themes you have to know for the exam will be distributed during the course. A test-exam will also be made available.

The exam will take place in week 34 (Friday, 29th of April, 09:00 – 12:00, C317). The re-exam is scheduled for week 44 (Thursday, 7th of July, 09:00 – 12:00, P31) and the total re-exam for week 51 (Tuesday, 23rd of August, 14:00 – 17:00, C30).

The exam will be graded by the coordinator of the course based on a grading key. After the exams are graded and the grades are published, you have the possibility to set up a meeting with the coordinator to check your answers and compare them to the grading key. During this meeting you can discuss the grading of your exam with the coordinator.

Group assignment

Besides the exam, the other main requirement of the course will be a group assignment. The group assignment will involve a lobby project which has to be described in a paper and be presented in the class. Groups of students (consisting out of 3 to 4 students) will act as a group of lobbyists for one interest group involved in discussions on a 'NRM' related problem, and will prepare a road-map, how to successfully set up a campaign to persuade public opinion in favor or against a certain organization or public figure or activity.



For clarification matters: the environmental problem may be related to a 'green' environmental topic, and not to a 'blue' one. Green refers to 'nature', blue to 'technology'; e.g. 'bio-ethanol' is 'green'; solar-energy / windmill is 'blue'. Let's stick to our core competencies: we are NRM's and not industrial engineers.

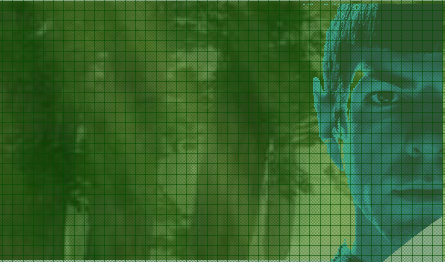
EXAMPLE (not green ;-)

GEN-TECH CORP. is a company involved in genetic-engineering and got patents on procedures to 'create' cats and dogs that will cause no allergic reactions. GEN-TECH CORP's strategy 1 may be classical advertising to sell some of their pets; strategy 2 may be an attempt to influence social systems (health-care, legal, NGOs ...) in a way, that in future it will be forbidden to keep 'classical' animals ('allergic animals') at home due to the 'passive animal petting allergies' caused by animal owners in public. Guess which strategy may offer greater chances, when unlimited resources for lobbying are available...

The problem you choose as a group must be approved by the coordinator of the course. By Tuesday, 5th of April, you have to send me (the coordinator) a brief proposal stating what issue your group wants to work on. This proposal need not be more than a page or two. I will read and return your proposal, either approving your proposal or suggesting (or insisting) that you do something different. Why would I not approve a proposal? It could be too simple, too difficult, too unfocused, etc. The important thing is that you choose something of interest to you. Do not, for example, choose a topic simply because you think it would be of interest to us. If you are not interested in the topic yourself, then your lack of interest will undoubtedly be reflected in the quality of the work. If you are interested, then you will find the entire enterprise worthwhile. Our hope is that you will choose something that interests and challenges you, and that you learn something in the process.

Every group has to write an essay type of document, in which you clarify the main results of your consultancy work. You are free to use your own format, but during the course an example format will be distributed in order to give you some support. Every group also has to present their work. The presentation consists of two parts:

1. PUBLIC HEARING - For the public-hearing ('road-shows', TV, conferences, ...) your group will need some good material to support the position. Your job is to prepare a good set of presentation material (ppt, hand-outs, if you like: make your own movie or whatever!) for the public hearing we will do during the 'class-room experiment', when it's your turn to get the best out of the situation for your client and try to convince the audience of whatever you want them to think/do.
2. HIDDEN AGENDA - At the end of presentation and public discussion we will add one element, that's never seen in public! You will explain to the audience, what your hidden agenda ('the normative management strategy') is about. As your colleagues hardly will find the time to read your essay beforehand, it might be quite funny to tell your student colleagues, what has been your strategy and why you did, what you did during the presentation. Recommended: 1 or 2 additional powerpoint slides and 1 page of handout, to be distributed / shown after the 'public hearing' took place.



Group presentations (public hearing and hidden agenda) will be held on Thursday, 14th of April, 13.30 – 17.15 hours. The essays have to be sent in before Friday 29th of April, 17.15 hours, in pdf-format. For essays that are handed in after the deadline, points will be deducted.

Both the presentation and the report will be evaluated and graded by the coordinator of the course based on evaluation sheet with criteria for both the presentations and the report. The evaluation criteria for the presentations include:

- Structure and content of the presentations;
- Convincement of the presentations;
- The use of visual aids;
- Speaker's ability to present.

The evaluation criteria for the report include:

- Description of the group of lobbyists;
- Explanation of client and client's objective;
- Case description;
- Classical solutions;
- The lobby strategy;
- The feasibility analysis;
- The roadmap;
- Layout and design.

The evaluation sheet will be send to all groups. The groups can discuss their grade with the coordinator based on this evaluation sheet.

Participation

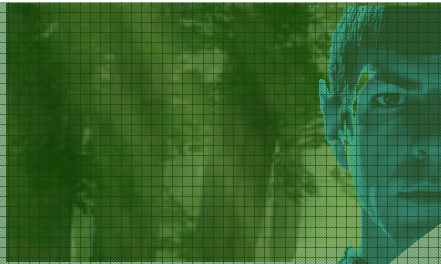
In a course like this, the adage “garbage-in-garbage-out” is especially true. Students will only get out of this course as much as they are willing to put in. Although we will straight-lecture perhaps one half of the time, we do as much as we can to make this a seminar, with class discussion of the issues. For that to work, we need to come up with discuss-able questions and you need to pick up that challenge when we do. Your participation in class also provides essential feedback to us regarding how clearly the topic is getting across.

However, I realize that volunteering to speak up in class is hard for some people, almost impossible for others. As a result, I don't like to force people to speak. Each year, we wrestle with this in seminar-like classes. This year, I would like to try the following policy. Please let me know if you feel that it is working poorly - or well.

First of all, I expect you to come to class prepared. Preparation is how well you know the material when called upon and how much effort you put into making the class work. Because the material of the course deals with the substance of everyday life (i.e., decision making), a test of its usefulness and of your understanding is to make contact between it and your own experiences. I expect that everyone will have something to contribute and I encourage you all to participate in class discussions. I also encourage you to bring in material from the outside that relates to course material, such as public pronouncements that seem to embody doubtful decision-making principles, or own experiences with decision-making that follow the standard decision-making models (or maybe not), etc. Every start of a lecture afternoon, we will spend some time on discussing this input.

Learning materials and resources

Will be distributed via the website of the course



Outline and schedule of the program of the course

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY	TOPIC	LECTURER	ROOM
Mo 07-03-2011	13:30 17:15	Classroom Lectures	Intro economics	MH	C30
Tu 08-03-2011	13:30 17:15	Classroom Lectures	Rational choice	MH	C30
We 09-03-2011	13:30 17:15	Self-study	Read articles	-	
Th 10-03-2011	13:30 17:15	Classroom Lectures	Certainty, risk, uncertainty, ignorance	MH	C30
Fr 11-03-2011	13:30 17:15	Self-study	Read articles	-	
Mo 14-03-2011	13:30 17:15	Classroom Lectures	DM situations: trivial and non-trivial systems	MH	C30
Tu 15-03-2011	13:30 17:15	Classroom Lectures	Trivial systems	MH	C30
We 16-03-2011	13:30 17:15	Self-study	Read articles		
Th 17-03-2011	13:30 17:15	Classroom Lectures	Decision-making in single trivial systems (I)	MH	C30
Fr 18-03-2011	13:30 17:15	Self-study	Read articles		
Mo 21-03-2011	13:30 17:15	Classroom Lectures	DM in single trivial systems (II)	MH	C30
Tu 22-03-2011	13:30 17:15	Classroom Lectures	Non trivial systems Game theory	MH MP	C30
We 23-03-2011	13:30 17:15	Self-study	Read articles		
Th 24-03-2011	13:30 17:15	Classroom Lectures	Conflicts and war	WL PW	C30
Fr 25-03-2011	13:30 17:15	Self-study	Read articles		
Mo 28-03-2011	13:30 17:15	Self-study	Read articles		
Tu 29-03-2011	13:30 17:15	Classroom Lectures	Rational choice in DM situations	MH	C30
We 30-03-2011	13:30 17:15	Classroom Lectures	DM approaches from other sciences Power	BA BA	C30
Th 31-03-2011	13:30 17:15	Self-study	Read articles		
Fr 01-04-2011	13:30 17:15	Self-study	Read articles		
Mo 04-04-2011	13:30 15:00 15:00 17:15	Classroom Lectures Group assignment	Intro assignment Work on project proposal	MH	C30
Tu 05-04-2011	13:30 17:15	Group assignment	Work on project proposal		
We 06-04-2011	13:30 17:15	Group assignment	Discussion of groups with coordinator	MH	B309
Th 07-04-2011	13:30 15:00 15:00 17:15	Group assignment Classroom Lecture	Work on project proposal Lobby Greenpeace	NH	C30
Fr 08-04-2011	13:30 17:15	Group assignment	Group work		
Mo 11-04-2011	13:30 17:15	Group assignment	Group work		
Tu 12-04-2011	13:30 17:15	Group assignment	Group work		
We 13-04-2011	13:30 17:15	Group assignment	Group work		
Th 14-04-2011	13:30 17:15	Classroom presentations	Public Hearing and Hidden Agenda	MH	C30
Fri 15-04-2011	13:30 17:15	Group assignment	Group work		

MH – Marjanke Hoogstra (FNP)
MP – Maarten Punt (FNP)
BA – Bas Arts (FNP)

WL – Wouter Leer
PW – Piet Wit
NH – Noor van der Hoeven (Greenpeace)