

CONF 399: Environmental Conflict and Its Resolution

Thursdays 4:30 – 7:10

Fine Art Building, B108

Instructor, Dr. Steve Garon; email: sgaron@gmu.edu; (703) 284-6190 – I will respond to your email or voicemail within 48 hours

Office hours by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide an overview of the field of environmental conflict resolution (ECR). Students in this course will explore the nature and dynamics of environmental conflict and how it differs from other forms of social conflict; consider and apply theories and methods for analyzing environmental conflict; and explore forms of practice for managing and/or resolving environment conflict. Students will also consider special challenges associated with ECR, such as what constitutes “success” in ECR cases, the perceived tension between environmental and conflict resolution goals, and ethical obligations of ECR practitioners.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required text (available in the GMU bookstore):

Dryzek, J.S. (2005). *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses*, 2nd Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Additional readings will (articles and book chapters) be posted via the class web page on E-reserve or distributed in class. Readings are listed week-by-week in the schedule section below.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Please come to class on time and prepared. Bring your readings with you. Turn off cell phones and other electronic devices. Remain in class unless you have an emergency. The use of laptops in class is discouraged except for course related activities. If an emergency prevents you from attending class, you should let me know ahead of time when possible. Please contact a classmate to find out what was missed. You are responsible for all announcements, assignments, and date changes made in class, and for all material covered in class, even if they are not there. The best way to contact me is by e-mail. I shall respond to your query within 48 hours. Please use your GMU email account when communicating with me.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

George Mason University provides each professor discretion to determine +/- grades for the semester. My policy is that averages ending in 9 or higher will receive a “plus” score (e.g. 79 = C+) and averages ending in 0 or 1 will receive “minus” scores (e.g. 80 or 81 = B-).

Participation 20 %

Because much of this course involves in-class, experiential learning and group discussion, participation constitutes a significant portion of the course grade. Consistent with the classroom etiquette described above, course attendance is expected and is a large part of your participation grade. *However, just showing up for class does not represent 'A' participation work.* Students are expected to show up on time for each class and stay for the duration, complete their reading assignments on time, and to participate in class discussions and exercises. Sometimes absence from class is unavoidable. If you know you are going to be absent, contact me in advance. Otherwise I expect you to be here.

Essays 40%

I will assign two essays over the course of the semester, one in mid-September and the other in mid-November. Each essay is expected to be 4-6 pages in length and is worth 20% of your grade. In the essay assignments, I will ask you to reflect on, analyze, integrate and/or apply specific course readings. No outside research will be necessary. Essay topics will be provided two weeks prior to the due date. I do give weight to organization, writing style, and mechanics as well as demonstrated understanding and presentation of issues.

- Essay #1: assigned 9/15; due 9/29
- Essay #2: assigned 11/3; due 11/17

Mid-term Exam 20 %

The mid-term exam will be an in-class essay exam (you will need a bluebook). The mid-term represents the course transitions from “analysis” toward “resolution.” Hence, I use the mid-term as an opportunity to check in on your understanding of analytical tools. Mid-term will be held on 10/20.

Individual Case Analysis/Situation Assessment and Presentation 20%

Students will independently research an environmental conflict to conduct a *situation assessment* and suggest a *process* for resolving the conflict. This will be a powerpoint presentation rather than a conventional research paper. I will provide a template for preparing the situation assessment after the mid-term. You will present the results of your assessment during the final class on 12/8.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Academic Honesty: All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at academicintegrity.gmu.edu. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. With specific regards to plagiarism, three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. If you have questions about when the contributions of others to your work must be acknowledged and appropriate ways to cite those contributions, please talk with the professor.

S-CAR requires that all written work submitted in partial fulfillment of course or degree requirements must be available in electronic form so that it can be compared with electronic databases, as well as submitted to commercial services to which the School subscribes. Faculty may at any time submit a student's work without prior permission from the student. Individual instructors may require that written work be submitted in electronic as well as printed form. S-CAR's policy on plagiarism is supplementary to the George Mason University Honor Code; it is not intended to replace or substitute for it.

Late Work: Class assignments that are submitted late will be accepted and graded at the discretion of the professor, generally only in cases of documented personal illness or family emergency.

Paper Format: Papers for the course should be typed, double-spaced, have 1” margins, and use a common 12-point font. The pages should be numbered and stapled together. Papers should have a title, include your name, course name, and the instructor’s name. Sources should be cited using a single standard academic citation format.

Student Resources: GMU Writing Center. The Writing Center is available if you need assistance with writing your papers. (<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>). Disability Support Services: Any student with learning disabilities or other conditions that may affect academic performance should: 1) contact the Office of Disability Support Services (ODSS) to determine the possible accommodations you might need; and 2) have the ODSS contact me to discuss reasonable accommodations. ODSS coordinates services for students with disabilities and are your first point of contact if you need assistance. Library Services: The CAR library liaison is Melissa Johnson (703-993-2212). Contact her for specific questions about holdings and research regarding the CAR field.

ANTICIPATED CLASS SCHEDULE, TOPICS, AND READINGS

9/1 Introduction to the Course/Syllabus Review
Getting to Know You
Working Definitions
ECR Challenges

Readings for 9/8

- Dryzek, J.S. (2005). Chapters 1-3

- Kuzmiak, D.T. (1991). The American Environmental Movement. The Geographical Journal, Vol. 157, No. 3, 265-278.

9/8 About the “Environment”
How Did “Environment” Become an Issue?
Understanding Environmental Discourses

Reading for 9/15

- Dietz, T. (2001). Thinking About Environmental Conflict. In L.S. Kadous (Ed.), *Celebrating Scholarship*, (31-54). Fairfax, Virginia: College of Arts and Sciences, George Mason University.
- Gould, K.A, Schnaiberg, A. & Weinberg, A.S. (1996). Transnational Structures and the Limits of Local Resistance. *Local Environmental Struggles: Citizen Activism in the Treadmill of Production* (1-41). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Susskind, L. (1981). Environmental Mediation and the Accountability Problem. *Vermont Law Review*. 6, 1-47 (read only pp 1-18 at this time)

9/15 About Environmental Conflict
What Is Unique/Different About Environmental Conflict?
What are the Implications about Prospects for Resolution?

Reading for 9/22

- Emerson, K., Nabatchi, T, O'Leary, R., and Stephens. J. (2003). The Challenges of Environmental Conflict Resolution. In R. O'Leary and L.B. Bingham (Eds.), *The Promise and Performance of Environmental Conflict Resolution* (3-26). Washington, DC: Resources for the Future

Essay #1 Assigned

9/22 ECR in the Federal Sector
How ECR is Being Used
Efforts to Evaluate ECR Outcomes

Readings for 9/29

- Dryzek, J.S. (2005). Chapters 4-6

9/29 Approaches to Solving Environmental Problems
Development of ECR
Forms and Examples of ECR Practice

Essay #1 Due

Readings for 10/6:

- Daniels, S.E. and Walker, G.B. (2001). Understanding Conflict Situations. *Working through Environmental Conflict: The Collaborative Learning Approach* (25-53). Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Indigenous Facilitation and Mediation Project. 2004. *The Satisfaction Triangle: A Simple Measure for Negotiations and Decision Making*. (Unpublished). Native Title Research Unit, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Canberra.

10/6 Understanding Environmental Conflict Situations
Substance, Process, and Relationships
Theoretical/Analytical Frameworks

Readings for 10/13

- Carpenter, S., and Kennedy, W.J.D. (1988). Analyzing the Conflict. *Managing Public Disputes* (71-91). San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Bean, M., Fisher, L., and Eng, M.(2007). "Assessment in Environmental and Public Policy Conflict Resolution: Emerging Theory, Patterns of Practice, and a Conceptual Framework." *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, vol. 24, no.4.

10/13 Conducting Situation Assessments

No reading assigned for 10/20. Prepare for mid-term exam.

10/20 Mid-term Exam

Readings for 10/27

- Dukes, E.F. (2007). "What We Know About Environmental Conflict Resolution: An Analysis Based on Research." *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, vol 22, no. 1-2.
- Susskind, L., and Cruikshank, J. (1987). Theory and Practice of Dispute Resolution. *Breaking the Impasse: Consensual Approaches to Resolving Public Disputes* (16-34). New York: Basic Books.

10/27 ECR Practice I

Readings for 11/3

- Moore. C.W. (1996). How Mediation Works. *The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict, 2nd Edition* (13-43). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- National Research Council (2008). The Promise and Perils of Public Participation. *Public Participation in Environmental Assessment and Decision Making* (33-74). Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

11/3 ECR Practice II

Essay #2 Assigned

Readings for 11/10:

- Adler, P.S., and Birkhoff, J.E. Building Trust: When Knowledge from "Here" Meets Knowledge from "Away." National Policy Consensus Center.

- Brown, P. (2001). Popular Epidemiology and Toxic Waste Contamination: Lay and Professional Ways of Knowing. In R.S. Frey (Ed.), *The Environment and Society Reader*, (301-319). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Harris, S., and Harper, B. (1997). The Native American Subsistence Scenario and a Tribal Risk Model. *Risk Policy Report*. June 20, 23.

11/10 Accommodating Different Forms of Knowledge in ECR Practices
 What Weight to Give to Scientific/Technical Information?
 How to Incorporate Indigenous Ways of Knowing?

Readings for 11/17

- Birkhoff, J.E., and Lowry, K. (2003). Whose Reality Counts? The Challenges of Environmental Conflict. In R. O’Leary and L.B. Bingham (Eds.), *The Promise and Performance of Environmental Conflict Resolution* (27-50). Washington, DC: Resources for the Future.
- Orr, P.J., Emerson, K., and Keyes, D. (2008). “Environmental Conflict Resolution Practice and Performance: An Evaluation Framework. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, vol 25, no. 3.
- Foley, T. (2007). Environmental Conflict Resolution: “Relational and Environmental Attentiveness as Measures of Success.” *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, vol. 24, no.4.

11/17 Evaluating ECR
 What Constitutes Success?
 What Are Mediator Ethical Obligations?

Essay #2 Due

Readings for 12/1:

- McClosky, J.M. (1996). “The skeptic: collaboration has its limits.” *High Country News*, 28(9).
- Bryant, B. (1995). Issues and Potential Policies and Solutions for Environmental Justice: An Overview. In B. Bryant (Ed.), *Environmental Justice: Issues, Policies, and Solutions* (8-34). Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Dryzek, J.S. (2005). Chapter 10

12/1 Environmental Justice, Environmentalism, and ECR

12/8 Student Presentations and Course Wrap-Up

Situation Assessment Powerpoint/Presentation Due