

## **CONF 399: Environmental Conflict and Its Resolution**

Mondays 4:30 – 7:10

Robinson Hall, A248

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 (best on Mondays either prior to or following class)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will provide an overview of the field of environmental conflict resolution (ECR), which has grown into a significant substantive practice area within the greater enterprise of conflict analysis and resolution. ECR deals with conflicts or high-stakes decisions related to natural resource management, the use of public lands, endangered species, water resources, energy, air quality, and toxics, to name a few issues. At the heart of environmental conflicts are different perspectives over the worth or value of the natural environment, its resilience, and humankind's relationship to/with it.

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 addressing past instances of environmental injustice, the appropriate use of scientific information, the perceived tension between environmental and conflict resolution goals, and what constitutes “success” in ECR cases.

### **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 you are not present. 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. Students are expected to show up on time for each class and stay for the duration, complete their reading assignments on time, write a brief reflection paper (~3 pages) and participate in class discussions and exercises. In addition, at some point(s) during the semester, each student will be required to present on class readings and lead the discussion. 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.

- Discourse Reflection Paper: Assigned 9/17; due 9/24

### **Essays 40%**

I will assign two essays over the course of the semester, one in late September and the other in late October. 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 9/24; due 10/9
- Essay #2: assigned 10/29; due 11/12

### **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 10/15.

### **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.

- You will present the results of your assessment during the final two weeks of class (either 11/26 or 12/3).

## 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](http://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  
(Bibliography Follows Schedule)**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings (to be done prior to class)</b>	<b>Other Assignments</b>
8/27	Introduction to the Course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Why “Environmental” Conflict</li> <li>▪ Conflict Vocabulary</li> </ul>		
9/3	Labor Day – no class		
9/10	About the “Environment” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Brief History of the U.S. Environmental Movement</li> <li>▪ Environmental Discourses Part I</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dryzek, Chapters 1-6</li> </ul>	
9/17	Environmental Discourses Part II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dryzek, Chapters 7-11</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discourse Reflection Paper Assigned</li> </ul>
9/24	About Environmental Conflict – Part I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Elements of</li> <li>▪ Analytical Framework 1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dietz</li> <li>▪ Susskind and Weinstein</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discourse Reflection Paper Due</li> <li>▪ Essay #1 Assigned</li> </ul>
10/1	About Environmental Conflict – Part II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analytical Framework 2</li> <li>▪ Whose Home on the Range (video)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Walker &amp; Daniels</li> <li>▪ Layzer</li> <li>▪ Indigenous Facilitation and Mediation Project</li> </ul>	
10/9 (Tues)	Conducting Situation Assessments for Environmental Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Susskind and Thomas-Larmer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Essay #1 Due</li> </ul>
10/15	Midterm Exam		
10/22	ECR Practice Part I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Case Typology</li> <li>▪ The Question of Who Participates and How</li> <li>▪ How to Evaluate “Success”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emerson, Nabatchi, and Stephens</li> <li>▪ Birkhoff and Lowry</li> </ul>	
10/29	ECR Practice Part II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Principles of Practice</li> <li>▪ Simulation – determining participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ McKearnan and Field</li> <li>▪ Smith</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Essay #2 Assigned</li> </ul>

11/5	ECR Practice Part III ▪ What Third Parties Do	▪ Carpenter & Kennedy	
11/12	Environmental Negotiation Simulation (entire class period)	▪ Elliott	▪ Essay #2 Due
11/19	Environmental Justice and ECR	▪ Bullard ▪ Byrne, Martinez, and Glover ▪ McClosky	
11/26	▪ Science and ECR ▪ Student Assessment Presentations	▪ Adler and Birkhoff ▪ Brown	▪ Assessment Presentation Due
12/3	▪ Student Assessment Presentations ▪ Wrap Up		▪ Assessment Presentation Due

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

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.

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.

Bullard, R.D. (2001). Decision Making. In L. Westra and B.E. Lawson (Eds.), *Faces of Environmental Racism: Confronting Issues of Global Justice, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, (3-28). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Byrne, J., Martinez, C. and Glover, L. (2002). A Brief on Environmental Justice. In J. Byrre, L. Glover, and C. Martinez (Eds.), *Environmental Justice: Discourses in International Political Economy* (3-17). New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

Carpenter, S., and Kennedy, W.J.D. (1988). Adopting Procedures, Educating Parties, and Developing Options: Reaching and Carrying Out Agreements. *Managing Public Disputes* (116-154). San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Daniels, S.E. and Walker, G.B. (2001). Understanding Conflict Situations. *Working through Environmental Conflict: The Collaborative Learning Approach* (25-53). Westport, CT: Praeger.

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.

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

Elliott, M.L.P. (1999). The Role of Facilitators, Mediators, and Other Consensus Building Practitioners. In L. Susskind, S. McKernan, and J. Thomas-Larmer (Eds.), *The Consensus Building Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to Reaching Agreement* (199-239). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

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

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.

Layzer, J.A. (2012). A Policymaking Framework. *The Environmental Case: Translating Values into Policy, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* (1-28). Washington, DC: CQ Press.

McClosky, J.M. (1996). "The skeptic: collaboration has its limits." *High Country News*, 28(9).

McKernan, S. and Field, P. (1999). The Northern Oxford County Coalition: Four Towns Tackle a Public Health Mystery. In L. Susskind, S. McKernan, and J. Thomas-Larmer (Eds.), *The Consensus Building Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to Reaching Agreement* (711-741). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Smith, M. *The Catron County Citizens Group: A Case Study in Community Collaboration*. New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution.

Susskind, L. and Weinstein, A. (1980). Towards a Theory of Environmental Dispute Resolutions. *Environmental Affairs Law Review*. 9, 311-357.

Susskind, L., and Thomas-Larmer, J. (1999). Conducting a Conflict Situation Assessment. In L. Susskind, S. McKernan, and J. Thomas-Larmer (Eds.), *The Consensus Building Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to Reaching Agreement*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.