GEO 430/530 - Syllabus
Resilience-Based Natural Resource Management

GEO 420/520
Winter 2015
Tu/Th 12:00-1:20pm
Wilkinson 108

Professor Hannah Gosnell
Wilkinson 260
541-737-1222
Office Hours: Tu 1:30-3:30
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Catalog course description. RESILIENCE-BASED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (3). Causes and consequences of conflict over natural resource management at local to global scales; principles for managing social-ecological systems for resilience. Field trip(s) may be required; transportation fee charged.

“Over the past 50 years, humans have changed ecosystems faster and more extensively than in any period in human history. This has been due largely to rapidly growing demands for food, freshwater, timber, fiber, and fuel. The result has been a substantial and largely irreversible loss in the diversity of life on Earth. The pressures on ecosystems will increase globally in coming decades unless human attitudes and actions change.” (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005)

This is a critical time to be studying the geography of resource use, as the statement above attests. We are at a crossroads, and the need for creative solutions to the many environmental problems we face is profound. Before we can develop such solutions, however, we need to understand the roots and drivers of the problems.

This course introduces students to the study of relationships between people and the environment providing a context for thinking about the social causes and consequences of environmental change in different parts of the world. A central premise guiding the course is that it is difficult if not impossible to understand social and ecological systems independently of one another; thus our challenge is to consider how they influence each other and what that relationship means for efforts to address natural resource management challenges.

In this course we will explore how and why human use of the environment has varied over time and space, analyze different approaches to decision-making about environmental issues, and consider strategies for enhancing the resilience of social-ecological systems in different geographical contexts. As we consider different natural resource management issues, problems, and challenges, we will repeatedly come back to four key questions:

- Where are we?
- How did we get here?
- What’s possible for the future?
- Where do we go from here?

The goals of this course are:
- to challenge students to think critically about the relationship between humans and the environment, and the geography of natural resources, including forests, rangelands, and ocean fisheries;
- to provide students with the tools and critical thinking skills necessary to view the world in fresh ways and assess possible routes forward;
- to produce informed global citizens and active, engaged participants in current debates about the future of the planet;
- to enhance students’ analytical, communication, research and writing skills.

You will be asked to think hard and practice articulating yourself clearly in both oral and written form. Why?
- “The Association of American Colleges and Universities recently asked employers who hire at least 25 percent of their workforce from two- or four-year colleges what they want institutions to teach. The answers did not suggest a narrow focus. Instead, 89 percent said they wanted more emphasis on ‘the ability to effectively communicate orally and in writing,’ 81 percent asked for better ‘critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills’ and 70 percent were looking for ‘the ability to innovate and be creative.’ (NY Times January 2, 2010)

**Course Structure**

Classes will combine lectures, small- and large-group discussions, and occasional viewing of films and material from the Internet. There may be one or two field trips. In terms of student work and graded material, note that more than half of your final grade will be determined by factors that are very much within your control – performance in regard to short written assignments, oral presentations, participation, and attendance. The remainder of your grade (35%) will be determined by performance on two exams (over which you have somewhat less control).

**Summarizing and Responding to Readings**

Part of your grade will be determined by your performance on five short written assignments involving summarizing and responding to questions about assigned readings in preparation for several small group discussions during the first part of the course. These responses should be typed, but they can be informal with bullet points. They should include key points along with any questions you have. You can use these notes for discussion, add hand-written notes during the discussion, and hand them in at the end of class. You will be evaluated primarily on the typed responses you bring to class, but also on the degree to which you supplement what you wrote with hand-written insights and clarifications you gain during the discussion. (This will both demonstrate your engagement and help your study efforts.)

Grads will also read supplemental journal articles and address questions such as:
- What is the central argument in this paper? How is it innovative or provocative or problematic?
- How does it relate to class themes? To your research?
- What questions does the paper raise for you?

The purpose of these write-ups is threefold. First, they will require you to digest the material
and assemble your thoughts, reactions and questions prior to class, which will make you more prepared for in-class discussion; second, they will challenge you to think critically and articulate yourself clearly in writing; and third, they will make it easier for you to study for the exams, which will include material from readings and discussions.

**Current Events**

Students will identify a current event related to each of three types of natural resources that are especially important in Oregon: forests, rangelands, and ocean fisheries. You will summarize a news article and then analyze the issue drawing on themes and concepts from class. Write-ups will be 1-2 pages single-spaced. Each student will share one of his/her current events with the rest of the class in a 5 minute oral presentation.

**Group Research Project**

In small groups (3-4), students will collaboratively investigate a current natural resource management issue in the Pacific Northwest, chosen in consultation with the Instructor. Together they will develop an engaging oral presentation that includes an analysis of the problem, its origins, potential solutions, and future challenges. Students will be graded on content and presentation style, and on the coherence of the presentations as a whole.

**Expectations**

Students are expected to attend all classes (attendance will be taken – notify me in advance if you will miss class and provide an explanation); and engage substantively in class discussions and activities. Analyzing environmental issues lends itself to lively debate, but if you are not prepared, it won’t be as interesting.

Given that this is an upper level course, the expectation is that students will demonstrate a solid mastery of the English language and produce high quality, written material that has been proofread. Evaluation of your work will focus mostly on content; but please note that even the most brilliant insights will not make up for a poorly written paper when it comes to assigning a grade.

**Grades**

- Chapter Summary Question Responses (5) 15%
- Midterm Exam 15%
- Current Event Write-Ups (3) 30%
- Current Event Oral Presentation 5%
- Group Research Project Presentation 10%
- Final Exam (GRADS: Replace with 10-12 pg final paper) 20%
  - 20% of the Final Exam/Paper will be determined by field trip attendance and 2 pg write-up; OR 5 pg paper and oral presentation
- Participation and Attendance 5%

**Extra Credit**
• Up to 2.5 pts towards final grade (1x per person) for either attending a talk on campus or in town related to class and writing it up and presenting it to class
• Consult with Dr. Gosnell before you choose an EC activity.

Required Texts, Supplemental Readings, Other Course Materials

• The textbook is available at the campus bookstore and as an e-book at the library.

• Grads will read approximately one additional article each week, which will be determined in consultation with the Instructor
• All lecture Powerpoints, supplemental readings, and guidelines for assignments will be posted on Blackboard, unless otherwise specified.

Important Dates

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Due in Class</th>
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<tr>
<td>Th Jan 8</td>
<td>Summary Question Responses due – Ch 1</td>
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<td>Tu Jan 13</td>
<td>Summary Question Responses due – Ch 2</td>
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<td>Tu Jan 20</td>
<td>Summary Question Responses due – Ch 4</td>
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<td>Th Jan 22</td>
<td>Summary Question Responses due – Ch 5</td>
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<td>Tu Jan 27</td>
<td>Summary Question Responses due – Ch 6</td>
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<td>Tu Feb 3</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Tu Feb 10</td>
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<td>Tu Feb 19</td>
<td>Current Event #2 due</td>
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<td>Th Mar 5</td>
<td>Current Event #3 due</td>
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<td>Fri Mar 20</td>
<td>Final Exam – 9:30am; Grad Final Papers due</td>
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Tentative Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

*Note: PES = Principles of Ecosystem Stewardship.* Supplemental readings on BB.
Policies

Lateness and Absence
Please note that no late assignments will be accepted without prior arrangements. If you anticipate that you will not be able to attend a session in which there is an assignment due, turn it in ahead of schedule. Submitting an exercise/assignment late without an acceptable excuse will result in a ZERO.

Failure to take a quiz or exam on the date it is scheduled will also result in a grade of ZERO. Please do not come to me after an exam is missed to explain why you were not in attendance. See me if you anticipate in advance that you cannot take an exam on the day and time outlined because:

1. You are traveling to an official university-sponsored event; or
2. You have a prescheduled medical appointment ¹.

If you foresee an absence due to one of the reasons listed above, you must contact me a minimum of two weeks in advance of the anticipated absence with appropriate documentation. Appropriate documentation includes a letter (on official letterhead) from your coach, instructor, or doctor that provides me with the details of the pre-existing time conflict and is signed by the appropriate party. All rescheduled exams must be taken before the original date and time for the exam.

Communication
Email with the professor should be limited to questions that require short answers. Anything requiring longer communication should occur during office hours. I encourage you to come to

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¹ A prescheduled medical appointment is one that is hard to come by (i.e., specialist) and does not include routine medical and/or dental appointments.
office hours to discuss course materials, concerns, and questions. Email should be respectful and grammatically correct (vs. texting style).

**Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to be honest and ethical in their academic work. Academic dishonesty is defined as an intentional act of deception in one of the following areas:

- **Cheating:** Use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information, study aids
- **Fabrication:** Falsification or invention of any information
- **Assisting:** Helping another student to commit an act of academic dishonesty
- **Tampering:** Altering or interfering with evaluation instruments and documents
- **Plagiarism:** Representing the words or ideas of another person as one’s own

The goal of Oregon State University is to provide students with the knowledge, skill, and wisdom they need to contribute to society. University rules seek to assure each student’s freedom to learn and to protect the fundamental rights of others. People must treat each other with dignity and respect in order for scholarship to thrive. Behaviors that are disruptive to teaching and learning will not be tolerated, and will be referred to the Student Conduct Program for disciplinary action.

For more information please see [http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm](http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm).

**Recommended Readings**


FOR MORE READING ON THESE TOPICS...