

 THE CENTER FOR JUSTICE & PEACEBUILDING A PROGRAM OF EASTERN Mennonite UNIVERSITY	TRANSFORMING ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICT PAX 689 SPI 2023 May 15-19 <i>Course meeting location and time: TBD</i>
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INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

As the global population grows, economies develop, and climate impacts increase, the pressures on our historic and natural resources continue to mount. Environmental issues offer particular challenges because of their impacts on multiple communities and on multiple levels of governmental jurisdictions. Conflict is often experienced within a community as well as between communities sharing the same resources, and between and among responsible agencies of government.

Environmental problems typically involve many different types of parties, issues, and resources. What is often at stake in the most intractable environmental problems are core issues such as individual and community health, racial and ethnic justice, the integrity or destruction of whole ecosystems, and the economic or cultural viability of various human communities. The environmental arena invokes passion because the consequences of these issues are so profound to individual and community life.

This course explores best practices for managing, resolving and transforming environmental conflict through the use of deliberative environmental conflict resolution (ECR) processes. The class begins by examining the nature and dynamics of environmental disputes and methods for assessing conflict situations. The course then turns to methods for conceiving, conducting and completing various forms of ECR processes with a focus on the principles of equitable collaboration. Students will develop a capacity to assess the strengths and weaknesses of ECR processes while learning about best practices for preventing, preparing for, and addressing environmental conflict. Among the domestic and international environmental conflicts examined this year are the Virginia coalfields and the Chesapeake Bay.

This course examines more closely the structure of specific environmental disputes and introduces students to the mid-level theory and practice of situation assessment, process design, and convening and conducting a process.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Students will develop a capacity to assess the strengths and weaknesses of ECR processes while learning about best practices for preventing, preparing for, and addressing environmental conflict.

Questions addressed in this course include the following:

- What do we need to know about a dispute in order to understand its sources, dynamics and potential outcomes?
- How do we decide whether or not a case is suitable for an ECR process?
- How do we conduct a situation assessment that can lead to an effective process design and convening?
- What strategies need to be employed to convene which parties, for what purposes?
- What are the key components of design for an equitable collaboration process?
- How are science and policy considerations introduced?
- What constitutes success in environmental conflict resolution? What outcomes are desired, which outcomes are possible, and how do we measure those outcomes?
- What leads to successful ECR? What can we learn from successful and unsuccessful ECR cases?

REQUIRED TEXTS AND OTHER RESOURCES:

- Dukes, E. Franklin and K. Firehock. *Collaboration: a Guide for Environmental Advocates*. Charlottesville, VA, Institute for Environmental Negotiation, The Wilderness Society, National Audubon Society. 2001. PDF file and/or hard copy available in class (no charge).
- equitablecollaboration.virginia.edu
- Other assigned readings will include journal articles, role plays, and current events.

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS:

Note that most SPI classes can be taken for 2 or 3 credits during SPI 2023, with all SPI coursework being due by no later than August 20th.

Two major assignments are required:

- 1) An in-class book, article, or web site review and facilitated discussion of one of the resources listed below. (3-credit students will submit a 3-5 page review in writing as well for their grade).
- 2) A 20 (2 credits) or 30 (3 credits) page paper and class presentation describing the application of an equitable collaboration process design to an environmental conflict of the students choosing. This design will incorporate six elements of equitable collaboration, including trauma, informed, inclusive, responsive, truth, seeking, deliberative, and adaptive.

Select one of these for your review:

- Forester, John. *Planning in the Face of Conflict: The Surprising Possibilities of Facilitative Leadership*. Routledge, 2013.
- Walker, Gregg and Daniels, Steve, *Collaboration in Environmental Conflict Management and Decision-Making: Comparing Best Practices With Insights From Collaborative Learning Work*. In *Frontiers in Communication*, 2019. Pdf available
- **Additional readings to be added.**

30%: Class attendance and active participation.

Attendance and participation in class is very important. Please show up on time, but if you are late don't let that stop you from participating once you arrive! And **please let us know in advance if you will miss any part of a class.**

Participation is rated for each day on a scale from 0 (lowest) through 10 (highest), using the criteria below. While your participation is important for any class you take, this class by its experiential nature requires considerable involvement, including interaction with your classmates.

We each learn from what you offer to the class. **We encourage you to strive for a “10” each week for your own and others’ benefit.**

Participation is graded on this basis:

0 - F Absent or without contribution.

7 - C Offers straightforward information (e.g., straight from the case or reading), without elaboration or very infrequently (perhaps once a class). Does not offer to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called on.

8.5 - B Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way: responds to other students’ points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way, offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion.

10 - A+ Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students’ comments, contributes to the cooperative argument-building, suggests alternative ways of approaching material and helps class analyze which approaches are appropriate, etc.

Missing one or two hours of class is unlikely to have an impact on your grade; missing between two and eight hours of classes will result in dropping at least one level (e.g., A to A-, A- to B+). Missing one day or more of class will result in dropping at least one full letter grade (e.g., A- to a B-, B to C) and may result in exclusion from the rest of the class.

50%: Environmental Conflict Analysis and Process Recommendations

Class members will work on a complex environmental issue of interest to them that involves multiple stakeholders. Each person will present their work in the last class and write up this in a 20 (2 credits) to 30 (3 credits) page paper.

The project proposal (answering the questions below), will be presented Wednesday morning. It involves the following:

- 1) *Identify your specific goals and objectives* for the project. These include what you want to learn and what impact you want to have. What learning goals do you have that may be addressed through this project?
- 2) *Identify information and/or other resources* that you know you will need to conduct the project;
- 3) *Develop criteria by which you will evaluate your success* upon completion of the project. These criteria should incorporate 1 above.

The written project report is due by Aug. 20, 2023, and will include the following:

- 1) *a situation assessment* that identifies key issues, stakeholders, and processes related to your chosen project;
- 3) *a purpose statement* with specific goals and objectives that your proposed process is designed to address;
- 4) *a set of options and recommendations* with appropriate justification for an *authentic equitable collaboration process or process options* that will accomplish that purpose and goals;
- 5) *a Process Map* (see example on the page below)
- 6) *an evaluation protocol* that would assess whether and how those goals and objectives were accomplished, should this process be implemented.

Here are the criteria that we will use to grade your class project, which will be based both on your presentation and on the final paper:

1. *Demonstration of knowledge:* are you familiar with the subject matter? is your knowledge helpful for your target audience(s)? did you do sufficient research that is particular enough for specific recommendations and broad enough in scope to demonstrate the big picture? (30 points)
2. *Completing project objectives:* did you learn what you indicated that you wanted to learn? Did what you learn help others in the class learn as well? Does this work potentially have the impact that you were striving to have? (10 points)
3. *Quality of discussion during and after your presentation:* Do you ask evocative questions or make assertions that make people reflect? Do you leave sufficient time for questions and discussion? Can you respond appropriately to questions? (5 points)
4. *Presentation style:* Is your presentation clear? Does it keep your audience's interest? (5 points)

10%: Book or web site or article review

Class members will choose from selections offered by the instructors, or they may suggest another reading for the instructors approval. They will present a brief, 5 to 10 minute overview of the reading that will include the reason for choosing this reading, a synthesis of the reading, and what you take away the most from the reading.

These are brief descriptions of required graded assignments for the course. More details for each assignment can be found on the "Guidance Notes" that will be provided in class.

DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE: TBA

SPI ATTENDANCE POLICY:

It is expected that individuals registering for an SPI session will attend the entire course (barring unforeseen travel delays or emergencies). Please contact SPI directly at spi@emu.edu before registering if you know you will have to miss any days of a course. SPI certificates are provided to participants only if they miss no more than one class day unless prior arrangements have been made with the SPI Director. For-credit participants are expected to attend all class sessions unless they are given permission from the instructor to miss a session. SPI courses rely on active student participation in a learning community. If a participant misses class repeatedly and this disrupts the learning for others, they will be asked to leave the course and no money will be refunded for remaining course time.

GRADING CRITERIA AND OTHER POLICIES:

SPI provides all students taking the course for graduate credit some supplemental information that will serve as a resource after SPI when students are working on course assignments. This includes information on library resources, EMU's academic integrity policy, and guidelines for writing graduate papers, information regarding the grading scale and course deadlines, and then some suggestions we have for you in order to make your experience of taking SPI courses for graduate credit as successful as possible! These [documents](#) are all available online.