

**WRP 521:
Water Conflict Management and Transformation**

Instructors

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*“No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.”
– Albert Einstein*

Course Description

How can we move debates about water resource issues beyond entrenched positions? What are some less confrontational approaches that bring conflicting interests and institutions together to craft workable solutions; ones that build community rather than disrupt it? Can we find solutions that work across different scales of both time and space? What are some ways we ourselves can work more peacefully within contentious situations?

Experience suggests that 21st Century water demands and associated issues will challenge us to seek new strategies. The complexity we face calls for approaches that foster sustained, long-term stewardship which connects people with the environment as well as with their communities.

“Water Conflict Management” offers an opportunity for water resources professionals and graduate students to learn about current and leading-edge ways to work effectively in contentious water situations. It explores conflict tolerance, prevention, management, and transformation through collaborative structures as well as through models of negotiation and dialogue.

This week-long course emphasizes experiential learning. Class offers a place to learn and practice new skills that are applicable from the individual level to the societal level and across a range of real-life situations. Additionally, the course helps students understand just how creative, messy and inelegant workable solutions are likely to be.

Course Credits: 3 credits; Course meets for 35 hours in class; 60 hours of work outside of the classroom is expected.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the class you will:

- Have increased your listening skills through practice and critique;
- Have increased your understanding of the culture and environment you “swim in” to include the power of “frames,” and multiple perspectives and scales (both geographic and temporal) on water conflict;
- Be able to reframe water conflicts from intractable to transformable through application of different negotiation tools, and different frameworks, philosophies and perspectives;
- Demonstrate creativity in the face of intransigence and negativity regarding water conflicts through in-class role plays;
- Have practiced and demonstrated your skills with a wide range of conflict transformation tools through in-class exercises, and;
- Develop ethical and moral guidelines for personal approach to resource use and allocation issues, and enhance joy and grace in one’s life (self-evaluated);
- Discover your talents with the StrengthsQuest online self-assessment and learn how use them in leadership roles;
- Explore principles of leadership through selected readings;

- Observe leadership skills in a real-life context through field visits;
- Learn about leadership from your peers by sharing experiences and knowledge.

Assessment

Your performance in this course will be assessed through two strategies:

- Class participation and reflection on experiences
- Changes in knowledge about strategies for managing conflict.

Each of these is described in more detail below.

Participation and Reflection Exercises: 60% of Grade (10% plus 50%)

The course is designed to be interactive and experiential, so it is critical that you come to each class prepared and ready to participate in exercises, simulations, and discussions. Please read the textbook. Most of the reading will not be directly addressed in class, although it was selected to provide background information on topics that will be covered during class.

New Strategies for Managing Conflict: 40% of Grade

This assignment has two sections: Part A and Part B. The first is designed to be done prior to beginning the class; the second will be done after class is completed.

Part A1. Prior to class. Identify a water or environmental conflict that you have some familiarity with through direct experience or study. Briefly describe background information that you consider critical to help someone understand the conflict: issues, players, historical context, and any other critical information. Propose a strategy for managing the conflict. Consider things like who should be involved? What kinds of processes should be utilized? What kinds of outcomes are you looking for? How will you know when you've reached the end? This part of the assignment should be about 5 pages long, double spaced.

Part A2. Prior to class. What is it like to communicate with you? (See page 4, for more details).

Part B. Due after the end of the course – July 6, 2018. Use information, ideas, and concepts learned in class to re-describe the background conflict (what else do you now think is critical for others to understand) and revise your strategy for managing the conflict (reconsider the questions above, especially regarding processes and outcomes). Since background information has already been provided, this part of the assignment continues on from Part A1. It should be at least 5 pages long, double spaced.

We will be looking for evidence of increased sophistication in the way you're thinking about conflict management, as well as innovative approaches to managing conflict. Have fun in developing your conflict management strategy - don't feel particularly limited by budgets or other practical matters (although you should feel free to address these issues as appropriate).

If you are taking this workshop as a non-credit course, e-mail your assignments to desival@geo.oregonstate.edu or bring it to class.

If you are taking this course for credit, upload your assignments through Canvas.

Rules of the Road for Class

- Be respectful and maintain a professional tone
- Be responsible
- Be inclusive
- Class starts and ends on time
- Turn off cell phones, beepers, pagers, computers, etc.

- Check your e-mail and Canvas regularly for information and announcements.
- Follow University policies regarding plagiarism and other ethical conduct.

Other

Students with disabilities who may need accommodations, who have any emergency medical information that we should know, or who need special arrangements in the event of evacuation, should make an appointment with us as early as possible, and no later than the first week of the term. Students seeking accommodations should be registered with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities.

Readings and Texts

Articles for class are available on the Canvas course website.

1. The only textbook to be purchased for the class is by John Paul Lederach, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, 2003.
2. A free workbook entitled, *Sharing Water, Sharing Benefits: Working Towards Effective Transboundary Water Resources Management*, can be downloaded from the Canvas course website or accessed here - <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001893/189394e.pdf>
3. A comprehensive reference book, that is optional is by Jerome Delli Priscoli and Aaron Wolf, *Managing and Transforming Water Conflicts*, Cambridge Press, New York, New York, USA, 2009.

Books #1 and #3 are available through <http://osubeaverstore.com/Academics/>, <http://www.bookdepository.com>, and <http://www.amazon.com>.

Course Outline

Day 1: Introductions and Background

We begin today with introductions to each other, the class, and the four-fold matrix we're going to be exploring throughout the week. We also go through some very basic information about water in the west, water in the world, and emerging water issues.

Day 2: Understanding and Working with Four-fold Approaches as Individuals

Introduction to different approaches for understanding yourself and your own roles in conflict transformation. We will also begin thinking about how we bring ourself - our perceptions, experiences, and understandings - to work with larger groups.

Day 3: Tools for Sorting Out Conflicts, Identifying Coalitions, and Test Driving our Skills

On this day, we will learn about situation mapping to plan for meetings, identify coalitions that might overtake collaborative processes, and learn who might not be talking to each other when they should have been, to avoid a conflict over water resources. Then we will practice mediating a dispute over water resources. Then we will learn more about how to manage conflict in preparation of assisting outside professionals with proposals on managing water resources.

Day 4: Field Trip to various zones of conflict.

Day 5: Understanding and Working with Four-fold Approaches in Groups and Understanding Transformation, Professional Roundtable and Taking it Home

On our last day together, we continue learning more about how to apply four-fold frameworks as we think about and work with larger groups. Time permitting, we'll learn from each other about our professional experiences. Then we turn our attention to "re-entry" - what do we want to bring home and how can we frame this new awareness and knowledge to work within - and maybe transform - existing systems?

What is it like to communicate with you?

Visit two or more people who are important to you in some way (your boss, your spouse, your employee, your partner, etc.). With each of the three people, ask their permission to have a conversation with them in which they will do the talking and you will do all the listening and asking questions. Hold the conversation in a quiet place where you will not be disturbed.

Ask them to answer this question:

What is it like to communicate with me?

Take notes while they speak. You may ask a few other clarifying questions (no more than three or four at most), but your principal task here is to take in what they tell you.

Thank them sincerely for their willingness to talk with you.

Tell them the conversation isn't over in one session, and that at any time in the future, **they** may continue the conversation.

Write **at least** one typewritten, single-spaced page on the reactions of each person you talked with. After you write out what they said in answer to your question, write your own reactions to what they said. What did you learn, if anything? Were you surprised? Do you think they were telling you the truth? Were they afraid to say what they really thought? What did you say back to them? What's next in your relationship based on this conversation?