

NRSM 379 Collaboration in Natural Resource Decisions

Syllabus

Schedule and Location: T/Th at 3:30 – 4:50 pm; Forestry 301

Instructor and Email: Megan Moore, PhD; megan9.moore@umontana.edu

Office Hours and Location: Tuesdays at 5:00 – 6:00 pm or by appointment; Clapp 448

Teaching Assistant and Email: Chris Macfarlane; christopher.macfarlane@umconnect.umt.edu

Course Materials and Resources: All course materials will be on Moodle

Land Acknowledgement: UM acknowledges that we are in the territories of the Salish and Kalispel people. We honor the path they have always shown us in caring for this place for the generations to come.

Course Overview

How are we going to solve big, messy environmental problems?

Why is it so hard for people to listen and really hear each other?

What guidelines steer collaborative processes toward success?

How do I help reduce conflict and build common ground among stakeholders?

If these questions intrigue you, this course is for you! NRSM 379 introduces students to the theory and practice of collaborative conservation. In addition to understanding the social and biophysical aspects of natural resource conflict, professionals must often facilitate dialogue among diverse stakeholders to achieve common goals.

In this course, we will read and discuss a mix of literature to understand common pitfalls and fruitful approaches to collaboration. Students will learn to recognize their own biases and practice deliberate, active listening. Through lectures, guest presentations, and attending “real world” meetings, students will gain an appreciation for the art and science of facilitation. At the end of this course, students will be able to participate in and lead decision making processes that incorporate diverse interests to address complex natural resource challenges.

Class Learning Objectives

This course will give you the tools to understand, participate, and lead collaborative decision processes.

1. Appreciate the subjective and “wicked” nature of natural resource problems.
 2. Understand human psychology related to groups, conflict, behavior, and cooperation.
 3. Practice empathy, self-reflection, listening, and empowering others.
 4. Learn the many “dos and “don’ts” of facilitating successful collaborative dialogue.
 5. Develop, refine, and practice writing skills.
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Course Format

This course will use online materials, reflective writings, lectures, discussion, and papers. Each student will also attend an external collaborative meeting.

Online materials can be found on our Moodle course site. There are general course materials and weekly course resources. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with Moodle, ask clarifying questions if necessary, and become proficient navigating Moodle. Visit moodle.umd.edu for more.

Reflective writings will be due most class periods (see the “weekly plan” on Moodle) and constitute the majority of **assignments**. Students will submit responses to question prompts via

Moodle before the start of class. We will use these responses to structure and enhance our discussion of class materials. **Students are expected to read course material and complete reflective writings prior to class.**

Lectures will be given as needed.

Discussions will serve as the backbone of this class. We will discuss course material in a variety of formats and methods. Student **participation** is essential for our learning in this class and requires thoroughly reading the material, thoughtfully responding to reflective writing prompts, **attendance**, and actively engaging with in-class activities.

| Course Grading | |
|----------------|------------------------|
| 30% | In class participation |
| 10% | Attendance |
| 30% | Assignments |
| 15% | Paper 1 |
| 15% | Paper 2 |

Papers will be developed via several in-class workshops and independent student work. In **paper 1**, you will review a current natural resource debate by researching and objectively representing multiple stakeholder perspectives on the issue. You will write this paper using a phased approach. You will write specific parts of the paper to begin, we will review and provide feedback on each, and you will revise and add new sections until the entire paper is written. In **paper 2**, you will review a public collaborative meeting that you attend outside of class hours. You will represent multiple stakeholder perspectives, evaluate how the meeting was structured and run, and utilize course concepts to explain what might help

reduce conflict or achieve specific, desired outcomes. More details on both papers will be provided in class and on Moodle. Additional writing resources and support can be found at the UM Writing Center.

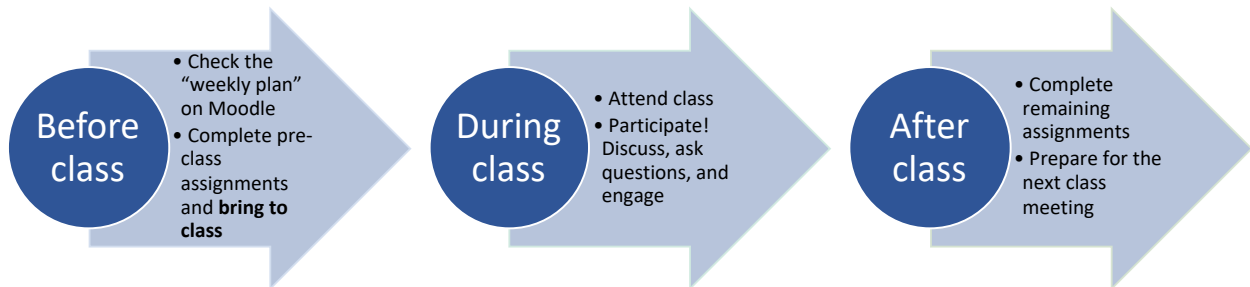
External collaborative meetings are an excellent way to learn how and how not to run good collaborative interactions. You'll attend one meeting and write a reflective paper (**paper 2**) on your experience.

Advanced College Writing

NRSM 379 is an advanced college writing course which fulfills an “upper division writing” requirement, or a “little w” as you’ll hear it called. The writing assignments in this course will help you ask academic questions, conduct research, manage diverse perspectives, edit and revise multiple drafts, follow citation standards, and use information technology. Completing your weekly **assignments**, **paper 1**, and **paper 2** will fulfill this requirement.

A Typical Week in NRSM 379

To prepare for a typical week in NRSM 379, you should log into Moodle and check the “weekly plan” listed under the week/topic section. The weekly plan will tell you what you have to do for the week. It will often instruct you to **read** a book chapter, article, or website; **write** responses to a prompt; **watch** a lecture or video; **complete** a specific assignment; or **attend** an external meeting.



Expectations

I expect everyone to:

- Complete the readings and assignments on time, share your ideas, ask questions, and actively engage with your peers.
- Listen and be curious, interested, and respectful of other viewpoints, beliefs, and perspectives.
- Ask for help when you need it or you don’t understand.
- Be honest and demonstrate academic integrity. This includes not using ChatGTP or other AI programs to write your assignments and papers, reproducing or distributing course materials, following instructions for individualized work, and not copying or plagiarizing other’s work. Visit umt.edu/student-affairs/community-standards/default.php to read the UM Student Conduct Code. Violations are serious and will result in reduced or no credit for the assignment, no credit for the course, and/or referral to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

- Be familiar with all UM policies including the course drop deadlines, which fall on the 15th instructional day, after which you can no longer drop the course with a refund and avoid a “W” on your transcript; and the 45th instructional day, after which you can only drop the class for a few limited reasons.

You can expect me to:

- Create an inclusive and conducive learning environment.
- Lead with compassion, treat you with respect, and value your life experiences.
- Work to answer your questions and address your concerns.
- Welcome your feedback and suggestions.
- Provide constructive feedback on your work.

Student Resources

- Curry Health Center: offers medical, counseling, dental, and wellness services
- Office for Disability Equity: provides resources and facilitates accommodations for students with disabilities
- Student Advocacy Resource Center (SARC): provides support for students who have experienced sexual violence, dating violence, harassment, or bias
- ASUM: Bear Necessities supports students’ basic needs; UM Food Pantry, legal services, and childcare for students
- Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX: support for discrimination, harassment, and retaliation
- TriO Student Support: resources for first generation and low-income students
- UM Writing Center: 1-1 appointments with tutors to improve writing assignments
- UM Solutions Center: tech support and Moodle assistance