

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

Host: Lynette de Silva

E-mail: [desilval@geo.oregonstate.edu](mailto:desilval@geo.oregonstate.edu)

*“Fierce competition for fresh water may well become a source of conflict and wars in the future.”*

--Kofi Annan, March 2001

*“I’m not a water policy expert, and I do not know what the exact solutions should be. But I am learning, and I have helped the House leadership to focus on this issue. This is not a pork-barrel spending project. It is not a partisan issue. It’s a human survival and quality-of-life problem.”*

-- Congressman John Linder (R-GA), Sponsor of 21st Century Water Commission Act, 2008

*“No problem can be solved form the same level of consciousness that created it.”*

--Albert Einstein

**Why Take This Class?**

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. Over one billion people currently lack safe access to drinking water and the United Nations predicts 50% of world population will face water shortages by 2025. Even Hollywood actors weigh in where a movie by Leonardo DiCaprio provides opinions on unacceptability of the status quo regarding the World’s Water (**Watch this Video**).

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iK2eAJLJoSg>

The complexity we face calls for approaches that foster sustained, long-term stewardship that connects people with the environment as well as with their communities. “Water Conflict Management and Transformation” 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 class fulfills one of the requirements of the Water Conflict Transformation Certificate Program offered through Oregon State University. The course is designed for upper level undergraduate students and graduate students. This online course emphasizes experiential learning; there is really no other way in an online environment. Because it is an online class, there will be a lot of independent reading and independent work

beyond the computer screen. The quality of the class is dependent on what the students are willing to invest in the course with respect to participation and debate. Grading is important, but it is highly dependent on active participation as an emerging professional rather than rote memorization or testing the student's ability to comprehend "facts". As an online course, all students share responsibilities as active participants in the cooperative and collaborative learning by all students enrolled in the course regardless of their major focus under the Water Resources Graduate Program or outside interests. The course will be conducted as a "virtual" seminar. This means that students are responsible for contributing to both structure and content — participation is vital.

**PLEASE NOTE:** This 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. However, the course is not designed to substitute for the 30 to 40 hour minimal training leading to becoming a "certified" mediator; there are many opportunities for this training outside of this course. Some training in mediation and other forms of Alternative Dispute Resolution will be provided, but the training will focus on transforming water-related conflicts.

### Learning Objectives

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 observation;
- ◆ Have practiced and demonstrated your skills with a wide range of conflict transformation tools through on-line and written 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 through self evaluation.

### Learning Resources

*Wolf, A. (editor). 2006. Sharing Water, Sharing Benefits: Working Towards Effective Transboundary Water Resources Management: A Graduate/Professional Skills-Building Workbook. This book is free and will be provided through class. It will be posted on Blackboard.*

This book is optional, but makes for an excellent reference book - Delli Priscoli, J. and A. Wolf. 2009. *Managing and Transforming Water Conflicts*. New York, NY: Cambridge Press.

**Blackboard** – Please familiarize yourself with how Blackboard operates by looking in each part of the class. If you have any difficulties, please contact eCampus.

## Course Organization

**Readings and Discussions.** Weekly readings in the textbooks are listed in the schedule. The Discussion Board on the course Blackboard site is one of the few opportunities for the instructor and students to interact as a group. Students will be required to participate in online Discussion Board topics. Each week a question will be posed by the instructor which is designed to help you synthesize the material covered in class. Bring together information from the readings, lectures, discussions, and experiences to complete the discussion board. Evidence of critical and thoughtful thinking will be the metrics used for grading, as well as the ability to bring multiple sources of information together in coherent and compelling discussions. **Please plan on submitting your first contribution to the discussion board by Tuesday of each week so that the class can discuss your contribution.**

**Book Reports.** Choose any book from the attached list or submit a short paragraph on a book that you found to the instructor before starting to read. **For the book you read, turn in a three-page book report (single or double spaced).** In your report, please do not summarize the book. Rather, embed the following sentences in your review: (1) I chose this book to read because: (one or two sentences); (2) the most useful general aspect of this book to me was: (for example, how did it broaden your understanding of conflict resolution or water governance); (3) the best thing I learned from this book was (one or two sentences); and (4) I would or would not recommend this book to my colleagues. **Submit your review as pdfs on the location in the View/Complete Assignment Function in Blackboard. Book reports attached to emails to the instructor will not be graded! Why this policy? This is something that eCampus is very concerned about if a student challenges a grade.**

**Your book review will be due at the beginning of Week No. 8 so the class can discuss them.**

**New Strategies for Managing Water Conflicts.** This assignment has two sections. The first is designed to be done during the first week of the class; the second will be done when the class is completed during finals week.

**Part A. Due at the end of Week No. 1.** Identify a **water-based** conflict that you have some familiarity with through direct experience or study. This could include observing a watershed council, city council meeting on water & wastewater upgrades, rates, privatization, etc. 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. Submit your assignment where indicated on Blackboard.**

**Assignments attached to emails to the instructor will not be graded!**

**Part B. Due on the Wednesday of Finals Week.** 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). **This part of the assignment should be about 10 pages long, double-spaced. Submit your assignment where indicated on Blackboard. Assignments attached to emails to the instructor will not be graded!**

Metrics of success include 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).

**Grades**

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

- Class participation and reflection on experiences including linking to the book reports
- Changes in knowledge about strategies for managing conflict

The grading distributions is as follows:

Pre-Class Water Conflict Assessment	10%
Participation in Discussion Board	30%
Negotiation/Facilitation (Details to follow)	15%
Communication Assignment (Details to follow)	10%
Book Review	15%
Post-Class Water Conflict Assessment	20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Grading Scale:**

The class will not be graded on a curve. Using this approach, the number of students receiving the same grade is not restricted.

100% - 93% A  
 92.9% - 90% A-  
 89.9% - 87% B+  
 86.9% - 83% B  
 82.9% - 80% B-

-----  
 79.9% - 77% C+  
 76.9% - 73% C  
 72.9% - 70% C- S

-----  
 69.9% - 67% D+ U  
 66.9% - 63% D  
 62.9% - 60% D-

-----  
 59.9% - 0% F

**For P/N or S/U students - 70% is required for a P or an S**

**INCOMPLETES?** – Rarely given, but considered if only if 70% of the class materials have been submitted. Application for an incomplete requires a written proposal from the student that includes a timetable to submit the outstanding work. Once approved by the instructor, the proposal becomes a contract to complete the work. Any deviations from the mutually-agreed upon contract void the contract. OSU has other policies regarding how long a student has to finish the Incomplete. Please review these with the Registrar's Office

**Tentative Schedule of Events and Readings**

<b>Topics/Readings</b>	<b>Sharing Water</b>
Week 1 –Introduction to Hydropolitics	Pgs. 2-8; 14-29
Week 2 – Water Wars	Pgs. 30-33; 40-51
Week 3 – Theory and Practice	Pgs. 52-56; 58-76
Week 4 – Treaties/Benefits	Pgs. 77-105
Week 5 – Laws and Legal Frameworks	Pgs. 106-110; 117-139
Week 6 – Public Participation	Negotiation Exercise; TBA
Week 7 – Public Participation	Negotiation Exercise; TBA
Week 8 – Four Worlds & Book Reviews	Negotiation Exercise; TBA
Week 9 – Hydrophilanthropy & Spirituality of Water	See Blackboard for readings

Sharing Water = Wolf, A. (editor). 2006. Sharing Water, Sharing Benefits: Working Towards Effective Transboundary Water Resources Management: A Graduate/Professional Skills-Building Workbook. This free book is provided electronically in the Blackboard class.

TBA – To be announced

**Learner Outcomes**

The intention of the course is for you to demonstrate your ability to:

<b>Skills</b>	<b>Evaluation Methods</b>
Acquire specialized language and concepts relevant to conflict management and transformation in water resources readings in texts and supplementary articles	Written and discussion exercises, class participation
Develop appreciation for complexities and disciplines related to resource decision-making	Written and discussion exercises, class participation
Demonstrate ability to obtain, analyze, synthesize, and critique information relevant to conflicts in water resources from a range of external sources, including literature and databases and prepare syntheses	Book reviews, written and discussion exercises, class participation
Acquire skills to evaluate critically both written and online presentations of peers and professionals	Peer reviews of book reviews and syntheses
Develop ethical and moral guidelines for personal approach to resource use and allocation issues, and enhance joy and grace in one’s life.	Self evaluation

**Rules of the Road for Class**

**Submitting Assignments.** Please do not submit your assignments as attachments to emails to the instructor. ECampus has requested that all assignments become a permanent part of the course file in the event the student challenges a grade. **Assignments submitted as attachments to emails to the instructor will not be graded. Why? eCampus wisely suggests this approach in the unlikely event a student decides to challenge a grade after the class has ended, then there is a record of the assignment to refresh the memory of all parties.**

Papers and write-ups must be typed, well written, and relatively error-free. Need help with writing? Contact OSU-The Center for Writing and Learning (CWL) at <http://cwl.oregonstate.edu/home/>.

**Late Work.** Please note the weeks for completing readings and submitting course work. Please be respectful of the class and the schedule of the instructor by not submitting late work. **Deadlines for papers should be taken seriously; the highest grade one can achieve will be reduced by one-half grade for every school-day missed after the deadline.** Please remember that attendance monitored through participation on the Discussion Board can be considered part of participating in the class (see Grades).

**Students with Disabilities.** Oregon State University policy provides for the following: “Students with documented disabilities who may need accommodations, who have any emergency medical information the instructor should know, or who need special arrangements in the event of evacuation, should make an appointment with the instructor as early as possible, no later than the first week of the term. In order to arrange alternative testing, the student should make the request at least one week in advance of the test. Students seeking accommodations should be registered with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities”.

**Civility and Honesty.** The Water Resources Graduate Program follows the university rules on civility and honesty. These can be found at <http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/>

## **Book Reports**

**Don't see a title that catches your eye, or have identified another book that you are dying to read, then submit a short paragraph on a book that you found to the instructor before starting to read.**

Brown, V.A. 2008. *Leonardo's Vision: A Guide to Collective Thinking and Action*. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Daniels, S.E. and G.B. Walker. 2001. *Working Through Environmental Conflict: The Collaborative Learning Approach*: Westport, CT: Praeger.

Innes, J.E. and D.E. Booher, 2010. *Planning with Complexity: An Introduction to Collaborative Rationality for Public Policy*: New York: NY: Routledge.

Files in

Javis, W. Todd. 2014. *Contesting Hidden Waters: Conflict Resolution for Groundwater and Aquifers*: New York: NY: Routledge.

Lederach, J.P. 2003. *The Little Book of Conflict: Transformation*. Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

Scholz, J.T. and Stiftel, B., editors. 2005. *Adaptive Governance and Water Conflict: New Institutions for Collaborative Planning*, Washington, DC: Resources for the Future.

Susskind, L., Moomaw, W. and Gallagher, K., editors. 2002. *Transboundary Environmental Negotiation – New Approaches to Global Cooperation*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Company.

Susskind, L., and Field, P. 1996. *Dealing with an Angry Public: The Mutual Gains Approach To Resolving Disputes*, New York, NY: The Free Press.

Wondolleck, J.M. and Yaffee, S.L.. 2000. *Making Collaboration Work: Lessons from Innovation in Natural Resource Management*. Washington, DC: Island Press.