NR400 Public Relations in Natural Resources
Department of Fish, Wildlife & Conservation Biology
Warner College of Natural Resources
Fall 2017    Mon/Wed, 1-1:50pm  Wagar 231

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Office Hours: Mondays noon-1pm, Wednesdays 11am-noon, or by appointment

University Course Description
Effective public relations and public information programs applicable to natural resource professions (3 credits)

Course Overview
NR400 Public Relations in Natural Resources examines how communication shapes public opinion and understanding of natural resource issues. The course combines study of key communication concepts with experiential assignments, including production of media projects. Through readings, case studies, class projects, guest speakers, and assignments, students will analyze the effectiveness of different communications approaches and develop new, creative strategies to address real-world issues in natural resource management. Public involvement in environmental decision-making will also be covered. Overall, the class broadly follows communication scholar and past Sierra Club president Robert Cox’s conception that environmental communication is at once “pragmatic” and “constitutive.”

Student Learning Outcomes
In this course, students will:
1. explore various communication tools, terms, theory, and concepts and how to apply them in explaining representations and public perceptions of the natural world.
2. critique case studies of communication in natural resources and conservation issues.
3. meet and learn from communication experts and natural resources managers.
4. develop communication strategies, materials and products through group and individual efforts, and present/share those materials with the class and natural resources professionals.
5. apply critical reading, thinking, and writing skills to explore and articulate thoughtful opinions on questions related to environmental communication.

Readings
Additional readings will be posted on CANVAS. NOTE: you must complete readings before the class for which they are assigned, so that you are a participant rather than just an observer. Be prepared for occasional unannounced quizzes [see below] to check your comprehension of particular readings.
Recitation
This course requires 50 minutes of recitation per week (see below for schedule). Recitations will be used for discussion, group work, guest speakers, and in-class assignments, depending upon the week’s topic. Attendance/participation in your recitation will factor into your overall grade.

- R01  Mondays  2-2:50pm
- R02  Wednesdays  2-2:50pm
- R03  Wednesdays  3-3:50pm

Assignments
A total of 500 points will be available for assignments in this course, primarily four projects (in-depth details about each project will be provided during the course). The assignments are as follows, listed in order of due date:

Website Critique (50 pts, 10% of grade)
Critique an online education/information website about an environmental topic/issue. Paper (minimum 4 pages, single-spaced size 12 font, excluding bibliography, illustrations, etc.) is due Wednesday September 13th.

Individual Communication Project (100 pts, 20% of grade)
For your first effort in communication design, you will create a brochure/website/video/podcast/other product about a natural resource topic that interests you. Unlike the group media project, you do NOT have to work with a ‘client’ for this assignment. Project proposals are due Wednesday September 27th. Due date for project itself is Wednesday October 19th.

Public Hearing Observation (100 pts, 20% of grade)
Attend and critique a public hearing about an issue relevant to natural resources. If you wish, interview at least one person at this public hearing – someone in the audience, a speaker (activist, professional ‘expert’, etc.), one of the ‘listening’ panelists, journalist covering the event, etc..
A 1-page proposal detailing date/place of hearing and brief background of issue is due Wednesday August 30th. The final paper (minimum 5 pages, single-spaced size 12 font, excluding bibliography, illustrations, etc.) is due Thursday October 26th.

Group Media Project (125 pts, 25% of grade)
In groups of 4, you will conceive and design a media product(s) that informs an identified audience about a real natural resources issue, opportunity or challenge. This project, which also entails a final report and presentation, must incorporate material covered in the course. Only groups that develop a relationship with a ‘client’ (non-profit, nature center, public agency, etc.) for their media product can potentially earn an ‘A’.
Project proposals are due Thursday November 9th, though I urge you to book an October meeting with Megan to discuss your proposals. The final product is due Sunday December 3rd.

Quizzes (75 pts, 15% of grade)
Four quizzes will test your knowledge/understanding of readings and other material covered in the course. Students will not be permitted to make up a missed quiz unless there are serious mitigating circumstances.

Attendance/Participation (50 pts, 10% of grade)
My style of teaching is collaborative, so participation by you is essential, especially during the weekly recitation. As incentive, I often require you to prepare a paragraph-long summary before class, each of which are worth a handful of points. As for attendance, random checks will be conducted. Excepting medical and personal emergencies, each unexcused absence will result in the loss of one percentage point from your final grade. If you need to miss class, Megan and I would appreciate the courtesy of a pre-class request/explanation.

THESE ASSIGNMENTS ACCORD YOU MUCH INDEPENDENCE AND CREATIVE FREEDOM – AND THUS PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY. YOUR GRADE IS VERY MUCH IN YOUR HANDS!
Unless otherwise instructed, assignments should be posted on CANVAS no later than 11:59pm of the due date. Excepting prior arrangement, assignments submitted after this time will be penalized 5% for each day they are late. Papers later than seven days will NOT be accepted and will be graded zero. Exceptions will only be granted in the case of serious medical or personal issues, in which case please discuss your situation with us as early as possible so we can come up with a revised deadline.

Final Grade
The following grading scale will be used to calculate your final grade:

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<tr>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>B</td>
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NOTE: Tracking your grades and overall performance is your responsibility. If you have quiz-related questions, wait 24 hours after the grade was posted (to process your thoughts/emotions), then make your request to Megan within 48 hours thereafter. If you do not contact her within that 48-hr window, you will not receive credit.

More generally, if you are struggling, contact me or make an appointment – do not wait until the last weeks of class to share concerns! Pass/Fail is not an option.

Grades of "Incomplete": Per university policy, an instructor may assign temporary grade of Incomplete to a student who demonstrates that he or she could not complete the requirements of the course due to circumstances beyond the student's control and not reasonably foreseeable. A student must be passing a course at the time that an Incomplete is requested unless the instructor determines that there are extenuating circumstances to assign an Incomplete to a student who is not passing the course. When an instructor assigns an Incomplete, he or she shall specify in writing using the Department Incomplete Grade Form the requirements the student shall fulfill to complete the course as well as the reasons for granting an Incomplete when the student is not passing the course. The instructor shall retain a copy of this statement in his or her grade records and provide copies to the student and the department head or his or her designee. (Section I.6 of the Academic Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual)

Academic Integrity
Academic dishonesty is a breach of trust between a student, one’s fellow students, and/or the instructor(s). The Warner College takes academic integrity seriously. At minimum, academic integrity means that no one will use another's work as their own. The CSU writing center defines plagiarism thus:

Plagiarism is the unauthorized or unacknowledged use of another person's academic or scholarly work. Done on purpose, it is cheating. Done accidentally, it is no less serious. Regardless of how it occurs, plagiarism is a theft of intellectual property and a violation of an ironclad rule demanding "credit be given where credit is due." Source: (Writing Guides: Understanding Plagiarism, http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/guide.cfm?guideid=17)

If you plagiarize, you could lose credit for the plagiarized work, fail the assignment, or fail the course. Each instance of plagiarism, classroom cheating, and other types of academic dishonesty will be addressed according to the principles in the CSU General Catalog (“Academic Integrity/Misconduct: http://catalog.colostate.edu/general-catalog/policies/students-responsibilities/.”)
Academic integrity also involves doing your own reading and studying. It includes regular class attendance, careful consideration of all class materials, and engagement with the class and your classmates. Academic integrity lies at the core of our common goal: to create an intellectually honest and rigorous community. Because academic integrity, and the personal and social integrity of which academic integrity is an integral part, is so central to our mission as students, teachers, scholars, and citizens, we will ask you to sign the CSU Honor Pledge as part of completing all our major assignments.

Disability Access
CSU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need accommodations must first contact Resources for Disabled Students before requesting accommodations from the professor. Resources for Disabled Students (RDS; http://rds.colostate.edu/home) is located in room 100 of the General Services Building. Their phone is (970) 491-6385 (V/TDD). Students who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations.

Religious Accommodation
Participation in official University activities, e.g., an out-of-town athletic event, or special religious observances may provide a legitimate reason for an excused absence. The student is responsible for discussing this with the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

Title IX Information
CSU’s Student Sexual Harassment and Violence policy, following national guidance from the Office of Civil Rights, requires that faculty follow CSU policy as a “mandatory reporter” of any personal disclosure of sexual harassment, abuse, and/or violence related experiences or incidents shared with the faculty member in person, via email, and/or in classroom papers or homework exercises. These disclosures include but are not limited to reports of personal relational abuse, relational/domestic violence, and stalking. While faculty are often able to help students locate appropriate channels of assistance on campus (e.g., see CSU Health Network; http://health.colostate.edu), disclosure by the student to the faculty member requires that the faculty member inform appropriate CSU channels to help ensure the student’s safety and welfare is being addressed, even if the student requests that the disclosure not be shared.

Non-Discrimination Statement
CSU does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, creed, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender, disability, veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or pregnancy. The University complies with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, related Executive Orders 11246 and 11375, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 402 of the Vietnam Era Veterans’ Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended, The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Civil Rights Act of 1991, the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, and all civil rights laws of the State of Colorado. Accordingly, equal opportunity of employment and admission shall be extended to all persons. CSU shall promote equal opportunity and treatment in employment through a positive and continuing affirmative action program for ethnic minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and veterans. The Office of Equal Opportunity is located in 101 Student Services, and this statement is online at http://oeo.colostate.edu/non-discrimination-statement.
Schedule of Topics and Readings

Week 1: Introduction
August 21
Intro to course and to each other; what’s in a word

August 23
Reading: Cox, Introduction and Chapter 1 (pp. 1-28)

Week 2: Symbolic Constructions of Environment
August 28
Reading: Cox, pp. 55-65
In-class work: bring to class a paragraph about an issue with contested meanings.

August 30
Reading: None
Assignment due midnight: 1-page Public Hearing Outline

Week 3: Norms/Attitude-Behavior Gap
September 4 — no class (Labor Day)

September 5: Quiz #1 [online; no recitations this week]

September 6
Reading: Cox, pp. 198-200
In-class work: bring to class a paragraph describing a Public Service Announcement (PSA) about an environmental issue/topic

Week 4: Environment in/of Visual and Popular Culture
September 11
Reading: Cox, pp. 69-81

September 13
Assignment due midnight: Website Critique
Week 5: Nature in the News: Environmental Journalism
September 18
  Reading: Cox, pp. 91-106

September 20
  Reading: Cox, pp. 106-116

Week 6: Scientists, Technology, and Environmental Controversies
September 25
  Reading: Cox, pp. 121-35

September 27
  Reading: TBD
  Assignment due midnight: Proposal for Individual Communication Project

Week 7: Framing/Risk Communication
October 2
  Reading: George Lakoff, “Why it matters how we frame the environment,” Environmental Communication (March 2010): 70-81. PDF
  Speaker: Prof. Brett Bruyere

October 4
  Reading: TBD

Week 8: Elements of Emotive Discourse [GLENN OUT OF TOWN]
October 9
  Speaker: Megan Jones

October 10: Quiz #2 [online; no recitations this week]

October 11
  Reading: TBD
  Speaker: Megan Jones

Week 9: Public’s Right To Know/Public Participation in Environmental Decisions [GLENN OUT OF TOWN]
October 16
  Reading: TBD
  GUEST SPEAKER: Brian Werner, Communications & Records Department Manager, Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District
October 18
Glenn lecture on CANVAS

October 19: Assignment due midnight: Individual Communication Project

**Week 10: Managing Conflict: Collaboration and Environmental Disputes**

October 23
Reading: Cox, pp. 315-25

October 25
Reading: Cox, pp. 331-38

October 26: Assignment due midnight: Public Hearing Observation

**Week 11: Digital Media and Environmental Activism**

October 30
Reading: TBD

October 31: Quiz #3 [online; no recitations this week]

November 1
Reading: Cox, pp. 209-28

**Week 12: Designing a Public Communication Campaign**

November 6
GUEST SPEAKER: Jen Kovecses, Center for Poudre Watershed Coalition

November 8

November 9: Assignment due midnight: Proposal for Group Media Project

**Week 13: Advocacy Campaigns and Movements Using Mass Media**

November 13
Reading: Cox, pp. 177-91

November 15
Reading: TBD from Doug McKenzie-Mohr, *Fostering Sustainable Behavior*
Speaker: Megan Jones
Week 14: NO CLASSES (THANKSGIVING)

Week 15: Case Studies of Public Communication
   November 27
   November 28: Quiz #4 [online; no recitations this week]
   November 29

Week 16: Group Project Presentations
   December 3 [Sunday]: Assignment due midnight: Group Media Project
   December 4: Reflections on projects
   December 6: Presentations