NR400 Public Relations in Natural Resources
Department of Fish, Wildlife & Conservation Biology
Warner College of Natural Resources
Spring 2018  Mon/Wed, 1-1:50pm Plant Sciences W9

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 11-2, 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 public communication shapes opinion and understanding of natural resource issues. The course combines study of key communication concepts with experiential projects, including critique of a public hearing and creation of media products. Through readings, case studies, and assignments, students analyze approaches for effective public communication. They then design brochures, websites, videos, etc., eventually collaborating in teams for real-life ‘clients’.

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.

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<th>Class</th>
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<tr>
<td>R01</td>
<td>Mondays</td>
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<td>R02</td>
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<td>R03</td>
<td>Wednesdays</td>
<td>12-12:50pm</td>
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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 (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 Sunday February 25th.

Individual Communication Project (20% of grade)
For your first effort in communication design, you will create a brochure/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 Thursday February 8th. Due date for project itself is Thursday March 8th.

Public Hearing Observation (20% of grade)
Attend and critique a public hearing about an issue relevant to natural resources. If you wish, interview one or more people at this public hearing – someone in the audience, a speaker (activist, professional ‘expert’, etc.), one of the ‘listening’ panelists, journalist, etc.
A 1-page proposal detailing date/place of hearing and brief background of issue is due Thursday January 25th.
The final paper (minimum 4 pages, single-spaced size 12 font, excluding bibliography, illustrations, etc.) is due Thursday March 23rd.

Group Media Project (20% of grade)
In 4-person teams, you will conceive and design a media product(s) that informs an identified audience about an actual natural resource issue, opportunity or challenge. This project, which also entails a final presentation, must incorporate concepts 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 Friday April 6th, though I urge you to meet beforehand with me/Josh to discuss your ideas. A progress report is due Thursday April 19th. The final product is due Sunday April 29th.

Quizzes (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/In-class work (15% of grade)
Our style of teaching is collaborative, so participation by you is essential, especially during the weekly recitation. As incentive, we often require you to do small projects before/during recitation, that are worth a handful of points. As for attendance, random checks will be conducted. If you need to miss class, we 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>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100%</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92%</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>59% or below</td>
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<td>Unsatisfactory</td>
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<td>IF</td>
<td>Incomplete/Fail</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 me within 48 hours thereafter. If you do not contact me 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 to you 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
JAN 17: Intro to course and to each other; sample projects; what’s in a word
   Reading: Mark Meisner, “Environmental communication: what it is and why it matters,” One-Planet Talking Point (Nov. 2015)

RECITATION: NONE

JAN 17: Assignment due midnight: Response to Meisner article

Week 2: Symbolic Constructions of Environment
JAN 21 [Sunday]: submit paragraph describing Public Service Announcement (PSA) about an environmental issue/topic (OPTIONAL-best get 5pts)
JAN 22: Intro to Environmental Communication/Contested Meanings of Environment
   Reading: Cox, Chapter 1 (pp. 11-26)
JAN 24: A Rhetorical Perspective
   Reading: Cox, pp. 51-63

RECITATION: PSA critiques

JAN 25: Assignment due midnight: 1-page Public Hearing Outline

Week 3: Storytelling
JAN 29 — Storytelling

JAN 31: Toolkit for Storytelling
   Reading: https://www.planetforward.org [select two stories for their impactfulness and be ready to explain why you felt them impactful]

RECITATION: Storyboarding

Week 4: Environment in/of Visual and Popular Culture
FEB 5: Walt Disney’s True-Life Adventure films
   Reading: Cox, pp. 67-78

FEB 7: SeaWorld
   Reading: Susan Davis, “Touch the magic,” pp. 204-17 in William Cronon, Uncommon Ground (1996) PDF

RECITATION: Effective/Efficient Writing

FEB 8: Assignment due midnight: Proposal for Individual Communication Project
Week 5: Analyzing Media Products
FEB 12: Analysis of Media Products

FEB 13: Quiz #1 online

FEB 14: NO CLASS [BUT DO ATTEND TODAY’S RECITATIONS]

RECITATION: Analyzing Media Products

Week 6: Framing
FEB 19: Framing
   Reading: George Lakoff, “Why it matters how we frame the environment,” Environmental Communication (March 2010): 70-81. PDF

FEB 21: Framing Climate Change
   Reading: Rose Hendricks, “Communicating climate change: focus on the framing, not just the facts,” The Conversation (March 5 2017)

RECITATION: work on Individual Communication Projects

FEB 25: Assignment due midnight: Website Critique

Week 7: Environmental Journalism
FEB 26: Environmental Journalism
   Reading: Cox, pp. 91-110 (esp. 97-110)

FEB 28: GUEST SPEAKER: Dr. George Wittemyer, Associate Professor, Department of Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Biology, Colorado State University
   Reading: TBD

RECITATION: Interviewing

Week 8: Science, Scientists, and Environmental Controversies
MARCH 5: Journalism, News, and Science/Scientists
   Reading: Cox, pp. 121-34

MARCH 6: Quiz #2 [online]

MARCH 7: Disinformation
   Reading: Genna Reed, “The 5 Worst Plays from Industry’s Disinformation Playbook,” Union of Concerned Scientists [blog]; Hannah Devlin, “Americans ‘under siege’ from climate disinformation – former Nasa chief scientist,” Guardian (June 8 2017)

RECITATION: NONE [quiz]

MARCH 8: Assignment due noon: Individual Communication Project
Week 9: SPRING BREAK

Week 10: Public Participation in Environmental Decisions
MARCH 19: Public’s Right to Know/Right to Access
Reading: Cox, pp. 285-304 [material will help your upcoming Public Hearing Observation paper]
MARCH 21: In-class team meetings for Group Media Project [MANDATORY ATTENDANCE]
Reading: TBD
RECITATION: Message Construction
MARCH 23: Assignment due midnight: Public Hearing Observation

Week 11: PUBLIC RELATIONS…OR GREENWASHING?
MARCH 26: Greenwashing
Reading: TerraChoice, *The Seven Sins of Greenwashing* (2009); play 10-question game
[http://sinsofgreenwashing.com/games-tools/name-that-sin-game/index.html]
MARCH 28: Northern Integrated Supply Project [NISP]; presentation by Brian Werner, Communications & Records Department Manager, Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District
Reading: https://kmsteph.wixsite.com/stpete READ BEFORE BRIAN’S TALK!!
RECITATION: NONE [write critique of NISP speaker]
MARCH 29: Assignment due midnight: 500-word critique of NISP speaker

Week 12: Digital Media and Environmental Activism
APRIL 2: Digitizing Environmental Journalism
Reading: Cox, pp. 96 & 110-115
APRIL 4: Social Media and Environmental Activism
Reading: Malcom Gladwell, “Small change: why the revolution will not be tweeted,” *New Yorker* (Oct. 4 2010)
RECITATION: Creating Messages and Strategies for Social Media
APRIL 6: Assignment due midnight: Proposal for Group Media Project
Week 13: Designing A Public Communication Campaign
APRIL 9: Communication Strategies and Actions

APRIL 10: Quiz #3 [online]

APRIL 11: Advocacy Campaigns and Movements Using Mass Media
   Reading: Cox, pp. 203-14

RECITATION: NONE [quiz]

Week 14: TBD
APRIL 16: TBD
   Reading: TBD

APRIL 18: TBD
   Reading: TBD

RECITATION: TBD

APRIL 19: Assignment due midnight: Progress Report on Group Media Project

Week 15: Case Studies of Public Communication/A New Lexicon
APRIL 23: TBD
   Reading: TBD

APRIL 25: New Lexicon
   Reading: George Monbiot, “Forget ‘the environment’: we need new words to convey life’s wonders [Opinion],” Guardian (Aug. 9 2017)

RECITATION: TBD

Week 16: Group Project Presentations
APRIL 29 [Sunday]: Assignment due midnight: Group Media Project

APRIL 30: Presentations

MAY 2: Presentations

RECITATION: NONE

Week 17: Finals Week
MAY 8: Quiz #4