

LAS 6291 (SECTION 3764)
Impacting Conservation and Development Policy

Fall Semester, 2008
Fridays, periods 7-9 (1:55-4:55), Grinter 376

Professors:

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Target Audience:

This course aims to fulfill the Tropical Conservation and Development Program's Conservation Skills requirement. By "conservation skills" we mean professional abilities that are essential to the effective implementation of Tropical Conservation and Development, but that would not normally be addressed in a natural or social science academic curriculum. This course is intended for grad students who envision themselves working in a conservation organization and would like to learn advocacy and campaigning skills that will be useful in that work.

Learning Objectives:

This course will analyze political processes related to public policy development and implementation in the environmental arena, and will help students to develop practical advocacy skills for achieving desirable policy outcomes.

Relevant skills that will be presented and tested in the course include:

- Campaign and advocacy strategy development, including stakeholder and power analysis, definition of goals, and planning interventions;
- Developing partnerships, convening stakeholder groups, and social networking;
- Framing issues;
- Working with the media;
- Effective communications (presentations, briefing papers, and personal advocacy);
- Social marketing.

We will take a case study approach, looking at ongoing policy reform processes in north-central Florida, the US and internationally. Through this approach, students will gain familiarity with specific policy issues (private property rights and environmental policy, water management in Florida, growth management, REDD), will learn about the policymaking process at multiple levels (local government, legislatures, executive agencies, international organizations), and will look at multiple roles (citizen activism, NGOs, science, politicians, bureaucrats).

Format:

This is a seminar course that will include reading, discussion, interviews with policy actors, and practice. We will also ask participating students to discuss the applicability and adaptation of the case study material to policy issues from their own research area and tropical experience.

We meet on Friday afternoons to promote informal discussions. Some class meetings may be off campus (meetings with policy stakeholders, government agencies, etc.)

Course projects:

We will divide the class into 3 or 4 groups, and each group will work throughout the semester to design a comprehensive issue campaign. Students will be expected to actually carry out some steps of the campaign that they design, such as writing policy briefs, op-ed articles, or press releases, mobilizing stakeholders, etc. Suggestions of relevant local current project topics are given here, but student groups may define a topic of their own choice. Students are free to take and promote any policy position that they choose, i.e. be pro or con of any issue.

1. Serenola Forest. Mobilize community support, explore options for purchase as a protected area, and block any zoning changes or large-scale residential development. See <http://www.serenolaforest.com/>
2. Influence the Public Service Commission to promote renewal energy in Florida's mix.
3. Generate support from Florida's congressional delegation for Lieberman-Warner or an alternative climate change measure.
4. Alachua County charter amendment to create a Registry of Public Places. See <http://alachuaconservationtrust.org/index.php?alachua/archives/charter-amendment-to-create-registry-of-protected-public-places/>
5. Renewal of Alachua county forever. See <http://www.wildspacespublicplaces.org/beta/>

Other assignments:

Students are expected to read assigned reading prior to each class and be prepared to discuss the readings in class. We will use WebCT or an alternative social networking tool and post comments on each week's readings in advance of each class. Posting expectations will be discussed in class; they will range from a free response to the readings to specific exercises based on readings and class discussions. Each student is expected to post each week; you may miss 1 post during the semester without prejudice. Posting is due at 9 am on the day before class.

Learning journals are designed to help you and us monitor your learning during the semester. Unlike WebCT discussions, learning journals focus on specific things that you learn in class, your "Ah-ha!" moments. By learning moments we mean moments both in and out of class when something happens to clarify your understanding of an issue or theme, make you look at something in a new way, or suddenly link concepts or issues that previously had no connection in your mind. Such moments can happen while reading, attending class, participating in a non-course related activity, talking or listening to someone, writing, or simply thinking (eg. "I realized today that local officials are misinterpreting my message"). Learning journal thoughts are to be recorded weekly and will be turned in every two weeks during the semester.

Grading:

Group project (written and presentation): 50%

Preparation and participation in class and online discussions: 50%

Schedule, topics and reading:

A schedule of topics and reading is attached. Because there will be a lot of interaction with non-university stakeholders, we will need to be flexible and this schedule may be adjusted. At the first class meeting, we will explore the feasibility of 1-2 half to full day field trips outside of Gainesville; this will also affect the class schedule.

Texts:

You are expected to purchase 3 books for this course. All other readings will be distributed either electronically, on library reserve, or in handouts. The books are all available at Amazon.com.

Heineman, Robert A. 1996. *Political Science, An Introduction*. McGraw Hill. This is a basic and readable text to the field of political science. We will read about 7 chapters throughout the semester. Part One will not be assigned or discussed in class, but I recommend that you read this on your own.

Rose, Chris. 2005. *How to Win Campaigns, 100 steps to success*. Earthscan. A how-to guide written by an experienced Greenpeace campaigner. We will use this throughout the course, and it will be very helpful for your group projects.

Barnett, C. 2007. *Mirage: Florida and the Vanishing Water of the Eastern U.S.* University of Michigan Press. Barnett is a UF graduate and Gainesville resident. This very readable book describes in depth a major Florida (and national) policy issue, water, and thus provides essential context for the course. For Florida, the water issue is inextricably linked with growth, and thus the state's overall history. Chapters 3-6 are assigned, but I recommend that you read it all at your leisure.

University Policies

The University of Florida Honor Code, signed by all students upon registration, states: *We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.* "In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action." (Student Handbook). In this course, students are expected and encouraged to work together. Plagiarism of written sources without proper citation is of course forbidden.

Students with disabilities are entitled to classroom accommodation. Please register with the Dean of Students Office in Peabody hall, who will provide documentation that the student will then provide to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

The University of Florida has excellent counseling services available on campus for students having personal problems or needing help in defining career and academic goals pursuant to good academic performance. These resources include:

- University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling
- Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling
- Career Resources Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling

Software Use: All faculty, staff and students of the University are required to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.