

SYLLABUS: ENR 4900.01  
Environment and Natural Resources Management:  
Capstone Experience –  
Collaborative environmental decision-making  
Spring 2023

## **COURSE OVERVIEW**

### **Instructors**

Dr. Steve Lyon (.248)  
Office hours: By appointment  
Office: Zoom or Kottman 469

**Credit hours** 3

**Course meetings** TBD

### **Course description and goals**

In this section of 4900.01, students will gain hands-on experience contributing to multi-stakeholder decision-making processes. When diverse groups of people are involved in decisions about environmental policy (for example, how to manage a park, or how to respond to a new invasive species), they often bring different values and goals to the table. Understanding these values and goals is crucial for making a good decision, or for making a decision at all, and this capstone section will focus on how to facilitate collaborative decision-making processes through approaches such as participatory mapping, value mapping, and outreach informed by stakeholder analysis. Specifically, students—in interdisciplinary teams—will gain experience applying these approaches in real environmental decision-making settings. Teams will then develop a set of recommendations designed to improve the specific decision-making process at hand. In the process, they will gain skills and training relevant to diverse careers such as environmental consulting, conflict mediation, and facilitation.

### **Course learning outcomes**

By the end of this course, you will:

- Apply skills and knowledge from prior courses to contribute to a complex real-world environmental decision-making process.
- As a member of a team, develop and carry out an original project designed to facilitate collaborative environmental decisions.
- Identify career opportunities and how to best communicate aspirations and skills to prospective employers.

### **Course format**

The course structure is divided into two parts. In the first part, students hone skills for identifying and landing rewarding jobs. A particular focus will be developing employment materials and building professional networks. Guest speakers will share experiences, perspectives, and expertise on a variety of environmental organizations and careers, and engaging diverse environmental stakeholders and communicating science to policy-makers and the public.

The second part of the course pivots to collaborative environmental decision-making, and students will gain hands-on experience in a variety of activities that can contribute to environmental

problem-solving. Simultaneously, students work together in teams to design and carry out projects to facilitate collaborative decision-making process. In the third part of the course, teams create products based on their findings (e.g., recommendations delivered in written reports or other formats).

### **Covid Health and Safety Requirements**

The following guidelines are adapted from the Safe and Healthy Buckeyes website: All students, faculty and staff are required to wear masks in classrooms and other shared indoor spaces, regardless of their vaccination status. Individuals should not eat in classrooms. Individuals can take an occasional drink but should take masks off only as necessary.

### **Course Materials and Technologies**

#### *Readings*

While there is no textbook for the course, certain resources will be made available through Carmen. These include newspaper articles, guides (e.g., tutorials), background on decision-making processes, and other resources that are essential for acquiring and applying the skills necessary for completing the capstone project.

#### *Course technology*

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at <https://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours>, and support for urgent issues is available 24x7.

- Self-Service and Chat support: <http://ocio.osu.edu/selfservice>
- Phone: 614-688-HELP (4357)
- Email: [8help@osu.edu](mailto:8help@osu.edu)
- TDD: 614-688-8743

**Grading:** A (100-93%); A- (92-90%); B+ (89-87%); B (86-83%); B-(82-80%); C+ (79-77%); C (76-73%); C-(72-70%); D+ (69-67%); D (66-60%); E (below 60%)

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Total Points</b>	<b>Proportion of Grade</b>
Career portfolio	75	0.15
Project Proposal (Group)	50	0.10
Project Report Draft (Group)	75	0.15
Peer Assessment	75	0.15
Final Project a) Group Report (Group)	50	0.10
b) Group Presentation (Group)	75	0.15
c) Individual Report	50	0.10
Participation	50	0.10
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	

See assignment descriptions, below, for details.

## **Assignment descriptions**

*Career Portfolio:* Various career development workshops will be presented throughout the semester, topics covering: how to write cover letters, how to write your resume, interview preparation, grad school applications. You will need to bring an example cover letter and resume to workshops to exchange with other students for comments. Points are awarded for bringing the items, they are not graded for content.

*Project proposal:* The project proposal will be a relatively short (maximum 5 page) document that outlines the prospective scope of the final project. Details on the project itself, as well as associated assignments (the proposal and draft), will be presented in class and provided on Carmen. Working in teams, students will develop and refine ideas for a project that can contribute to collaborative problem-solving. In addition to describing the proposed scope and goals of the project, the proposal will also identify the role(s) of each team member.

*Project report draft:* The project draft will include all components of the final project. The scope of work completed (e.g., collection of information, analysis), as well as discussion of the implications of findings for policymakers and other stakeholders, should reflect feedback on the project proposal. While the content and organization of each group's project will depend on the scope of the project/product itself, certain core components will be described in class and on Carmen.

*Peer assessment:* Students will anonymously evaluate the participation of other members of their team. These assessments will provide opportunities for students to get credit for contributions to the group effort. The criteria of these assessments will be described in class and on Carmen.

*Final project:* The final project includes the final draft of the project group report, a group presentation, and an individual report. The final draft should account for feedback on the earlier draft. In their individual reports, students will reflect on their experiences developing and carrying out the group project as well as how they plan to draw upon these experiences (and potentially the project itself) in near-term careers. Each of the three final project components will be described in class and on Carmen.

*Participation:* Because much of this course is student-led, participation is crucial. Students' participation grades will account for active involvement in the class.

All written assignments will be submitted to Carmen by 11:59 pm on the day they are due.

### *Late assignments*

The maximum grade of written assignments will decrease by 5% for each day late, including weekends. Late penalties will not be applied in cases of emergencies or other excused absences if documentation is provided.

### **Communications, faculty feedback and response time**

Notifications and updates will be communicated through Carmen and/or in class. You may communicate via email, at the beginning or end of class, by attending office hours, or by scheduling a meeting. We are providing the following list to give you an idea of intended availability throughout the course. Remember that you can call 614-688-HELP at any time if you have a technical problem.

- Grading and feedback: You can generally expect feedback within 10 days.
- E-mail: We will reply to e-mails within 48 hours on school days.

### **Participation and attendance**

#### *Student participation requirements*

Participation is important, and students are expected to contribute constructively to class activities and discussions. Your participation will contribute to everyone's understanding of topics.

#### *Student attendance requirements*

Participation is particularly important in this course. Students are required to not only attend all classes (see below) but also contribute constructively to class activities and discussions. Participation will be evaluated both by the instructor and by peers (capstone project team members). Attendance is required. If you must miss a class, please notify me as soon as possible. If you must miss a stretch of classes for any reason, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can work with you (and your capstone group) to develop accommodations.

## **Other Course Policies and Information**

### *Career services*

We encourage you to take advantage of resources and opportunities offered by the School of Environment and Natural Resources Career Services Office (<https://senr.osu.edu/undergraduate/career-services>) and to get engaged with the School of Environment and Natural Resources Environmental Professionals Network (<https://epn.osu.edu/>).

### *Academic integrity policy*

#### Policies For This Course

- **Written assignments:** Your written assignments, including discussion posts, should be your own original work. You are encouraged to ask a trusted person to proofread your assignments before you turn them in, but no one else should revise or rewrite your work.
- **Reusing past work:** In general, you are prohibited in university courses from turning in work from a past class to your current class, even if you modify it. If you want to build on past research or revisit a topic you have explored in previous courses, please discuss the situation with us.
- **Collaboration and informal peer-review:** The course includes many opportunities for formal collaboration with your classmates. While study groups and peer-review of major written projects is encouraged, remember that comparing answers on a quiz or assignment is not permitted. If you are unsure about a particular situation, please ask ahead of time.

#### Ohio State's Academic Integrity Policy

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's Code of Student Conduct, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's Code of Student Conduct and this syllabus may constitute "Academic Misconduct." The Ohio State University's Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the University's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.

Other sources of information on academic misconduct (integrity) to which you can refer include:

- The Committee on Academic Misconduct web pages (COAM Home)

- Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity (Ten Suggestions)
- Eight Cardinal Rules of Academic Integrity ([www.northwestern.edu/uacc/8cards.htm](http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/8cards.htm))

### *Copyright disclaimer*

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

### *Title IX*

All students and employees at Ohio State have the right to work and learn in an environment free from harassment and discrimination based on sex or gender, and the university can arrange interim measures, provide support resources, and explain investigation options, including referral to confidential resources.

If you or someone you know has been harassed or discriminated against based on your sex or gender, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, or sexual exploitation, you may find information about your rights and options at [titleix.osu.edu](http://titleix.osu.edu) or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at [titleix@osu.edu](mailto:titleix@osu.edu)." Title IX is part of the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) at Ohio State, which responds to all bias-motivated incidents of harassment and discrimination, such as race, religion, national origin and disability. For more information on OIE, visit [equity.osu.edu](http://equity.osu.edu) or email [equity@osu.edu](mailto:equity@osu.edu)

### *Your mental health*

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life Counseling and Consultation Services (CCS) by visiting [ccs.osu.edu](http://ccs.osu.edu) or calling (614) 292- 5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614.292.5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Prevention Hotline at 1.800.273.TALK or at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

### *Diversity*

The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. We are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited.

*ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES*

Requesting accommodations

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu); 614-292-3307, 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Ave

## **Fieldwork Safety**

Safety during fieldwork is the prime responsibility of the individuals undertaking the fieldwork. Safe conduct extends to journeys to and from field locations. Responsible and careful behavior is thus an obligation for all students at all times. Infringement of this safety code or indulging in any activity which is prejudicial to safety during a field course, will be regarded as a very serious matter.

Specifically, all students must:

1. Obey all safety instructions given by the course convener and relevant land/property owners and managers.
2. Wear appropriate clothing for the type of weather and terrain likely to be encountered. For any research in which fieldwork is conducted in the countryside the following guidelines should be followed. Wind and waterproof outer jacket and trousers are necessary. Walking boots (not Doc Martins!) should be worn for work off surfaced roads or paths. An appropriate number of layers of warm clothing and waterproofs should be taken.
3. When working in hot and sunny conditions, ensure you have a plenty supply of fluid, and take care to avoid exposure to strong sun – wear sunscreen and a hat
4. If instructed to do so, wear required personal protective equipment in the field until such time as the responsible party instructs that it is safe to remove them.
5. Report any injury or illness to the course convener immediately, however trivial.
6. Inform the course convener about any prior illness or medical condition which might reoccur during the fieldwork. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they have an up to-date record of vaccination cover (such as for tetanus).
7. Conduct themselves properly and with respect for others whilst in field residences or host organization. Anti-social behavior is likely to lead to deterioration in safety and will not be tolerated.
8. Follow rules and guidelines given by property owners or managers.