

PACS 3860 Environmental Conflict and Conflict Resolution

Syllabus and Course Policies

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Michael English

I am the Director and Associate Teaching Professor for the Peace, Conflict, and Security Program (PACS) for the University of Colorado Boulder. You can read more about me [here](#). Please call me Dr. English, Professor English, or Michael.

Office Location

My office is located in Norlin Library, room S423. My office is in suite S436 with the Special Undergraduate Enrichment Programs (SUEP). Follow the signs for SUEP if you do not see signs for PACS.

Office Hours

My office hours are by appointment only. Please schedule an appointment [here \(Links to an external site.\)](#). I am always happy to meet with you either over Zoom or in person. You are always welcome to drop by my office to see if I am available but scheduling an appointment ensures we have time to meet.

Email

You can reach me at michael.d.english@colorado.edu. Please make sure to include the .d. in my email address or you are sending your message to someone else.

Course Information

Description

The purpose of this seminar is to introduce students to the field of environmental conflict resolution (ECR). ECR is a subfield within peace and conflict studies that focuses on the challenges raised by public policy conflicts over issues such as land, water, pollution, natural resources and climate change. Environmental issues are particularly complex because of their impacts on multiple communities and on multiple levels of governmental jurisdictions. Conflict is often experienced within a community as well as between communities sharing the same resources, and between and among responsible agencies of government who must develop and enforce policies around resource use. While conflict over resources is not new to humans, the challenges posed by environmental degradation, climate change, and resource scarcity creates new possibilities for violent conflict in the face of a warming planet. These changes have both local and global effects, particularly as different actors (state and non-state) begin to assert their claims over natural resources.

In this course, we will explore the causes and dynamics of environmental conflict and explore practices for managing, resolving and transforming environmental conflicts through the use of deliberative Environmental Collaboration and Conflict Resolution (ECCR) processes. This process is also sometimes labeled environmental conflict management (ECM) and at times public or community deliberation. The class begins by examining the nature and dynamics of environmental disputes and methods for assessing conflict situations. Environmental conflict crosses all levels and sectors of society and as such, requires a multi-stakeholder approach to conflict intervention. How do we bring people with divergent views, backgrounds, and financial resources together to work on these contentious issues? Students will learn skills related to the mapping of conflict, develop a capacity to understand the role of identity, culture, and power in conflicts, and learn about negotiation, mediation, and facilitation techniques relevant to bringing stakeholders together to explore solutions for addressing environmental challenges.

*This course is part of the [Peace, Conflict, and Security Program](#) offered through CU Boulder. If you are interested in the Certificate in Peace, Conflict, and Security, please check out the website and schedule an appointment to meet with me. Students do not need to complete the certificate to take this course.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this class. It is recommended that students have completed PACS 2500 before taking this course.

Format

This course will be run as a combination of lecture and seminar. Students and the instructor will embark on a collaborative learning experience, partaking in a range of activities and discussions designed to deepen our understanding of the assigned materials. This includes working in small groups, role plays, possible guest speakers, and other experiential activities that might take place inside or outside of the classroom. Student participation and preparedness are crucial to making the class a successful learning experience.

Learning Goals

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Examine how human ecology has affected the environment and explore the causes and dynamics of natural resource conflicts;
- Understand the relationship between public policy and environmental conflicts;
- Analyze the linkages between environmental degradation, resource scarcity, and the potential for violent conflict;
- Identify key stakeholders relevant to environmental conflicts and their potential resolution;
- Apply the tools of conflict intervention to bring stakeholders together to address environmental conflicts.

Textbooks

There is one required textbook for this course:

- Moore, Lucy. [*Common Ground on Hostile Turf: Stories from an Environmental Mediator*](#). Washington, DC: Island Press, 2013.

Additional readings and web material are available to you through the [Modules](#) in Canvas.

There are two optional textbooks for this course:

- Clarke, Tracylee, and Tarla Rai Peterson. [*Environmental Conflict Management*](#). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2016.
- Fisher, Joshua D. [*Managing Environmental Conflict*](#). New York, NY: Colombia, 2022.
 - Both texts are available as ebooks through the CU Library System.
 - However, if you prefer working with hard copies you may purchase copies of these books.
 - To use the texts through the library please see the [Accessing the Course Texts](#) page.

Assignments

Overview of Assignments (1000 possible points)

Your grade is based out of 1000 total points.

- Reading and Lecture Quizzes (30% of your total grade, 2 online quizzes, 150 points each)
 - Due 3/2 and 5/4
- Short Papers (20% of your total grade, 2 essays, 100 points each)
 - Due 2/9 and 3/16
- Finding Common Ground Project (30% of your total grade, 300 points)
 - FCG Video Interview Essay (150 points)
 - Due 2/23
 - FCG Peer Reviews (100 points)
 - Due 3/2
 - FCG Responses to Peer Reviews (50 points)
 - Due 3/9
- Environmental Conflict Resolution Facilitation (20% of your total grade, 200 points)
 - ECR Preparation Essay for Character (50 points)
 - Due 4/23
 - ECR In-Class Participation (100 points)
 - Must be present in class on 4/22, 4/24, and 4/29.
 - ECR Reflection Paper (50 points)
 - Due 5/4

A full discussion of the course assignments can be found on the [Assignment Details](#) page.

Schedule

There are five units in the course which we will cover over our 15 weeks together.

1. Unit One: Public Policy Conflicts
2. Unit Two: Environmental Issues
3. Unit Three: Analyzing Environmental Conflicts
4. Unit Four: Environmental Conflict Resolution Process
5. Unit Five: Skill Development

A full version of the course reading schedule and bibliographic information can be found: [Course Calendar and Reading Schedule](#).

Grade Scale

Your final grade for this course is determined by the number of points acquired through quizzes and assignments. There are 1000 total points possible. The grading scale is as follows:

- A (1000-940 points)
- A- (939-900 points)
- B+ (899-870 points)
- B (869-830 points)
- B- (829-800 points)
- C (799-700 points)
- D (699-650 points)
- F (649 points or below and/or student has 6 or more unexcused absences)

Course Policies

Attendance

Class Attendance is Mandatory

Failure to attend class and/or disruption can be grounds for your final grade to be reduced or, in extreme cases, to receive an automatic F or be dropped from course.

You are expected to attend class on time and be prepared to participate in class discussions and activities. To record attendance, the instructor will either call out attendance or pass around a sign-in sheet during the class session.

As per guidance from the University of Colorado Boulder, the instructor no longer distinguishes between excused and unexcused absences. Therefore, it is your responsibility to save your absences in case you need them due to sickness or other emergencies. You are only to contact the instructor about an absence if it is a medical emergency lasting more than 2 weeks.

- **Students are allowed to be late or absent four times without a deduction to their final grade.**
 - A fifth absence will result in a full letter grade deduction off your final grade for this course.
 - Students with six or more unexcused absences will receive an F in this course.
 - If you are not in class, you are not considered present no matter the reason. Please save your absences in the case you have an emergency or are out with illness.
- **Students are allowed to be partially present (tardy) for class two times without a deduction to their final grade.**
 - I consider you to be tardy if you are more than 5 minutes late to the start of a session.
 - If you are tardy three times, it will result in a ½ letter grade deduction of your final grade for this course.
 - You will lose a ½ letter grade off your final grade for each time you are tardy thereafter.

- For assignments that have an in-person requirement, you must be present in class on those days to earn credit for participation.

Please Contact Disability Services If You Have Issues with Attendance

- If you have issues with mental health (stress, anxiety, depression, etc...) and this prevents you from attending class, please schedule an appointment with [Disability Services](#)[Links to an external site.](#). They can work with you to address your health needs and in many cases provide you with an accommodation letter or Flex Plan for excused absences due to mental health reasons.
- If you need support with mental health issues, please reach out to CU's [Counseling and Psychiatric Services \(CAPS\)](#)[Links to an external site.](#) CAPS offers support to all CU students.

Participation

Participation in class can take many forms. I know not all students are comfortable with speaking in front of a large group, which is why I will employ a number of strategies to allow for various participation types.

However, there is a difference between discomfort and distraction. Distraction takes away from our ability to learn together as a group. Students will lose points for participation if they are engaged in any of the following behaviors that distract from the learning environment such as: working on materials for other courses, surfing the web or watching TV on their devices, or having conversations not related to the material under discussion. **Earbuds and headphones are not allowed to be worn during class.**

Students will receive a warning for a first offense.

- A second offense will result in 10% deduction off your final grade.
- A third offense will be grounds for administrative action as per CU Boulder policy.

Waitlist

What if I join the class late?

Students who register for the course after the term has already started are responsible for making up work they have missed and obtaining any lecture notes from peers. Late work should be completed within 7 days of joining the course. The attendance policy for missed sessions and tardiness comes into force on the first day a student joins the class. It is recommended that you introduce yourself to me after your first class so that you are not accidentally penalized.

What if I'm on the waitlist?

If our classroom capacity allows, I will try my best to admit students listed on the waitlist. I am restricted by university policy to follow the fire marshal's posted room occupancy limits, regardless of the number of desks or chairs. If, for example, the capacity states 50, that's the cap. If you are on the waitlist, I encourage you to attend class, since there will no doubt be a few drops during the first week. However, I cannot guarantee you a place, nor can I adjust the order of the waitlist to prioritize admission.

Late & Missing Work

Please complete the required assignments and readings by the due dates listed on Canvas. All work must be submitted electronically through Canvas as a watchable video, Word document, or discussion post unless otherwise noted. **Late work will be docked 10% off total points per day the assignment is past due.** All due dates and exam dates are available to you in advance for planning purposes. *Students should contact me prior to the due date if they have a concern regarding an assignment and are seeking an extension.* Exceptions for extended due dates and make-up exams are considered on a case by case basis, which requires a discussion with me.

Accommodations for students with disabilities must be handled by the office of Disability Services, which determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Please contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by e-mail at dsinfo@colorado.edu. More information on accommodations is listed below under the Accommodations Statement section. When your accommodations are approved, please schedule an appointment with me to present your letter(s) and to discuss how we can make sure your needs are met.

Technologies

We will use the Canvas (and perhaps Zoom) as part of our course. Canvas works best in Firefox and Chrome. If you use another type of browser, please be warned that some things may not function properly. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the platform since you will need to do everything for this course on it, including submission of all your assignments. If you need help with technology, please contact the [Office of Information Technology](#). I would love to be able to help you with all your tech needs, but I'm not that person.

In the classroom, the use of laptop computers and tablets for the purposes of note-taking and accessing readings is permitted as long as the user does not engage in activities such as emailing, searching the web, playing games, or anything that might be of distraction to the class and its members. **Students may also not wear earbuds or headphones during class.** *Students violating this policy will be asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of that class session.* The instructor reserves the right to revoke the use of laptops and tablets in the classroom at his discretion.

Students may not create an audio recording or stream of classroom lectures and discussions without prior permission of the instructor. **Glasses that record video and audio are prohibited from recording or streaming class lectures and discussion.**

Mobile phones should be set to silent and kept out of sight for the duration of the class. Students who violate this policy will be asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of that class session. Please speak with the instructor before the start of class if there is an emergency situation that requires you to have your phone out during the session.

AI/LLM/Chatbots

For the purposes of this class, my usage of the terms AI, LLMs, and Chatbots all relate to services that will take written (text) prompts and produce full essays from them. This includes services such as Gemini, ChatGPT, Claude, Llama, and others commonly referred to as large language models (LLMs). This does not include the use of services like Grammarly which assist you with grammar-related issues in your writing.

In general, I prefer that you not use LLMs to produce your assignments. Why do I say this? In most cases, the work students are asked to perform in PACS courses often has a reflective component to it. I want to know what is going on for you. The act of writing is central to helping you explore your thoughts and develop your critical thinking skills. It defeats the purpose of a reflective assignment if you hand in something produced by ChatGPT. For any paper deemed reflective or asking for your interpretation, you will receive a failing grade if you use ChaptGPT, Claude, Gemini, and/or any other service to write your paper for you.

What about in the cases of research papers? Here there is some room for flexibility. Based on university guidance, I interpret the use of these tools as plagiarism if you use them to produce more than 10% of your paper. While these tools are powerful, they are also inaccurate and problematic for undergraduates. Often, they produce false statements that are easy for students to overlook, particularly when dealing with specific authors and materials the systems may not be trained on. Second, they produce formulaic essays and use language in ways that are not typical of an undergraduate student. That is, it is easy to spot direct copy-paste essays, especially when the word choices reflect terms not used in the class or articles, or the essay comes off as if it were written by a specialist in a particular subject area. Again, if you use AI/LLM to write the majority of your paper (more than 10%), you will receive a failing grade.

Can you use these tools to assist in your writing? Yes, but only if you are transparent about how you used them and that you limit their use to less than 10% of whatever final product is produced. For instance, it is more than acceptable to write your paper, and then ask a service like ChatGPT to suggest improvements for particular parts so long as the paper remains essentially your thoughts and work. Additionally, you can use these tools to help you understand the subject matter, so long as you do not copy-paste whole paragraphs and try to pass the work off as your own. Think about it as similar to Wikipedia. The tools can help you learn about a subject, but they should not be seen as authoritative sources. In all cases, if you use an LLM to help with a paper, include a footnote or endnote briefly describing why you decided to use the model and in what sections LLM influenced changes appear. Including such a declaration will help your instructor understand your choices, particularly if there are questions about the content of the paper. The rule to follow here is to be transparent about your use of AI/LLM and to keep your usage minimal, if at all.

If I suspect the use of AI/LLMs in your paper, I may require you to come to my office and produce a handwritten version of your paper from memory to evaluate your writing and grasp of concepts against what was submitted. This will help me make a final determination about your assignment grade.

Email

I typically respond to emails within 24 hours during the work week (Monday through Friday). If you do not get a reply within 36 hours, please send me a follow-up email. The answer to most general questions can be found within the syllabus, so please double check it before sending your email.

Email considerations:

- **You do not need to email me about absences.**
 - Only send me an email if you are dealing with an illness lasting longer than 2-weeks or there is an emergency I need to be aware of.
- **Kindly remember that an email is not a text message.**
 - Make sure to include your full name, the course and section number you are taking with me, and a detailed explanation of the issue. You do not need to email me if you are going

to miss class unless it is a prolonged absence due to a medical emergency lasting more than two weeks.

- **Finally, do not email me and ask, "Did I miss anything important?"**
 - Of course you did. It is on you to get notes from a classmate, and then, if you have questions or concerns about the material you missed, to schedule a meeting with me to discuss specific issues that you have identified. I am always willing to chat with you during office hours about the course content.

Office Hours

I hold office hours by appointment only. This is in part to encourage students to be proactive in meeting with me and to make sure that we have the time to appropriately address your questions when we do meet. I can usually answer quick questions after class, but if you have something more involved, please schedule an appointment!

You may schedule an office visit with me [here](#). When you schedule, you will be prompted to select how you would like to meet. Once I confirm, I will send you an Outlook invitation to your university email address. For those selecting Zoom, the link will be contained in the invite.

Letters of Rec

At some point, you may need the dreaded letter of recommendation or professional reference. I know how difficult it can be to get these from faculty. I am always happy to support students in this way, but I do have some criteria that you must meet. Things to keep in mind:

- **You are currently registered for the PACS Certificate and have taken at least two courses with me;**
- Maintain a B average in my classes;
- Did not have more than 4 unexcused absences in each of these courses;
- You should be able to describe the job, internship, or program you are applying for and your interest in it;
- Provide me with a current copy of your resume (or we can build one if you need it);
- Ask politely.

If this is something you require, please send me an email to get the conversation started.

University Mandated Policies

Accommodations for Disability

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) on the Disability Services website.

If you have an illness, injury or required medical isolation for which you require adjustment, please contact the instructor ASAP to discuss.

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote, or online. Failure to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, marital status, political affiliation, or political philosophy.

For more information, see the [classroom behavior policy](#), the [Student Code of Conduct](#), and the [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#).

Preferred Name and Pronouns

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [Honor Code](#). Violations of the Honor Code may include but are not limited to: plagiarism (including use of paper writing services or technology [such as essay bots]), cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. Understanding the course's syllabus is a vital part in adhering to the Honor Code.

All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution: StudentConduct@colorado.edu. Students found responsible for violating the [Honor Code](#) will be assigned resolution outcomes from the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution as well as be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Visit [Honor Code](#) for more information on the academic integrity policy.

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits [protected-class](#) discrimination and harassment, sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these concerns, and individuals who have been subjected to misconduct can contact OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, [reporting options](#), and [support resources](#) including confidential services can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors must inform OIEC when they are made aware of incidents related to these policies regardless of when or where something occurred. This is to ensure that individuals impacted receive outreach from OIEC about resolution options and support resources. To learn more about reporting and support for a variety of concerns, visit the [Don't Ignore It](#) page.

Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. If this applies to you, please speak with me directly as soon as possible at the beginning of the term. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Mental Health & Wellness

The University of Colorado Boulder is committed to the well-being of all students. If you are struggling with personal stressors, mental health or substance use concerns that are impacting academic or daily life, please contact [Counseling and Psychiatric Services \(CAPS\)](#) located in C4C or call (303) 492-2277, 24/7.

Free and unlimited telehealth is also available through [Academic Live Care](#). The [Academic Live Care](#) site also provides information about additional wellness services on campus that are available to students.