

WATER POLICY & POLITICS

T, Th 11:30-1:00 p.m.

Professor: Sara Hughes
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Graduate Student Instructor: Anna Kaczmarek
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Office Hours

Professor Hughes (Dana 3572): Tuesdays 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Anna Kaczmarek (Dana 4046): Mondays and Fridays 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Course Overview

This course is designed to provide an intensive graduate-level introduction to water policy and politics. Water connects people, land, infrastructure, ecosystems, and the climate and is essential for human health and wellbeing. The choices we make about how and where to use, transport, treat, or leave water resources have social, environmental, and economic consequences. Water policy also reveals the driving forces of power, institutions, and science in our political processes and decision-making forums. In this class, we approach water resources from a policy and politics perspective: focusing on decision making processes, power structures, conflicts, and rules. The geographic focus of the course is primarily the U.S., with some international examples, cases, and guest speakers.

As an environmental professional or researcher, you will inevitably engage with issues of water policy and politics. This course provides foundational knowledge of water policy; tools for evaluating and navigating water politics; and exposure to thought leaders and leadership skills in the field.

Learning Objectives

1. Be water knowledgeable: Become familiar with the major issues, actors, laws, and policies in the water sector.
2. Strengthen policy analysis skills and writing: Understand and be able to independently evaluate the determinants of water policy outcomes and feasibility of alternative proposals.
3. Gain exposure to thought leaders and opportunities in the water sector.

Prerequisites

None. Course content is intended to be accessible to all graduate students regardless of prior knowledge or experience with (water) policy.

Format

The course will meet for two 1-1/2 hour sessions per week. The format will be a mix of lecture, small group exercises, and full class discussion. Class sessions will be recorded and uploaded onto our Canvas website and only accessible to students and instructors registered for the course. Please see the ITS [Recording and Privacy Concerns FAQ](#). Students are prohibited from recording/distributing any Class Activity without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student's own private use

Canvas will be used throughout the course. Readings and handouts will be on Canvas, assignments should be submitted on Canvas, and all grades and any lecture slides will be posted on Canvas.

Our preferred method of contact is email. You can expect an email response from us within 48 hours, unless emailing over a holiday or weekend. You will also receive messages from Professor Hughes through Canvas so be sure you are regularly checking your UMich email account.

Readings

We will be using in this class the following book:

Christian-Smith, Juliet et al. 2012. "A Twenty-First Century U.S. Water Policy," Oxford University Press.

The book is available through multiple outlets, including as an e-book from the University of Michigan library. Individual chapters of "A Twenty-First Century U.S. Water Policy" will also be posted in course modules. Please be sure to decide how you would like to access the book by the beginning of the course (digitally or hard copy).

All additional readings will be accessible online, with the vast majority posted on the 558 Canvas site. The reading assignments for each day are posted in Canvas and will be available at least two weeks ahead of time.

Assessment

Grades will be based roughly on the following formula. Additional details about specific written assignments will be provided in class.

1. Water Policy Primer (15%)

This is a short (2-3 page) paper that summarizes and critically reflects on the core concepts covered in Part I of the course (Introduction to Water Policy and Politics). Your objective is to critically reflect on (a) the features of water resources and our relationship to them that generate policy and political challenges, and (b) the three drivers of water policy we will have discussed: politics, institutions, and science.

Due Friday, January 28 by 5:00 p.m. (EST) (submitted in Canvas).

2. Flint Water Crisis Gala Case Study Exercise and Memo (10%)

Due Friday, February 11 5:00 p.m. (EST) (submitted in Canvas).

3. Group Project: Water Policy Brief (Outline is 5% of final grade, Written Report is 35% of final grade, Presentation is 10% of final grade)

Policy briefs are common advocacy and communication tools in the environmental field. They serve as a way to succinctly communicate the importance of an issue, and a preferred policy solution. For this assignment, you will work in groups (3-4 members) to write a policy brief on a water-related issue. I will provide a set of options for you to choose from and organize around. The brief should identify and justify a set of preferred actions, by a defined set of actors, for addressing your issue. I will provide some examples on Canvas, and we will discuss this assignment further in class. You will be assigned to groups in mid-February.

Part 1 of the policy brief will be a one-page summary plus an outline that summarizes the major sections in your policy brief, including the types of policy recommendations you anticipate making (e.g., administrative vs. legislative change), and the resources and evidence you will be using to support your recommendations.

Due Friday, March 11 by 5:00 p.m. (EST) (submitted in Canvas)

Part 2 is the final policy brief. It should be around 8 pages long (12-point font, double spaced) and should include a one-page executive summary at the beginning.

Due Friday, April 1 by 5:00 p.m. (EST) (submitted in Canvas)

Part 3 is a presentation to the class during the final weeks of the course.

4. Final Exam (25%)

Due Monday, April 25, by 11:59 p.m. (EST) (submitted in Canvas).

Late Assignment Policy

There will be a two-point deduction in grade for every day (24 hours from the due date) an assignment is late. However, assignments later than seven days will not be accepted and will receive a grade of zero, without prior agreement. If you are having challenges, please contact the teaching team.

CLASS SCHEDULE**I. Introduction to Water Policy and Politics**

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| Thursday, 1/6/22 | 1. Course Overview: Water as a Policy Problem |
| Tuesday, 1/11/22 | 2. The Evolution of U.S. Water Policy |
| Thursday, 1/13/22 | 3. Institutions and Intergovernmental Relations in Water Policy |
| Tuesday, 1/18/22 | 4. Power and Politics in Water Policy |
| Thursday, 1/20/22 | 5. The Role of Science in Water Policy |

II. Issues in Water Policy and Politics**A. Ensuring Access to Safe, Affordable Drinking Water**

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| Tuesday, 1/25/22 | 1. Water Equity in the U.S. |
| Thursday, 1/27/22 | 2. Regulating Drinking Water
<i>*Water Policy Primer due 1/28/22 by 5:00 p.m.</i> |
| Tuesday, 2/1/22 | 3. Financing and Governing Drinking Water Services |
| Thursday, 2/3/22 | 4. Case Study: Flint Water Crisis (Gala) |
| Tuesday, 2/8/22 | 5. Public Opinion and Urban Water Resources; Guest Lecture:
Ellie Rauh, UM SEAS |
| Thursday, 2/10/22 | 6. Crafting Solutions for Drinking Water in the U.S.
<i>*Flint Water Crisis Gala Case Study Memo due 2/11/22 by 5:00 p.m.</i> |

B. Watershed Management and Coordination

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| Tuesday, 2/15/22 | 1. Approaches to Watershed Management |
| Thursday, 2/17/22 | 2. Regulating and Managing Water Quality |
| Tuesday, 2/22/22 | 3. Case Study: Groundwater Management in the Great Lakes;
Guest Lecture: Jon Allan, UM SEAS |
| Thursday, 2/24/22 | 4. Case Study: Managing the Colorado River; Guest Lecture:
Elizabeth Koebele, University of Nevada, Reno |

C. Governing the Water-Energy Nexus

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| Tuesday, 3/8/22 | 1. Policy Problems at the Water-Energy Nexus |
| Thursday, 3/10/22 | 2. Case Study: Michigan's Line 5
<i>*Policy Brief summary and outline due 3/11/22 by 5:00 p.m.</i> |
| Tuesday, 3/15/22 | 3. Case Study: Water and Energy in California |

D. Flood Risk Management

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| Thursday, 3/17/22 | 1. Flood Risk, Response, and Insurance in the U.S. |
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| Tuesday, 3/22/22 | 2. The Evolution of Flood Management and Engineering; Guest Lecture, Jessica Ludy ACoE |
| Thursday, 3/24/22 | 3. Urban Stormwater Flooding and Resilience |
| Tuesday, 3/29/22 | 4. Preparing for Climate Change |

E. Governing Global Water

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| Thursday, 3/31/22 | 1. Water and the Sustainable Development Goals
<i>*Written Group Policy Brief Due 4/1/22 by 5:00 p.m.</i> |
| Tuesday, 4/5/22 | 2. Pursuing a Global Water Policy Framework |

III. Group Presentations and Wrap-Up

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| Thursday, 4/7/22 | 1. Group Project Presentations |
| Tuesday, 4/12/22 | 2. Group Project Presentations |
| Thursday, 4/14/22 | 3. Group Project Presentations |
| Tuesday, 4/19/22 | 4. Wrap Up and the Future |

**Final Exam Due Monday, April 25, by 11:59 p.m. (EST) (submitted in Canvas)*

Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that the land in this region of Michigan was originally called Michigami (Mishigami) and belongs to the People of Three Fires: Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi. We are honored to be guests on this land. We also recognize Michigan's 12 federally recognized Tribal Nations, historic Indigenous communities in Michigan, Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and those who were forcibly removed from their homelands in Michigami.

Water Acknowledgement

We recognize that many of the land reservations of the Tribal Nations are located in the arid western United States. While some Nations have established water rights to accompany the land, many Nations still need to establish legal title to water rights in addition to what is called "wet water" in the West – actual water coming to the Nations' lands and people. Rectifying this historic injustice is an essential task for the first half of this century.

Learning in a Pandemic

These are difficult times. Every person in this class has been personally and professionally impacted by this pandemic. We should all be kind to one another and extend grace whenever possible. If you need to talk about your experience of the pandemic and how it is impacting your life and/or academic work please contact me. This may also mean that elements of this syllabus, assignments, and course structure may change based on potential public health developments.

For up-to-date information about the University of Michigan and COVID-19 please visit [Maize and Blueprint](#).

For up-to-date information about COVID-19 cases in our area please visit the [Washtenaw County Health Department](#).

University Statement on Health and Safety

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been required for our protection. By returning to campus, you have acknowledged your responsibility for protecting the collective health of our community. Your participation in this course on an in-person basis is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the State of Michigan and the University, including maintaining physical distancing of six feet from others, and properly wearing a face covering in class. Other applicable safety measures may be described in the [Wolverine Culture of Care](#), the [University's Face Covering Policy for COVID-19](#) and SEAS [Questions & Concerns document](#). Your ability to participate in this course in-person as well as your grade may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the [Office for Institutional Equity](#). If you are unable or unwilling to adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, you will be required to participate on a remote basis (if available) or to disenroll from the class. I also encourage you to review the [Statement of Students Rights and Responsibilities](#) and check-in with the Office of Academic Affairs Director to navigate support and resources for you.

Principles of Conduct

The University of Michigan Rackham Graduate School includes a policy on Academic and Professional Integrity: “As members of this community, and as future leaders in research and the professions, all Rackham students are expected to take personal responsibility for understanding and observing the following standards of academic and professional behavior that safeguard the integrity of the academic mission of the University.”

Please familiarize yourself with this policy, particularly the section on Plagiarism and other forms of academic and professional misconduct at <https://rackham.umich.edu/academic-policies/section8/>.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities, please contact their office at (734) 763-3000 or email at ssdoffice@umich.edu. Students who have registered with the Disability Resource Centre are eligible for formal academic accommodation; please note that the University's Policy is two weeks' notice for any academic accommodation. Their web address is: <https://ssd.umich.edu>.