WATER POLICY & POLITICS
T, Th 11:30-1:00 p.m.

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Office Hours
Professor Mika (Dana 2536): Thursdays 1:30-3:30 p.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. Where possible, 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.

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

**Readings**

We will be using in this class the following book:


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.

All additional readings or webinars 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. **Briefing Paper (15%)**

   Briefing papers are commonly used to help government officials and policymakers pinpoint an issue without having to delve into details that they don't have time for, particularly in fast-paced, public-facing environments. You will write a short briefing paper on a significant issue in water policy that could be used by an elected official to give a press conference. Briefing papers include a fact sheet, talking points, likely Q&A, and context on the event, attendees, and venue.
Due Friday, February 3rd by 5:00 p.m. (EST) (submitted in Canvas)

2. Public Testimony (delivered in-class) (10%)

Public testimony at a hearing is the opportunity to be heard directly by the decision makers and potentially influence the outcome of votes. You will prepare a testimony on a significant water policy issue that is no longer than 2 minutes to present in class on Tuesday, March 14.

Due Tuesday, March 14 (delivered in class)

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 late January.

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, February 24th 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, March 31st by 5:00 p.m. (EST) (submitted in Canvas)

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

4. Reading and Participation (25%)

This component will include class attendance, participation in class discussions and activities, and short one-paragraph responses to select readings and/or guest speakers.

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 professor.

CLASS SCHEDULE

I. Introduction to Water Policy and Politics

Thursday, 1/5/23  1. Course Overview and Introduction
Tuesday, 1/10/23  2. The Evolution of U.S. Water Policy
Thursday, 1/12/23 3. Institutions and Intergovernmental Relations in Water Policy
Tuesday, 1/17/23  4. The Role of Science in Water Policy
Thursday, 1/19/23 5. Power and Politics in Water Policy; Guest Speaker Celia Haven, Healing our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition.

II. Issues in Water Policy and Politics

A. Ensuring Access to Safe, Affordable Drinking Water

Tuesday, 1/24/23  1. Water Equity in the U.S.; Guest Speaker Cyndi Roper NRDC
Thursday, 1/26/23  2. Regulating and Financing Drinking Water
Tuesday, 1/31/23  3. Case Study: Flint Water Crisis (Gala)

B. Sustainability and Data Management

Thursday, 2/2/23  4. Public Opinion, Conservation, and Urban Water Resources
Tuesday, 2/7/23  5. Metrics and Indicators: Case Study: LA Sustainability Plan
Thursday, 2/9/23  6. Approaches to Watershed Management

C. Watershed Management and Coordination

Tuesday, 2/14/23  1. Integrated Watershed Management
Thursday, 2/16/23  2. Data and Disinformation; Guest Speaker Dr. Irene Pasquetto, UM School of Information
Tuesday, 2/21/23  3. Regulating and Managing Water Quality

***********************SPRING BREAK 2/28 & 3/2 ********************

D. Governing the Water-Energy Nexus

Tuesday, 3/7/23  1. Policy Problems at the Water-Energy Nexus
Thursday, 3/9/23  2. Case Study: Water and Energy in California
Tuesday, 3/14/23  3. In-class ‘public’ testimony
Thursday, 3/16/23  4. Case Study: Michigan’s Line 5; Guest Speaker Dr. Mike Shriberg, SEAS

E.  Stormwater and Flood Management

Tuesday, 3/21/23  2. The Evolution of Flood Management and Engineering
Tuesday, 3/28/23  4. Urban Stormwater Flooding and Resilience; Guest Speaker Palencia Mobley, Midwest Funding Navigator Manager at EPIC

F.  Governing Global Water

Thursday, 3/30/23  1. Plastics in Marine and Coastal Areas
Tuesday, 4/4/23  2. Pursuing a Global Water Policy Framework

III. Group Presentations and Wrap-Up

Thursday, 4/6/23  1. Group Project Presentations
Tuesday, 4/11/23  2. Group Project Presentations
Thursday, 4/13/23  3. Group Project Presentations
Tuesday, 4/18/23  4. Wrap Up and the Future

**************************  No Final Exam  **************************

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.