

The Human Dimensions of Water in the West

"Whiskey is for drinking; water is for fighting" - Mark Twain



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COURSE OVERVIEW:

The goal of this semester is to empower students to effect change, by giving them the knowledge and the opportunity to connect global and regional issues to local conditions and behaviors. We spent last semester trying to understand what “sustainability” means by looking at a wide variety of issues through a broad set of lenses. This semester we are going focus on the sustainability of a particular resource – water – in a particular context – on the University of Utah campus.

Simply put, the way we currently use water locally is just not sustainable. In order to understand why, we will need to look at “water” from a variety of perspectives and contexts. Accordingly, the first two-thirds of the course will be spent exploring the many of the different ways that humans encounter and think about water, moving progressively from abstract and global issues – like urbanization and climate change – to concrete and regional ones. Students will hear from experts from a range of academic disciplines – like Urban Planning, Biology, Geography and Engineering – as well as from different professional endeavors – like regional and campus water managers and facilities planners. During this part of the course, students will be asked to evaluate various case studies, and to write position papers arguing for or against some of these cases.

In the last third of the course, students will begin taking field trips around campus and hearing from different campus stakeholders, and then evaluating and applying all this information. The vehicle for this endeavor will be a final group project that focuses on the University of Utah campus and its community as a “living/learning laboratory”. That is, the class will collectively develop and evaluate their own case study that addresses a current water use issue on campus. A group report and final presentation will be given to an audience of campus stakeholders.

ADA Statement: The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the instructor and to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Bldg, 581-5020 (V/TDD) to make arrangements for accommodations. This information is available in alternative format with prior notification.

EVALUATION AND GRADING:

Your course grade will be determined from your performance on the following assignments:

1.) Position Paper on Chatham River Case	15%	(Jan. 23)
2.) Development/preservation analysis (Goldsmith)	15%	(Feb. 6)
3.) Position Paper on Bear River Pipeline	20%	(Mar. 4)
4.) Final Group Project	50%	(Apr. 22)

Extra Credit: There will be opportunities to earn extra credit points throughout the semester. Such opportunities typically involve attending a talk, film or some other event dealing with issues relevant to our discussions, and then handing in a short write-up (description and evaluation). I will inform students about these opportunities as they arise.

Final Grade:	A : 93 or more points	B+: 87.6 – 89.9	C+: 77.6 – 79.9	D: 60 – 69.9
	A-: 90 – 92.5 pts	B : 83.6 – 87.5	C : 73.6 – 77.5	E: <60
		B- : 80 – 83.5	C- : 70 – 73.5	

SCHEDULE:

Week 1 –

Tues.	1/7	Intro, read in class (handouts) Movie: Desert Wars
Thurs.	1/9	Read: Perkowitz, “The Rarest Element” Pearce, “Riding the Water Cycle”

Week 2 –

Tues.,	1/14	Read: Warshall, “Watershed Governance” Introduction and discussion of Chatham River Study Case
Thurs.,	1/16	Chatham River Study discussion and position assignments

Week 3 –

Tues.,	1/21	Read: Clark and Gerlak, “Environmental Racism in Southern Arizona”
Thurs.,	1/23	Chatham River Positions discussion

Week 4 –

Tues.,	1/28	Meet with Prof. Goldsmith’s <i>Green Communities</i> class (M LIB 1170)
Thurs.,	1/30	same as above

Week 5 –

Tues.,	2/4	same as above
Thurs.,	2/6	same as above

Week 6 –

Tues.,	2/11	Read: Pearce, “Losing the West” Introduction of Group Position Paper on the Bear River Pipeline
Thurs.,	2/13	Read: Barbanell, Chs. 1 & 2

Week 7 –

Tues., 2/18 Bear River Pipeline Discussion

Thurs., 2/20 **Read:** (1) Kirkman, “A Little Knowledge of Dangerous Things”
(2) Global Warnings’ Six Americas (Center for Climate Change Communication)

Week 8 –

Tues., 2/25 Andrea Brunelle (Chair, Geography Dept.) to discuss Climate Change

Thurs., 2/27 same

Week 9 –

Tues., 3/4 Guest Speaker: Richard Bay, CEO, Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District
Group position paper on Bear River Pipeline due.

Thurs., 3/6 Guest Speaker: Steve Burian, Civil and Environmental Engineering Dept.

Week 10 – SPRING BREAK

Weeks 11 & 12 –

Tues., 3/18 – Guest Speaker: Myron Wilson, Director of the Sustainability Resource Center.

Thurs., 3/20, Tues., 3/25, and Thurs., 3/27 – fieldtrips to various parts of campus to see water-related research and projects.

Weeks 13, 14 & 15 –

Work on final project/case study

Week 16 –

Tues., Apr. 22 – Final project/Case Study Presentation