

Course Syllabus
Human Dimensions of Natural Resource Conservation
WIS 4523: Fall 2025

Class Times:

Tuesday: Period 8 3:00pm – 3:50pm NZH 0222
Thursday: Periods 8 – 9 3:00pm – 4:55pm NZH 0222

Instructor: Dr. Nia Morales, Assistant Professor of Human Dimensions

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Course Description:

The field of human dimensions of natural resources conservation evaluates how peoples' values, culture, knowledge, opinions, and tolerance influence natural resource management. Practitioners of human dimensions work to identify stakeholders, understand stakeholder knowledge and opinions, and use this information to guide management decisions or to effectively communicate environmental messages. In this course, students will be exposed to the principles of human dimensions, strategies for stakeholder evaluation and communication, and human dimensions applications in management.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify stakeholders of natural resource issues
- Identify qualitative and quantitative research tools and their applications
- Develop a quantitative survey to address a natural resource issue
- Understand the practical application of human dimensions methods in a variety of agencies and organizations

Grading Policy:

All assignments are to be typed, not handwritten, and should be submitted in accordance with the assignment description. Assignments are due at 3pm on the due date unless otherwise specified. Late submissions of assignments will result in a 10% reduction in the assignment grade per day and will not be accepted after five days. The grading scale will be 94-100 A, 90-93 A-, 87-89 B+, 84-86 B, 80-83 B-, 77-79 C+, 74-76 C, 70-73 C-, 67-69 D+, 64-66 D, 60-63 D-, <60 = unacceptable (E)

There are a total of 500 points available between assignments, attendance, and exams. The number of points available per assignment and exam is described in the Assignments and Grades section. All assignments, unless otherwise specified will be due on Sundays. Exams will be open on Wednesdays and closed on Sundays.

Attendance Policy: Students are required to attend each session and attendance will be taken in each session. Each student is allowed **two** unexcused absences. After the second unexcused absence, each will count as a 2-point deduction in the participation portion of your grade. If you are having difficulties with attendance due to technical issues, please let your instructors know as soon as possible.

Readings:

Readings will come from the required text or will be posted on the e-learning website.

Recommended Text: Decker, D.J., Riley, S.J., & Siemer, W.F. (eds). 2012. Human Dimensions of Wildlife Management. The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Recommended Text: Jacobson, S.K. 2009. Communication Skills for Conservation Professionals. Island Press.

Discussions:

Typically, Thursday classes will consist of a variety of activities and discussions. You are expected to be an active participant in discussion sessions. Each student will have the opportunity to lead discussions and activities and will be expected to come prepared to develop discussion prompts/questions when necessary. Active participation in these sessions is part of your overall participation grade (4% of your total grade).

Assignments and Grades:

Exams: 100 points each

There are two exams. On the Thursdays of the weeks the exams are scheduled, there will be NO in-person class meeting. Exams will be open the Wednesday of that week and close that Sunday. Exams are open book, but work must be done **individually**. There is no final exam during UF exam week.

Quizzes: 10 points each (100 points total)

A paper quiz will be completed every Tuesday at the beginning of class. The quiz will cover content from the prior week. If you have an excused absence on the day of the quiz, we will excuse the grade as well. Unexcused absences will result in a zero grade.

Perusall Assignments: 3 points each

Each week, you will be assigned a Perusall assignment for the week's readings. You'll be graded on opening and completing the reading as well as commenting and interacting with others.

- Reading, watching, or listening to the end (50%): You will earn full credit by accessing each page/section of the document by the deadline
- Active engagement time (40%): You will earn full credit by spending 30 minutes actively engaging with the content
- Comments (30%): You will earn full credit on this metric by submitting 2 high-quality comments
- Upvoting (10%): You will earn full credit if you upvote 5 classmates' comments or receive 5 upvotes
- Opening the assignment (5%): You will earn full credit by opening the assignment 3 times
- Getting responses (5%): You will earn full credit by comments that elicit responses from your classmates

Notice that this adds up to 140%- therefore you have *multiple* opportunities for full points.

Assignment 1: Introduction Post: 5 points

Due Date: August 31

Description: Introduce yourself to the class! Create a post on Canvas describing who you are. Where are you from? What do you like to do? Why are you taking this class? What do you hope to get out of the class? Include at least 1 picture/image to help us get to know you.

Grading Rubric: 5 points for on-time submission of a complete post, 0 points for late or incomplete submission

Submission: Upload to e-learning website

Assignment 2: Wolf Case Study: 25 points

Due Date: September 28

Description: For this case study, you will be graded in two parts. First will be your participation in the role play exercise (10 points); second will be for your 1-2 page summary/debrief (15 points).

Grading Rubric: See rubric on e-learning website for breakdown of points.

Submission: Upload to e-learning website

Extra Credit: Conservation Meets Psychology Podcast: 5 points

Due Date: October 12

Description: Listen to the Rewildology episode 42- *Conservation Meets Psychology: How to Foster Meaningful Engagement with Kayla Cranston, PhD*. What are two practical strategies from the podcast that Dr. Cranston suggests for fostering meaningful and enduring engagement with nature? What are the personal and societal benefits of fostering a stronger connection to nature? Describe something that resonated with you in the podcast (it could be something from Dr. Cranston's professional journey or her research/current work).

Grading Rubric: Follows writing prompts and paragraph requirements (5 points).

Submission: Upload to e-learning website

Assignment 3: Conservation Education and Outreach

Due Date: October 19

Description: For this assignment, you will create a conservation education or outreach program. Describe your program, complete a logic model, and create an evaluation plan. Detailed instructions can be found on Canvas.

Grading Rubric: See Canvas for rubric

Submission: Upload to e-learning website

Assignment 4: HD Research Project Pt. 1:50 points

Due Date: November 3

Description: In this 2 part project, you will choose a human dimensions issue in natural resource management, develop a proposal on the subject, design a quantitative survey and present your study and hypothesized results to classmates. Your objective for part I is to choose a topic and develop a 3-5 page research proposal.

Project Part 1: Develop a 3-5 page research proposal including an introduction to the issue and stakeholders/groups involved, at least 2 research questions/objectives of the study, and methodology including a survey or qualitative instrument.

Grading Rubric: See rubric on e-learning website for breakdown of points.

Submission: Upload to e-learning website

Assignment : Survey Project Pt. 2- Final Presentations: 25 points

Due Date: November 17

Project Part 3: For the final part of this project, you will present your study to the rest of the class in an e-poster session. These will be speed presentations; each presenter will have 3 minutes to describe their project/poster.

Grading Rubric: See rubric on e-learning website for breakdown of points.

Submission: the poster session will be done on Nov 19 and Nov 21 during class. Upload a copy of your presentation on the e-learning website by November 17.

In-Class Participation: 20 points

Active participation is an important part of this course. You will be awarded up to 20 points for your engagement throughout the semester. Engagement is not solely limited to speaking in class or asking questions, but is related to your active participation in class activities and discussions, consistent attendance, and the quality of engagement.

Informed: Shows evidence of having done the assigned work.				
Thoughtful: Shows evidence of having understood and considered issues raised.				
Considerate: Takes the perspective others into account.				
Present: Shows evidence of regular attendance.				
	High Quality	Quality	Average	Needs Improvement
Total Points	15-20	10-14	5-9	0-4

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Assignment 1: Intro Post	8/31	6
Exam 1 (Online- Available 9/18-9/21)	9/21	100
Assignment 2	9/28	25
Assignment 3	10/19	25
Assignment 4	11/2	15
Exam 2 (Online- Available 11/6-11/10)		100
Assignment 5	11/16	25
Perusall Readings		24
Quizzes (in- class only)		100
Participation (general attendance + discussion participation)		20
Total		440

Extra Credit

Podcast Reflection (5 points) due 10/12

Course Schedule:

Week	Date	Topic	Assignment/Reading
1	August 21	Course Introduction & Introduction to Human Dimensions: Overview of fields involved	<i>Activity:</i> Review syllabus and course format. Discuss course expectations. <i>Readings:</i> Decker Chapter 1 Bennett et al. 2016. Biological Conservation
2	August 26	Basics of understanding behavior	<i>Readings:</i> Decker chapters 4 & 5 <i>Activity:</i> Lecture
	August 28		<i>Activity:</i> Wildlife Value Orientations in the US *Assignment 1: Intro post due 8/31
3	September 2	Understanding Stakeholders	<i>Readings:</i> Decker Ch 11 <i>Activity:</i> Lecture & Guest Lecture-Savannah
	September 4		<i>Activity:</i> Stakeholder Issues in Florida & Case study background info (for next week)
4	September 9	Managing Stakeholders	<i>Readings: none</i> <i>Activity:</i> Wolf Role Play
	September 11		<i>Activity:</i> Hour 1- Wolf Role Play debrief
5	September 16	HD of wildlife mgmt	<i>Readings:</i> Skim Decker chs 13-15 <i>Activity:</i> Lecture
	September 18	Exam 1 (No Class)	Exam open 9/18-9/21 Covers weeks 1-4
6	September 23	Conservation Psychology	<i>Readings:</i> Clayton and Brook 2005 <i>Activity:</i> Lecture
	September 25		<i>Activity:</i> Breakout groups *Assignment 2: Wolf debrief due 9/28

7	September 30	Conservation Communication	<i>Readings:</i> Love or Loss 2019 <i>Activity:</i> Lecture
	October 2		<i>Activity:</i> Design a conservation communication program
8	October 7	Environmental Outreach	<i>Readings:</i> The Concept of EE & Env Interp (Youngentob and Hostetler) <i>Activity:</i> Lecture
	October 9		<i>Activity:</i> Guest Lecture: Keara Clancy *Extra Credit due 10/12
9	October 14	Quantitative Research Techniques	<i>Readings:</i> Skim Israel Savvy Survey Series (<i>skim</i>) <i>Activity:</i> Lecture
	October 16		<i>Activity:</i> Guest lecturers: FWC social scientists * Assignment 3: Conservation/Outreach Prog due 10/19
10	October 21	Qualitative Research Techniques	<i>Readings:</i> Creswell ch 9 <i>Activity:</i> Lecture
	October 23		<i>Activity:</i> Fish Bowl Focus Group
11	October 28	HD in Academia	<i>Readings:</i> Dayer and Mengak 2020 <i>Activity:</i>
	October 30		<i>Activity:</i> *Assignment 4: Survey Proj Pt 1 due 11/2
12	November 4		<i>Activity:</i> Guest Lecture- Savannah
	November 6	No Class	<i>Activity:</i> Exam 2 open covers weeks 5-10 (11/6-9)

13	November 11	Holiday- No Class	
	November 13	HD Careers outside of Academia	<i>Readings:</i> *see canvas for reading assignment <i>Activity:</i> Lecture <i>Activity:</i> Career Panel * Assignment 5: e-poster must be uploaded by 11/16
14	November 18	Poster Presentations	
	November 20	Poster Presentations	
15	November 25		NO CLASS
	November 27		
16	December 2		Course Evals

Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A	93.6 – 100%	C	73.6 – 76.5%
A-	89.6 – 93.5%	C-	69.6 – 73.5%
B+	86.6 – 89.5%	D+	66.6 – 69.5%
B	83.6 – 86.5%	D	63.6 – 66.5%
B-	79.6 – 83.5%	D-	59.6 – 63.5%
C+	76.6 – 79.5%	E	<59.5

Required Policies

Course Policies:

Attendance Policy: Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Quiz/Exam Dates/Policies: There are in class quizzes and take-home exams in this course. There is no final exam.

Make-up Policy: Make-up assignments are at the instructor's discretion.

Assignment Policy: Please see Pg 5 for a list of graded work.

Online course evaluation: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:

1. The email they receive from GatorEvals,
2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals,
3. The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluera.com>
 - a. Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

UF Policies:

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

University Policy on Academic Conduct: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all

work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Class Demeanor or Netiquette: All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. [Describe what is expected and what will occur as a result of improper behavior See Sample Netiquette Document]

8. Getting Help:

For issues with technical difficulties for Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu>
- (352) 392-HELP (4357)
- Walk-in: HUB 132

Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues MUST be accompanied by the ticket number received from the Help Desk when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You MUST e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Other resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

(Required) Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course please visit <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints> to submit a complaint.