

NRSM 379 Collaboration in Natural Resource Decisions

Syllabus

Schedule & location

M/W/F at 1:00-1:50
Liberal Arts 204

Instructor & email

Holly Nesbitt (she/her)
holly.nesbitt@umontana.edu

Office hours & location

Mondays at 2:00-3:00 or by
appointment
Clapp 404

Course materials & resources

All course materials will be on Moodle. For more information about COVID-19, see umt.edu/coronavirus.

About the instructor

Please call me Holly. I'm a PhD candidate in the FCFC. Before coming back to school, I worked as a natural resource management facilitator. When I'm not working, you can find me outside (skiing, paddling, hiking, yay!) or enjoying a good book/movie. Pro tip: HP jokes will be greatly appreciated.

The best way to reach me is via email (but not on weekends). Feel free to ask me about anything – class, grad school, research, jobs, facilitation – happy to chat!

Course overview

How are we going to solve big, messy environmental problems?

Why is it so hard for people to listen and really hear each other?

What guidelines steer collaborative processes toward success?

How do I help reduce conflict and build common ground among stakeholders?

If these questions intrigue you, this course is for you! NRSM 379 introduces students to the theory and practice of collaborative conservation. In addition to understanding the social and biophysical aspects of natural resource conflict, professionals must often facilitate dialogue among diverse stakeholders to achieve common goals.

In this course, we will read and discuss a mix of literature to understand common pitfalls and fruitful approaches to collaboration. Students will learn to recognize their own biases and practice deliberate, active listening. Through lectures, guest presentations, and attending “real world” meetings, students will gain an appreciation for the art and science of facilitation. At the end of this course, students will be able to participate in and lead decision making processes that incorporate diverse interests to address complex natural resource challenges.

Course delivery

We will plan to meet in person with the option of switching to Zoom depending on how the pandemic continues to unfold.

Land acknowledgement

UM acknowledges that we are in the territories of the Salish and Kalispel people. We honor the path they have always shown us in caring for this place for the generations to come.

What will you learn in this class?

This course will give you the tools to understand, participate, and lead collaborative decision processes. Our objectives are to:

1. Appreciate the subjective and “wicked” nature of natural resource problems;
2. Understand human psychology related to groups, conflict, behavior, and cooperation;
3. Practice empathy, self-reflection, listening, and empowering others;
4. Learn the many “dos and “don’ts” of facilitating successful collaborative dialogue; and,
5. Develop, refine, and practice writing skills.

How will you be graded?

30%	In class participation
10%	Attendance
30%	Assignments
15%	Paper 1
15%	Paper 2

Pro tip: Extra writing help is available via UM’s Writing Center.

Course format

This course will use online materials, reflective writings, lectures, discussion, and papers. If possible, each student will also attend an external collaborative meeting.

Online materials can be found on our Moodle course site.

There are general course materials and weekly course resources. *Students are expected to familiarize themselves with Moodle, ask clarifying questions if necessary, and become proficient navigating Moodle. Visit moodle.umt.edu for more.*

Reflective writings will be due most class periods (see the “weekly plan” on Moodle) and constitute the majority of **assignments**. Students will submit responses to question prompts via Moodle before the start of class. We will use these responses to structure and enhance our discussion of class materials. *Students are expected to read course material and complete reflective writings PRIOR to class.*

Lectures will be given as needed.

Discussions will serve as the backbone of this class. We will discuss course material in a variety of formats and methods. Student **participation** is essential for our learning in this class and requires thoroughly reading the material, thoughtfully responding to reflective writing prompts, **attendance**, and actively engaging with in-class activities. We’re in this together!

External collaborative meetings are an excellent way to learn how and how not to run good collaborative interactions. I hope to find several meetings for students to attend (likely online). You’ll attend one meeting and write a reflective paper (**paper 2**) on your experience.

Papers will be developed via several in-class workshops and independent student work. In **paper 1**, you will review a current natural resource debate by researching and objectively representing multiple stakeholder perspectives on the issue. We will write this paper using a phased approach – you will write specific parts of the paper to begin, we will review and provide feedback on each, you will revise and add new sections until the entire paper is written. In **paper 2**, you will review a public collaborative meeting that you attend outside of class hours. You will represent multiple stakeholder perspectives, evaluate how the meeting was structured and run, and explain a field of research that might help reduce conflict or achieve specific, desired outcomes. More details on both papers will be provided in class and on Moodle.

Inclusivity & support

We support an inclusive learning environment where we recognize that diverse perspectives and life experiences are a source of inspiration and strength. This course is designed to present, acknowledge, and respect these different viewpoints. I welcome any feedback or suggestions.

Together, we are expected to be respectful and welcoming. Disagreements are inevitable, and we'll address them in a way that honors and shows dignity to all members of the class. We expect everyone to engage in honest self-expression and diligent work to understand different perspectives. We reject discrimination in all forms, including but not limited to, those based on age, color, disability, gender identity and expression, national origin, parental status, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status. For more information on diversity at UM, please see: umt.edu/diversity/default.php.

Please let me know if there are ways that the delivery and content of this course can be altered to meet your learning needs. Please email me with details and we will work together to develop appropriate modifications. You can also contact UM's Office for Disability Equity at 406.243.2243 or ode@umontana.edu.

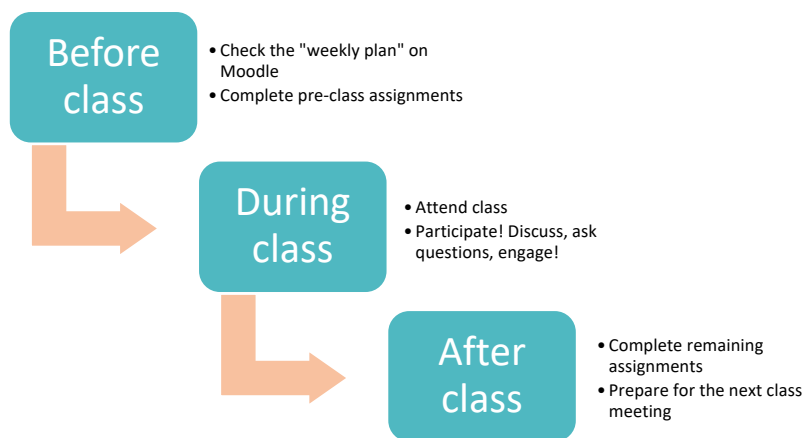
We support students with families. You are welcome to bring breastfeeding children to class. In cases where parents have a gap in childcare for older children, children can come to class as a temporary, occasional solution.

Please take care of your physical and mental health. If you are unable to attend class or complete assignments, please let me know as soon as possible so we can work together to accommodate your needs. You can also access the following UM mental health resources: umt.edu/diversity/resources/mental-health.php. UM's Curry Health Center also provides medical, counseling, dental, and wellness services: umt.edu/curry-health-center/.

Although I have high expectations for all students in my class, I am happy work with you and support you as you strive for balance and well-being in your life.

A typical week in NRSM 379

To prepare for a typical week in NRSM 379, you should log into Moodle and check the "weekly plan" listed under the week/topic section. The weekly plan will tell you what you have to do for the week. It will often instruct you to *read* a book chapter, article, or website; *write* responses to a prompt; *watch* a lecture or video I will provide; *complete* a specific assignment; or *attend* an external meeting.



Expectations

I expect everyone to:

- Actively engage in class, which includes completing readings and assignments, sharing your ideas and questions, and being respectful and interested in other viewpoints;
- Ask for help when you need it or you don't understand (you're not alone!);
- Be honest and demonstrate academic integrity; which includes not reproducing or distributing course materials, following instructions for individualized work, and not copying or plagiarizing other's work; visit umt.edu/student-affairs/community-standards/default.php to read the UM Student Conduct Code; violations are serious and will result in reduced or no credit for the assignment, no credit for the course, and/or referral to the Vice President for Academic Affairs; and,
- Be familiar with all UM policies including the course drop deadlines, which fall on the 15th instructional day, after which you can no longer drop the course with a refund and avoid a "W" on your transcript; and the 45th instructional day, after which you can only drop the class for a few limited reasons.

You can expect me to:

- Create an inclusive and conducive learning environment;
- Work with you to address your concerns and questions;
- Provide constructive and timely feedback on your work; and,
- Use a collaborative teaching philosophy, which is centered on:
 - Engagement (piquing interest and curiosity);
 - Interaction (learning from one another);
 - Reciprocity (building relationships based on trust and sharing); and,
 - Reflexivity (challenging assumptions and asking why).

Advanced college writing

NRSM 379 is an advanced college writing course which fulfills an "upper division writing" requirement, or a "little w" as you'll hear it called. Learning outcomes include being able to ask academic quality questions, perform research, present different viewpoints, edit and revise work, present work appropriately, and use modern information technology. More details can be found here: umt.edu/faculty-senate/procedures/general-education-procedures-202/writing-course-guidelines-202.pdf. Completing your weekly **assignments**, **paper 1**, and **paper 2** will fulfill this requirement.

Pro tip: If you plan to continue in an academic or research field, I strongly recommend you use a citation manager. If you wind up writing lots of papers with lots of citations, it will make your life considerably easier if you adopt one sooner rather than later. Imagine writing a paper and the literature cited section just auto-populates in the correct format – what a dream! I use Mendeley (free online app or download) and would be happy to help you. There are many other options.