U.S. Water Governance

ENV 738
Fall 2020 (half semester)
T/Th 8:30-9:45 am

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Office hours: Th 10-11 or by appointment, https://duke.zoom.us

Class location: T (except 8/18 & 9/22), Grainger Hall 1112
Th (plus 8/18 & 9/22), https://duke.zoom.us

This course examines the governance systems that manage freshwater resources in the United States. American water policy is densely institutionalized, constrained by historical systems of rights and long-established patterns of water usage. It is also organizationally complex, with authority fragmented among myriad agencies and authorities at all jurisdictional levels. Our task will be first to understand current governing structures as a consequence of historical, functional, and political forces, and second to analyze contemporary efforts to promote collaboration, adaptive management, and market solutions within the framework of existing governance systems.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will gain an understanding of:
- The organization of U.S. water governance systems and the logic of their complexity.
- Recent innovations in water policy design and management strategies.

Students will gain competencies in:
- Situating water resources problems and issues within the complex governance system.
- Identifying institutional and organizational obstacles and opportunities for water reform.

COVID-19 STATEMENT

The world is a mess. Let’s be patient and generous with one another. Learning the foundations to improve water governance has never been more important.

ASSIGNMENTS

Readings and Discussion (20% of course grade)
All students should be prepared to participate in seminar discussion during each class session. Discussions will concentrate on the assigned readings, rigorously examining the theoretical and empirical contributions of each work. Please be sure to complete all of the assigned readings and take time to reflect upon them prior to class.
**Reading Reflections (25%) – due by M 12pm for T classes, W 12pm for Th classes**
Each student will write a 400-600 word response to the readings two times over the semester. Assignment to particular days will be made during the first class. These short reflections should not summarize the readings. The goal instead is to respond to some or all of the works; you might do this by comparing their questions or approaches, proposing an alternative hypothesis or argument, discussing their connection to readings from previous weeks, or considering the implications of their findings for an applied water resources problem or issue.

**Water Concept Memo (25%) – due T 9/15**
During the first week of class, each student will be assigned a concept that applies to multiple water management issues and challenges. The memo (800-1,200 words, not including references) should use resources supplementary to course readings to define the concept, explain how it can be measured, and discuss its main areas of application.

**Short Research Paper (30%) – topics due Th 9/17; papers due T 10/13**
The short paper (2,000-2,500 words, not including references) will analyze the application of the assigned water concept to a water resources problem or issue of the student’s choosing. The paper should explore how the organization of governance affects how the concept gets treated within that setting.

**DUKE COMMUNITY STANDARD**
All activities of Nicholas School students, including those in this course, are governed by the Duke Community Standard.

Duke University is a community dedicated to scholarship, leadership, and service and to the principles of honesty, fairness, respect, and accountability. Citizens of this community commit to reflect upon and uphold these principles in all academic and nonacademic endeavors, and to protect and promote a culture of integrity.

To uphold the Duke Community Standard:
- I will not lie, cheat, or steal in my academic endeavors
- I will conduct myself responsibly and honorably in all my endeavors; and
- I will act if the Standard is compromised.

Proper citations in all papers submitted for this course are absolutely mandatory. For information on citing sources and avoiding plagiarism, see the library’s web site at [https://plagiarism.duke.edu/](https://plagiarism.duke.edu/). If you have questions about the Community Standard or citation practices, please consult with the instructor or the NSOE Communications Studio.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**August 18. Introduction**

**August 20. State of the Nation’s Water Resources**


**August 25. Values**

Students will be assigned to two:


**August 27. Water Quality Protection**


**September 1. Water Federalism**


**September 3. Markets and Privatization**

Students will be assigned to two:


**September 8. Domestic Water Wars**


Willis, Haisten. 2019. For 30 Years, Georgia and Florida Have Been Fighting over Water. *Southerly* (September 27).


**September 10. Water Wars and Adaptive Management**


**September 15. WATER CONCEPT MEMO DUE**

**September 15. Water and Cities**


**September 17. RESEARCH PAPER TOPICS DUE**

**September 17. Governance Failure in Flint**


Additional readings divided among class.

**September 22. Indigenous Participation in U.S. Water Governance**

September 24. Flood Management


Selections from *After Hurricane Harvey: Failures in a Flood Zone*.

September 29. Collaborative Water Governance


October 1. Wrapping Up

October 13. PAPERS DUE by 5pm