

# **NRM 403, Environmental Decision Making**

## **Course Syllabus, Fall Semester 2021**

### **9:45-11:15 AM Tuesdays & Thursdays (3 Cr)**

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**Section F01:** O'Neill Building room 201

**Section FXA:** <https://alaska.zoom.us/j/82137152017>

**Office Hours:** Generally, I plan to be available in my office Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:30 - 1:00, or by appointment. To stem the spread of COVID-19, my door will likely be closed, so please knock. I am also available to meet virtually (Zoom, telephone, etc.).

**Course goal:** To introduce students to an approach and range of tools useful to making good environmental and natural resource management decisions in the face of complexity, uncertainty, and competing values, as well as to enhance students' critical thinking skills. By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- **Articulate and apply the foundations** (science, economics, ethics/values, and policy) upon which natural resource management decisions are made.
- **Develop and apply critical thinking skills** when evaluating information and be able to distinguish between fact, theory, and opinion.
- Independently **evaluate various sources of information for reliability**, and **use reliable sources of information** to support positions in natural resource issues.
- **Deliver clear analysis and persuasive presentations**, both orally and in writing.
- **Discuss and use a variety of techniques** employed by resource managers in decision-making.
- **Gain perspective** ("big picture" sense) on perspectives ("points of view" sense).

**Textbook:** Gregory, R., Failing, L., Harstone, M., Long, G., Mcdaniels, T., and Ohlson, D. (2012), *Structured Decision Making*, Wiley Global Research (STMS). Other required readings will be assigned and made available via Canvas (<https://canvas.alaska.edu>)

**Prerequisites:** NRM 101 or permission of instructor.

**NRM 403 is an upper division, capstone class.** The emphasis is on discussion and active learning, **not** lecture and passive learning. Class participation is a substantial portion of your final grade, and depends on both your live presence in the Zoom class and the quality of your participation. More than two unexcused absences will reduce your class participation grade, even if you watch the recordings later. Participation quality depends on active participation in discussions, thoughtful comments, and good questions. Effort counts here. We will do all we can to provide the atmosphere necessary for fun and challenging discussions.

**NRM 403 meets Oral- and Writing-intensive requirements**, reflecting our emphasis on clarity of communication. Although some new information will be presented, the emphasis will be on improving how you synthesize and work with information you already have, e.g., from previous courses.

**Technology Policy:** You may use your laptop/tablet/phone to do work relevant to the course, as long as others do not find it distracting.

**Canvas:** This course will make extensive use of Canvas (<https://canvas.alaska.edu>) for making class notes and reading materials available, submitting assignments, coordinating activities with project group members, retrieving grades, and updating your course progress. Please check it regularly for announcements and updates. In addition, we occasionally will need to contact you between class periods via Canvas e-mail. If you prefer to use a different e-mail address, you will need to set up e-mail forwarding.

**Assignment submission:** All assignments MUST be turned in using Canvas's assignment submission tool. DO NOT use any other means of submission (e.g., e-mail). Assignments received by email will receive the response that the assignment must be handed in on Canvas. Late assignments will be penalized 10% of the assignment value per day, up to a maximum of 50%. We are reasonably proficient with various tools to detect plagiarism, which is a serious violation of the UAF honor code that merits a failing grade.

**Issues:** The instructors and invited guests will present current, controversial natural resource issues and cases that will highlight the foundations of decision-making in natural resources management. The issues are complex, with "good" answers, "bad" answers, but no "right" answers. We encourage you to present your perspective energetically and rationally while challenging (respectfully) those you disagree with (including ours). We welcome (and occasionally offer) "devil's advocate" arguments as a way to challenge assumptions and strengthen arguments. **Your grade does not depend on what conclusions you reach, but rather on how you reach those conclusions.**

**Grading:** Letter grades will be assigned based on the fraction of total points obtained in the class: 90-100 = A, etc. We will assign + or – modifiers for scores within 2 points of the letter grade cutoffs. All grades and feedback for assignments will be provided via the gradebook feature on Blackboard.

## Syllabus Addendum (Revised 8/18/2021)

**COVID-19 statement:** Students should keep up-to-date on the university's policies, practices, and mandates related to COVID-19 by regularly checking this website:

<https://sites.google.com/alaska.edu/coronavirus/uaf?authuser=0>

Further, students are expected to adhere to the university's policies, practices, and mandates and are subject to disciplinary actions if they do not comply.

**Student protections statement:** UAF embraces and grows a culture of respect, diversity, inclusion, and caring. Students at this university are protected against sexual harassment and discrimination (Title IX). Faculty members are designated as responsible employees which means they are required to report sexual misconduct. Graduate teaching assistants do not share the same reporting obligations. For more information on your rights as a student and the resources available to you to resolve problems, please go to the following site: <https://catalog.uaf.edu/academics-regulations/students-rights-responsibilities/>.

**Disability services statement:** I will work with the Office of Disability Services to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities.

### Student Academic Support:

- Speaking Center (907-474-5470, [uaf-speakingcenter@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-speakingcenter@alaska.edu), Gruening 507)
- Writing Center (907-474-5314, [uaf-writing-center@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-writing-center@alaska.edu), Gruening 8th floor)
- UAF Math Services, [uafmathstatlab@gmail.com](mailto:uafmathstatlab@gmail.com), Chapman Building (for math fee paying students only)

- Developmental Math Lab, Gruening 406
- The Debbie Moses Learning Center at CTC (907-455-2860, 604 Barnette St, Room 120, <https://www.ctc.uaf.edu/student-services/student-success-center/>)
- For more information and resources, please see the Academic Advising Resource List ([https://www.uaf.edu/advising/lr/SKM\\_364e19011717281.pdf](https://www.uaf.edu/advising/lr/SKM_364e19011717281.pdf))

### Student Resources:

- Disability Services (907-474-5655, [uaf-disability-services@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-disability-services@alaska.edu), Whitaker 208)
- Student Health & Counseling [6 free counseling sessions] (907-474-7043, <https://www.uaf.edu/chc/appointments.php>, Whitaker 203)
- Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities (907-474-7317, [uaf-studentrights@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-studentrights@alaska.edu), Eielson 110)
- Associated Students of the University of Alaska Fairbanks (ASUAF) or ASUAF Student Government (907-474-7355, [asuaf.office@alaska.edu](mailto:asuaf.office@alaska.edu), Wood Center 119)

**Nondiscrimination statement:** The University of Alaska is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and educational institution. The University of Alaska does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, citizenship, age, sex, physical or mental disability, status as a protected veteran, marital status, changes in marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, parenthood, sexual orientation, gender identity, political affiliation or belief, genetic information, or other legally protected status. The University's commitment to nondiscrimination, including against sex discrimination, applies to students, employees, and applicants for admission and employment. Contact information, applicable laws, and complaint procedures are included on UA's statement of nondiscrimination available at [www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination](http://www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination). For more information, contact:  
 UAF Department of Equity and Compliance  
 1692 Tok Lane, 3rd floor, Constitution Hall, Fairbanks, AK 99775  
 907-474-7300  
[uaf-deo@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-deo@alaska.edu)

### Additional syllabi statement for courses including off-campus programs and research activities:

#### University Sponsored Off-Campus Programs and Research Activities

We want you to know that:

1. UA is an AA/EO employer and educational institution and prohibits illegal discrimination against any individual: [www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination](http://www.alaska.edu/nondiscrimination).
2. Incidents can be reported to your university's Equity and Compliance office (listed below) or online reporting portal. University of Alaska takes immediate, effective, and appropriate action to respond to reported acts of discrimination and harassment.
3. There are supportive measures available to individuals that may have experienced discrimination.
4. University of Alaska's Board of Regents' Policy & University Regulations (UA BoR P&R) 01.02.020 Nondiscrimination and 01.04 Sex and Gender-Based Discrimination Under Title IX, go to: <http://alaska.edu/bor/policy-regulations/>.
5. UA BoR P&R apply at all university owned or operated sites, university sanctioned events, clinical sites and during all academic or research related travel that are university sponsored.

For further information on your rights and resources [click here](#).