

NR 5884 Transboundary Resource Management

Offered: Spring Semester

INSTRUCTORS: Courtney E. Kimmel, PhD (cekimmel@vt.edu)
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REQUIRED TEXT: There is no required text for this course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Boundaries are all around us. They help define separation, difference, ownership, and sovereignty. They also define rights, responsibility, and accountability at all levels—individual, local, regional, national, and international. Although boundary-markers delineate territory, they can create problematic political, cultural, economic, and even environmental divisions. The complex materialization of boundaries not only blur traditional lines that have been relied upon to guide political, economic, and environmental decision-making but also demand new strategies for negotiating across an array of complex factors. Transboundary Resource Management is a social challenge that requires understanding cultural, social, geographic, and political context, rather than an oversimplified and instrumentalist logic of resource management. In this course, we will be exploring types of boundaries, resources that evade boundaries, challenges managing these resources pose, and strategies that have proven promising (or not) for managing transboundary resources that in this changing age. While not your traditional definition of a course on the subject of transboundary resource management, this course is sure to challenge your thinking and better prepare you to think critically and creatively as natural resource and sustainability professionals in a rapidly changing world.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Section I: Introduction to Transboundary Resource Management

Week 1: Course Introduction & Orientation
Week 2: Dimensions of Boundaries & Borders
Week 3: Transboundary Resource Management

Section II: Boundaries & Resources That Evade Them

Week 4: Water
Week 5: Air
Week 6: Minerals
Week 7: Biodiversity
Week 8: Pollution

COURSE OUTLINE (continued):

Section III: Management Strategies for Transboundary Resources

Week 9: Treaty & Policy

Week 10: Markets

Week 11: Non-State Agreements

Week 12: Failure to Manage/Conflicts

Section IV: Deep Dive Project

Week 13: Draft Due

Week 14: Peer-Review

Week 15: Classes Over

Week 16: Final Draft Due

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

Participation/Discussion—50% Students are expected to actively participate in course discussions. Each week, questions and considerations will be posted for you to coincide the topic.

Deep Dive Project—20% You will choose a topic of significance to the broader problematic of transboundary resource management that you would like to address over the course of the semester. During the semester, you will research this topic and work on gathering information, analyzing it, and synthesizing it into a research paper of publishable quality.

Essay Assignments—30% (total) There will be 2-3 assignments worth 10%-15% each during the course of the semester designed to evaluate your understanding of the course material and assess your ability to apply theoretical concepts to real-world issues and develop an original argument and critique grounded in literature. You will be given the prompt for the assignment at least 2 weeks before it is due.