

**CMN 493: Environmental Communication Workshop**  
Tuesday & Thursday 3:30-4:50 pm Marshall 110  
**Instructor:** Khris Dodson  
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*Speak when you are angry and you will make the best speech you will always regret.*  
--Ambrose Bierce

Environmental professionals in the twenty-first century face a continuing and critical challenge —how to maintain a healthy environment and economy, integrate scientific knowledge, and pursue a participatory democracy to achieve a sustainable ecosystem. Using readings, some lectures, and mostly collaborative activities and discussion, the course is designed to encourage students to experientially integrate and apply knowledge and skills to environmental issues or problems.

The Workshop engages students in some of the foundational theories and introductory skills of alternative dispute resolution, public participation structures and dynamics, public policy decision-making processes and implementation, communication, leadership styles, and small group dynamics.

As a result of this course, students will be better able to effectively and appropriately address the increasing demand for multi-party involvement in planning, policy-making, conflict prevention and resolution, and in dealing with the diverse communicational aspects of the human dimension of environmental issues.

**Objectives:** After completing this course, the student should be able to:

- Distinguish different styles of communication, decision making, and leadership
- Understand various components of small and large group dynamics in diverse group situations around environmental issues, (ex. Citizen advisory groups, local boards, resource roundtables, public hearings, creative environmental problem solving groups, citizen advocacy groups, agency task forces)
- Distinguish among communication behaviors which produce supportive communication climates among multiple stakeholders
- Demonstrate knowledge of basic communication components of dialogue, deliberation, and collaborative learning
- Understand ways to prevent or deal more productively with environmental conflict
- Demonstrate knowledge and skills to achieve effective and appropriate communication in various situations

**Evaluation:**

50% active engagement  
20% journal

30% assignments, projects

**Schedule:**

The schedule will be influenced by the work we do. I have plans for several skills-building sessions, but we will spend a significant amount of time in this course working with various stakeholders on environmental concerns. This is truly where you will learn the skills of this course. There will be several occasions where we will do in-class activities such as role playing scenarios. We may also have some guest speakers. Do not feel anxious about the lack of a concrete plan, we will have plenty to do and plenty of time to discuss how we move forward.

**A few miscellaneous items about this course:**

- This course is **very** hands-on and consists largely of experiential learning.
- We will plan, collaborate and host several community conversation events this semester
- You **WILL** be working with organizations, agencies and individuals outside of this course, in some cases more than you do with folks in the course.
- This may be your first foray into professional engagement, networking and working as an environmental communication professional.
- You **WILL** be required to devote time to this course outside of our regular meeting times and we **WILL** be hosting events during the day, in the evenings and on weekends. **Be prepared for this!**

**Course Resources:**

- **Required:** Getting Past No: Negotiating Your Way from Confrontation to Cooperation; William Ury
- Assorted, distributed readings

**Confidential Journal on the Team's Progress & Your Experiences**

You will become a project team to achieve tasks while you learn about group dynamics. Your journal can and should reflect the uniqueness and creativity of your individual experience. It should provide details and demonstration of integrating class readings, discussions and exercises with our experience as a project team. Mechanically arrange your journal so that it not only makes sense to you as you write it but also for me as I try to understand your experience. You should create entries that adequately include all in-class and out-of-class experiences relevant to our work. Whether you have a daily, weekly or bi-weekly entry is up to you, but you need to capture all of your thoughts, feelings and work in each entry.

Typed journals are highly preferred, but very legible handwritten entries are also OK.

Here's a breakdown of things to include in your journal entries.

- I. **Observe/Chronicle:** record what's going on or not going on as you and the other parties try to achieve your aspiration in the team. This part should be a narrative from the perspective of your role/s, complete with interpretations, rationales for action, attribution of others' motivation, etc. This should not read like you tried to write this way after the events—it will show. Your feelings change pre- and post- event, meeting, etc. Instead, write it immediately afterwards, within hours, and write often.
  
- II. **Feel/Reflect:** Step back and consider how you feel emotionally, mentally, and physically at different markers as events and interactions unfold. Speculate how other parties (in role) might have felt. What's going on for you?
  
- III. **Analyze/ Deconstruct:** Using the class readings, web sites, and other sources you come across, make a good attempt to explain/speculate/interpret the dynamics of the unfolding chronicle. Deconstruct what's going on. Reference these sources and provide some sort of bibliography at the end. Bonus if you seek out articles, books, chapters, etc. beyond those assigned in class to supplement your deconstruction and analysis of what' going on.

You will hand in your journals at mid-term and at the end of the semester.

