

University of Massachusetts Boston  
Graduate Program in Dispute Resolution

**Special Topics in Dispute Resolution:  
Environmental Conflict: Human and Moral Dimensions**

DisRes 691, Fall 1996  
Monday, 7:00pm - 9:30pm

**Instructor:**

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**Course Objectives:** Environmental conflicts not only emerge from differences of political power and economic impact, but they also emerge from the different ways that stakeholders in environmental disputes think about and relate to the natural world. This course focuses on attitudes, beliefs, and deeply-held moral values that underlie people's environmental stance, and on the way that people with differing environmental perspectives approach and resolve environmental conflicts. Utilizing local, regional, national, and international conflicts as case studies, the course examines justice concerns that emerge in environmental conflicts; the social mores and the moral orientations, and values that underlie environmental conflicts; and approaches that resolve environmental disputes.

**Course requirements and grading:**

- 1) Case study: environmental conflict (60%)
  - a) assignments 1-3 (15%)
  - b) class presentation (15%)
  - c) final case study (15%)
  - c) op-ed article (15%)
- 2) Class participation (40%)

**Class participation:** Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings by the beginning of the class and to actively contribute to class discussions. Bring two questions, comments, or reactions to the assigned reading to each class. Another aspect of course participation is providing feedback to two students on preliminary drafts of their final case study.

**Written assignments:** Each student will choose one environmental dispute (local, regional, national, or international) to study in depth. Utilizing course readings, citations from scholarly sources and periodicals, and original data, the case study will include your ideas about attitudes, beliefs, and moral values that underlie the dispute, and the psychological, social, economic, and political conditions that facilitate or hinder its resolution.

Four brief papers will serve as a basis of your case study. These papers offer you an opportunity to develop your ideas and to generate original analyses of the interrelationship among key factors that underlie this dispute. Course readings, class discussions, and student seminar presentations will help you develop and sharpen your ideas. You are encouraged to utilize data for your case study such as (but not limited to): scholarly books and papers, reports in the media, technical studies, interviews with stakeholders in the conflict.

Assignment 1: Identify an environmental dispute you wish to study in depth throughout the course. You can choose a particular dispute, a type of dispute (e.g., wetlands, soil loss), or social factors associated with environmental disputes (e.g., grassroots vs. big government, NIMBY, etc.). Describe your topic, its importance in society, and why it is important to you (maximum 750 words) Due: Session 2.

Assignment 2: Using a minimum of 3 sources (books, articles, newspapers, reports, interviews, etc.) describe the history of the environmental dispute you are studying, identifying issues and stakeholders in the dispute (500-1000 words). Due: Session 3.

**Assignment 3:** Write an analysis of your environmental dispute, identifying perspectives of all stakeholders. There perspectives include their values, cultural perspectives, and views about what's fair (750-1250 words). Due: Session 6.

**Assignment 4:** Describe the micro (individual level) and macro (community and societal level) issues that perpetuate the environmental dispute you are studying. Differentiate between stronger and weaker issues, identifying those that resist or might be amenable to resolution (500-1000 words). Due: Session 8.

**Case study.** The final case study (15 pages maximum, including tables, figures, and references) will include your analysis of: (1) issues, historical background, and stakeholders to the dispute, (2) underlying perspectives of stakeholders, including perspectives, values, culture, and views about fairness, (3) individual, group, or systemic factors that perpetuate the dispute, and (4) promising approaches that might resolve the dispute. Due: Session 10.

**Op-Ed article.** Write an 800 word (maximum) article that persuasively argues a public policy approach for your environmental issue. You can suggest novel analyses, critique proposed or current environmental policies. Write an op-ed piece suitable for publication in the Boston Globe. Due: Session 11.

**Seminars in Environmental Conflict:** Working along with a group of students assigned by the course instructor, develop the conceptual framework for a class presentation in seminar format that focuses on particular aspect of environmental disputes. Student-panelist will make for 8-10 minute presentation on one aspect of your seminar theme and respond to questions from the class.

### Course Topics and Readings:

1) 9/9: **Introduction: Course overview**

2) 9/16: **Environmental conflict overview: What are the social and environmental issues? Who are the stakeholders?**

Stone, C.D. (1974). Should trees have standing? Toward legal rights for natural objects. Los Altos, CA: William Kaufmann, Inc. Pp. ix-xvii, 3-10, 73-84.

Hardin, G. (1986). Tragedy of the common. Science, 162, 1248-

Nash, R.F. (1989). The rights of nature: A history of environmental ethics. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press. Chapter 1: From natural rights to the rights of nature (pp. 13-32).

### Assignment 1 due

[9/23: No class: Rescheduled for December 16th]

3) 9/30: **Justice and environmental conflicts: What kind of fairness, for whom?**

Opotow, S., & Clayton, S. (1994). Green justice: Conceptions of fairness and the natural world. Journal of Social Issues, 50(2), 1-11.

Clayton, S. (1994). Appeals to justice in the environmental debate. Journal of Social Issues, 50(2), 13-27.

Opotow, S. (1994). Predicting protection: The scope of justice and the natural world. Journal of Social Issues, 50(2), 49-63.

### Assignment 2 due

**\*\* DISPUTE RESOLUTION CONFERENCE: Friday and Saturday, October 4 & 5th \*\***

4) 10/7: **Anthropocentrism and ecocentrism orientations toward the environment**

Hunter, S. (1989). The roots of environmental conflict in the Tahoe Basin (pp. 25-40). In L. Kriesberg, T. A. Northrup, & S. J. Thorson (Eds.), Intractable conflicts and their transformation. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Opotow, S. (In press). Is justice finite? The case of environmental inclusion. In L. Montada & M.J. Lerner (Eds.), Social justice in human relations: Vol. 3. Current societal concerns about justice. New York: Plenum.

[10/14: No class: Columbus Day]

5) 10/21: **Environmental racism: Toxic waste siting and disparate group outcomes**

Bullard, R. D. (1994). Dumping in Dixie (2nd ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press. *Chapter 2: Race, class, and the politics of place* (pp. 21-36).

Mohai, P., & Bryant, P. (1994). Environmental racism: Reviewing the evidence. B. Bryant & P. Mohai (Eds.), Race and the incidence of environmental hazards: A time for discourse (pp. 163-176). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

6) 10/28: **Culture, moral perspective, and perceptions of environmental disputes**

Guest speaker: Dr. Jill Greenwald Robbins

Robbins, J. G., & Greenwald, R. (1994). Environmental attitudes conceptualized through developmental theory: A qualitative analysis. Journal of Social Issues, 50(2), 29-47.

Jandt, F. E., & Pedersen, P. P. (Eds.), (1996). Constructive conflict management: Asia-Pacific cases. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. *Five case studies of land and environmental conflict*, pp. 131-169.

**Assignment 3 due**

7) 11/4: **The influence of values on environmental disputes**

Stern, P., C., & Dietz, T. (1994). The value basis of environmental concern. Journal of Social Issues, 50(2), 65-84.

Seligman, C., & Syme, G. J. (1994). The role of values and ethical principles in judgments of environmental dilemmas. Journal of Social Issue, 50(2), 105-119.

[11/11: No class: Veterans Day]

8) 11/18: **Justice, values, and activism**

Freudenburg, W.R., & Pastor, S.K. (1992). NIMBYs and LULUs: Stalking the syndromes. Journal of Social Issues, 48(4), 39-62.

Laturi, M. & Kirby, A. (1994). Finding fairness in America's cities? The search for environmental equity in everyday life. Journal of Social Issues, 50(2), 121-139.

**Environmental Conflict Seminars I**

**Assignment 4 due**

**Draft manuscript for case study due**

9) 11/25: **Fairness and the resolution of environmental disputes**

Cvetkovich, G., & Earle, T.C. (1994). The construction of justice: A case study of public participation in land management. Journal of Social Issues, 50(2) 161-178.

Rasinski, K.A., Smith, T.W., & Zuckerman, S. (1994). Fairness motivations and tradeoffs underlying public support of government environmental spending in nine nations. Journal of Social Issues, 50(2) 179-197.

### **Environmental Conflict Seminars II**

#### **10) 12/2: Psychological attachment to the natural world**

Searles, H.F. (1960). The nonhuman environment. New York: International universities Press. *Chapter 1: Man's kinship with the nonhuman environment*, pp. 3-28.

#### **Case study due**

#### **11) 12/9: Environmental disputes and ADR: Pitfalls and cautions**

Bingham, G. (1986). Resolving environmental disputes., Washington, D.C.: The Conservation Foundation. pp. xv-xxviii, 1-12.

Amy, D. J. (1987). The politics of environmental mediation. New York: Columbia University Press. *Chapter 6: Distorting the nature of environmental conflict*, pp. 163-198.

#### **Op-ed article due**

#### **12) 12/16: Course wrap-up**