

# Collaboration in Natural Resource Decisions

Held M/W/F, 1:00 to 1:50 PM MST

Offered via Moodle/Zoom

**No textbook required.** All readings will be posted on Moodle.

**Professor:** Dr. Alexander L. Metcalf

**Teaching Assistant:** Mr. Christopher Mackay

## Our hybrid course delivery during COVID-19

All course materials and assignments will be posted on our **Moodle** course page. Attendance is rewarded, but will not be enforced; participation is essential. I will post a “weekly plan” on Moodle so you know what to do to stay on track. We will meet as a full class over **Zoom** with small breakout groups as needed for discussion or collaborative (eh?) work.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.umt.edu/coronavirus>

## Instructor Information

**Alexander L. Metcalf, PhD**

**Please call me:** Dr. Metcalf, Professor Metcalf, or Alex.

**How do you pronounce that:** Like, I “Met” a “Calf” (yes, a baby cow).

**How to contact me:** please e-mail at [alex.metcalf@umontana.edu](mailto:alex.metcalf@umontana.edu) (I receive 100-200 emails per day, if I have not replied within 3 days, please e-mail [nicely] again; I do not reply to e-mail on weekends).

**Ask me about:** Anything! Class, research, grad school, jobs, UM, hunting/fishing, public lands

**TA e-mail:**

[christopher.mackay@umontana.edu](mailto:christopher.mackay@umontana.edu)

How are we going to solve the **BIG MESSY** environmental problems?

Why is it so hard for people to listen and really hear each other?

What guidelines help steer collaborative processes toward success?

How do I help reduce conflict and build common ground among stakeholders?

If these questions intrigue you, this is the course for you! NRSM 379 introduces students to the theory and practice of collaborative conservation. In addition to understanding the social and biophysical phenomena related to natural resource conflict, professionals must often facilitate dialogue among diverse stakeholders and help realize outcomes embraced by all.

In this course, we will read and discuss a diverse mix of popular, scientific, and gray literature to understand common pitfalls and fruitful approaches to collaboration. Students will learn to recognize their own biases and practice deliberate, active listening. Through guest presentations and by attending “real world” meetings, students will gain an appreciation for the art and science of collaborative facilitation.

Upon completion, students will be equipped to successfully participate and lead decision-making processes that purposefully incorporate diverse interests to address complex natural resource challenges.



## Learning objectives and assessment

### What will you learn in this class?

This unique course will give you the tools to understand, participate, and lead collaborative decision processes. Our objectives are four:

1. Appreciate the subjective and “wicked” nature of natural resource problems
2. Understand human psychology related to groups, conflict, behavior, and cooperation
3. Become proficient at empathy, self-reflection, listening, and empowering others
4. Familiarize ourselves with the many “dos and “don’ts” of facilitating successful collaborative dialogue

### How will you be graded?

30%	IN CLASS PARTICIPATION
10%	ATTENDANCE
30%	ASSIGNMENTS
15%	PAPER 1
15%	PAPER 2

## Course Format

This course will be delivered using **online materials, reflective writings, lectures, and discussion**, including live lectures, readings, assignments. We will have discussions as a large class and in small groups. If I can find enough meetings...each student will also **attend an external collaborative meeting**.

**Online materials** can be found on our Moodle course site. There are general course materials and weekly course resources. *Students are expected to familiarize themselves with Moodle*, ask clarifying questions if necessary, and become proficient navigating Moodle. Visit [moodle.umt.edu](http://moodle.umt.edu) for more. Students should come to class having read all materials.

**Reflective writings** will be due most class periods (see weekly plan on Moodle) and constitute the majority of **ASSIGNMENTS**. Students will submit responses to question prompts via Moodle before the start of class. We will use these responses to structure and enhance our discussion of class materials. *Students are expected to read course material and complete reflective writings PRIOR to class.*

**Lectures** will be given as needed, live, and via Zoom. Recordings will be available, based almost entirely on the professor’s capacity for remembering to hit record. Please remind me!

**DISCUSSIONS** will serve as the backbone of this class. We will discuss course material in a variety of formats and methods. Robust student participation, essential for our learning, is a culmination of thoroughly reading the material, thoughtfully responding to reflective writing prompts, **attendance**, and actively engaging with in-class activities. We’re in this together!

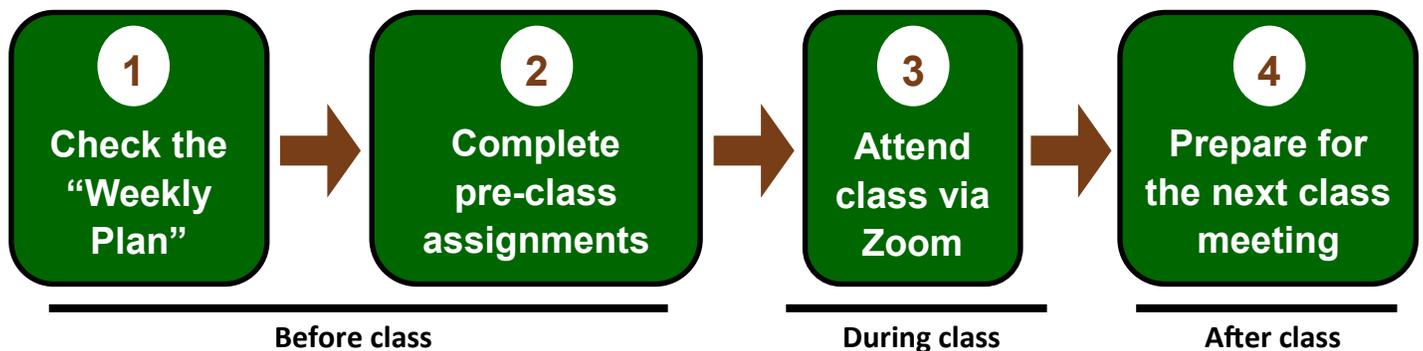
**Accommodations** are available to any student willing to coordinate with the instructor and potentially UM’s office of Disability Services for Students (DSS). If there is an accommodation that would help you learn, please e-mail me with details and we will work together to develop appropriate modifications. You can contact DSS at 406.243.2243.

**External Collaborative Meetings** are an excellent way to learn how and how not to run good collaborative interactions. It is my strong intention to find several meetings for students to attend. I anticipate requiring attendance at one meeting and writing a reflective paper (**PAPER 2**) on your experience.

**PAPERS** will be developed via several in-class workshops and independent student work. Each paper will have several due dates including idea formulation, outline, drafts, and final. Extra writing help is available via UM’s **AMAZING** Writing Center.

## Typical Week in NRSM 379

To prepare for a typical week in NRSM 379 you should log into Moodle and **check the “weekly plan”** listed under the week/topic section. The weekly plan will tell you what you have to do for the week. It will often instruct you to **READ** a book chapter, article, or website, **WRITE** responses to a prompt, **WATCH** a lecture or video I will provide, **COMPLETE** a specific assignment, or **ATTEND** an external meeting.



*Before class* you should complete the pre-class assignments listed in the weekly plan.

*During class* we will discuss topics and answer your questions.

*After class* you should complete any remaining assignments and prepare for the next class meeting!

## Expectations

### What I expect from you, and you can expect from me

I expect each of you to actively contribute to our learning environment. This goes beyond completing assignments and engaging in discussion to include treating your instructors and fellow classmates with utmost respect and care. I also expect you to take an active role in your education. I have eliminated all required texts from this course in favor of selected and open access resources. I expect you to read these materials on your own time before class periods. I expect you to ask questions and for assistance. If you don't understand something, please ask. I am happy to engage over e-mail or set up individual meetings if necessary. Do not limit your questions to course material - ask me anything that might help you in your pursuits!

I expect you to be honest and demonstrate academic integrity. This includes not reproducing or distributing course materials, following instructions for individualized work, and not copying or plagiarizing other's work. Please visit <http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/community-standards/default.php> to read the UM Student Conduct Code. Violations are serious and will result in reduced or no credit for the assignment, no credit for the course, and/or referral to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

I expect you to familiarize yourself with all UM policies including the course drop deadlines, which fall on the 15th instructional day, after which you can no longer drop the course with a refund and avoid a "W" on your transcript; and the 45th instructional day, after which you can only drop the class for a few, limited and generally unusual reasons.

You can expect me to create an inclusive and conducive learning environment. You can expect me to be responsive to your concerns and to your questions. You can expect me to be a partner in your learning.