

NRM 4301 – Wildlife and Society
Course Syllabus – Fall 2025

Course Information

Instructor

Dr. Mark Bell

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208-201-4883 (cell, 9-5 daily, can text/call)

SRSU Office: HSC 102

Office Hours

Monday 11:00am-12:00pm

Wednesday 11:00am-12:00pm

Or by appointment

Class Meeting Time/Place

This is an online class with readings from the course texts that replace formal lectures. Blackboard will be used for all announcements, discussions, assignments, and grades.

Course Description

This is an advanced course on the theory and applications of human dimensions in wildlife conservation. Course emphases will include constituency groups; psychology and sociology; economic considerations; natural resource decision making and policy development; methods of human dimensions inquiry; and communication, engagement, and conflict resolution.

Expanded Course Description

The way that people value and interact with wildlife has a direct impact on how wildlife can be managed, and on the success of different management practices. In today's technologically connected society, even a biologist who works in a remote area needs to consider how his or her actions may be interpreted by the stakeholders that he or she serves. And due to increasing urbanization, most wildlife biologists will actually work in close proximity to the general public and may frequently need to communicate with that public.

This course will teach you about the importance of human dimensions, how to learn about the values of a particular group of stakeholders, and how to communicate with diverse groups of people. In addition to readings from the textbooks, we will explore current human dimensions topics through analysis of media, interactions with professional wildlife biologists, and student-led discussions. Students will not just summarize the information from the textbooks but will apply these lessons to how they communicate and interact with information about wildlife.

Course Objectives

Students will learn the art and science of human dimensions research as it applies to the field of natural resource management. Specifically, upon course completion, students shall understand:

1. Current trends in public opinion affecting natural resource management,
2. Current human dimension issues in the field of conservation, and
3. Strategies and techniques for effectively communicating with people.

Student Learning Outcomes, M.S. in Range and Wildlife Management

1. Students will be able to apply statistical concepts and procedures to research.
2. Students will be able to evaluate literature and references to substantiate the applied research project.
3. Students will be able to justify and defend research questions and design.

Student Learning Outcomes, M.Ag. in Natural Resources Conservation

1. Students will be able to apply statistical concepts and procedures to natural resource data.
2. Students will be able to evaluate literature and references as they apply to the natural resource field.
3. Students will be able to demonstrate their knowledge of the fundamentals and advanced concepts of range and wildlife management.

Marketable Skills, M.Ag. in Natural Resources Conservation (THECB requirement)

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of key Natural Resource Management topics.
2. Students will be able to apply knowledge to projects that include biostatistics, research methods, and scientific writing.
3. Students will demonstrate skills in scientific writing and analysis.

Course Materials and Policies

Textbooks

You can purchase an e-book or a physical textbook.

1. Decker, D. J., Riley, S. J., and W. F. Siemer, editors. 2012. *Human dimensions of wildlife management*. Second edition. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, USA. **Required.**
2. Bonar, S. A. 2007. *The conservation professional's guide to working with people*. Island Press, Washington, D.C., USA. **Required.**

Grading

Unit quizzes (4 @ 25 points each)	100 points
Unit activities (4 @ 100 points each)	400 points
Case Study StoryMap project	250 points
Case Study discussions	150 points
Book report	200 points

Grades

A: 89.5 – 100%
B: 79.5 – 89.4%
C: 69.5 – 79.4%
D: 59.5 – 69.4%
F: < 59.4%

Due Dates and Extensions

This course is structured into weekly time periods that begin on Monday and end on Sunday. All assignments are due by Sunday at 11:59pm unless otherwise specified. **No due dates for ANY graded work will be extended and no points will be given for late assignments except under extraordinary circumstances.** The student must initiate contact with the instructor to request an exception for late work. See the class schedule (posted in Blackboard) for the dates and assignments for each week.

Major Assignments and Examinations

Textbook readings and unit quizzes

During the first part of the semester, readings will be assigned from the textbook Human Dimensions of Wildlife Management. Please keep up with the readings so that you can do your best on the associated unit activities. A short (5 question) quiz will be given at the end of each set of readings, covering material from that unit.

Unit activities

At the end of each set of readings, you will be assigned an activity that corresponds to the material you have learned. Each unit will have a different type of activity.

Unit 1: Written summary of the unit readings

Unit 2: Oral presentation summarizing the unit readings

Unit 3: Interview of a wildlife biologist

Unit 4: Compare and contrast of a news release and its associated scientific publication

Case Study StoryMap project

Students will research a human dimensions topic related to wildlife management and create a case study that will be reviewed and discussed in class. With assistance from the instructor, each student will choose a journal article to use as a case study. The students will use ArcGIS StoryMap to create engaging visual and written displays of their case studies.

Case Study discussions

After all case studies have been completed, students will use Blackboard Discussion Boards to answer questions written about the other case studies by each case study's author. Each student should participate in each forum, and each posting will be graded based upon the relevance, depth of knowledge, and unique contribution that it made to the discussion.

Book Report

A report on The Conservation Professional's Guide to Working with People by Scott Bonar will be due at the end of the semester in lieu of a final exam. Students will be expected to reflect on their own experiences working with people and relate this to the material in the book.

Academic Integrity

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared, and focused; meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Examples of academic dishonesty

include but are not limited to: Turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden.

General Expectations

As this is an upper-level course, I have high expectations for all students. I expect quality, high-level writing and that you will seek assistance from the university help center on writing projects if needed. I will provide you with prompt and meaningful feedback on your assignments.

Many of the topics we discuss in this course will be contentious and there will probably be many different points of view amongst the class. As we cover these topics, I expect you to:

- Treat your classmates with respect, even if you do not agree with their viewpoints
- Defend your own opinions with logical rhetoric and not fallacies
- Avoid all ad hominem attacks, insults, or other derogatory comments against a person

You can expect the instructors to:

- Serve as a moderator
- Provide current scientific information
- Articulate where science ends and policy or opinion begin
- Remain neutral in most discussions; if I give an opinion, you can expect me to show the same respect that I expect from you.

Communication

You are required to check your ***Sul Ross e-mail and Blackboard announcements several times per week***. I do not use the personal or preferred e-mail addresses that you may have on record with the University.

SRSU Distance Education Statement

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

Resources

SRSU Disability Services (ADA Statement)

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Alpine Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact **Mary Schwartze**, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203, or email mschwartz@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall – room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine. Texas, 79832.

Counseling Services

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) has partnered with TimelyCare, which is an online mental health support platform, and all SRSU students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. These can be accessed by visiting <https://timelycare.com/srsu>. Counseling is also offered in Ferguson Hall Room 112 in Alpine, and via telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students.

Library Information

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or phone (432-837-8123).

Tutoring

If you need help with writing, please contact Lobo Den Tutoring Services (BWML 125: tutoring@sulross.edu or (432) 837-8726

Blackboard Support Desk

If you have any technical issues with Blackboard itself, the Blackboard Support Desk is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can reach the support desk by calling (888) 837-6055, emailing blackboardsupport@sulross.edu, using resources from the Technology Support tab within Blackboard, or clicking the Support Desk graphic on the course homepage.

Tentative Course Schedule

Subject to change, please check Blackboard for updates.

Week	Dates	Reading Assignments	Due This Week
Week 1	8/25-8/29	Course Overview	Introduction post
Week 2	9/1-9/5	Unit 1: Ch. 1-3, 16	
Week 3	9/8-9/12		Quiz 1, Unit 1 activity
Week 4	9/15-9/19	Unit 2: Ch. 4-6	StoryMap article selection
Week 5	9/22-9/26		Quiz 2, Unit 2 activity
Week 6	9/29-10/3	Unit 3: Ch. 7-8, 9-10, 11-12	
Week 7	10/6-10/10		StoryMap draft
Week 8	10/6-10/10		Quiz 3, Unit 3 activity (interview) draft
Week 9	10/13-10/17	Unit 4: Ch. 13-15	
Week 10	10/20-10/24		Quiz 4, Unit 4 activity
Week 11	10/27-10/31	Bonar Ch. 1-3	StoryMap final
Week 12	11/3-11/7	Bonar Ch. 4-6	Case Study discussions
Week 13	11/10-11/14	Bonar Ch. 7-11	Case Study discussions
Week 14	11/17-11/21		Case Study discussions
Week 15	11/24-11/28		Unit 3 activity (interview) final
Week 16	12/1-12/5		Book report