

NRM 3304 – Natural Resource Policy and Administration

Fall 2026

Instructor: Dr. Kelbi Delaune

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Office hours: 10:00 am-12:00 pm W/Th, or by appointment.

Class meeting time and space:

This is an online, asynchronous course that will be available through Blackboard.

Course Description:

This course examines the legal, political, scientific, economic, and social frameworks that shape the management and conservation of natural resources. Students will explore how laws, regulations, policies, courts, government agencies, private landowners, communities, and stakeholders influence natural resource decisions and management outcomes. This course introduces major principles of natural resource governance, including property rights, public trust, federalism, administrative law, environmental regulation, endangered species protection, public lands, and resource allocation. We will investigate the challenges of implementing and evaluating natural resource policies and apply these concepts to contemporary issues in wildlife, water, fisheries, forests, rangelands, energy, and other natural resource systems.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will be introduced to:

1. The historical development of pertinent laws, policies, and institutions that govern natural resources.
2. The foundations and principles of natural resource policy and management in the United States.
3. Evaluate how philosophies over time have influenced legislation and related organizations
3. Detail key policies and their impact on society
4. Roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in natural resources governance, including private landowners, federal, state, local, and tribal governments.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Describe major political, social, economic, and ecological factors that shape natural resource policy and management.
2. Evaluate the differences between natural resource management on private versus public lands
3. Analyze natural resource policy issues at the intersection of scientific evidence, values, and interests of stakeholders.
4. Evaluate how implementation of natural resource policies influences outcomes
5. Determine metrics for successful policy implementation
6. Identify stakeholders and practitioners of environmental policies across state, federal, and private organizations

Course Materials:

Freyfogle, E. T., Goble, D. D., Wildermuth, T. A. (2019). Wildlife Law, Second Edition: A Primer. United States: Island Press.

Additional readings and supplementary resources will be made available through the Blackboard platform.

Libraries:

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend 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 by phone (432-837-8123).

Grading:

The class is structured into weekly modules that start on Monday and conclude on Sunday. All weekly discussions and assignments are due on Sunday at 11:59 p.m. CST. The course grading will be based on the percentage of points earned out of the total.

Participation & Engagement	150
Assignments	100
Final Project	200
TOTAL	450

Scale: 90-100% = A; 80-89% = B; 70-79% = C; 60-69% = D.

Course Structure:

The course will be delivered entirely online, using a mix of synchronous and asynchronous components through Blackboard to facilitate engagement and flexibility. This course is intentionally designed to be student-led, with an emphasis on fostering deep thinking, exploring personal academic interests, and engaging in rich discussions. Students will take an active role in shaping the dialogue and contributing their unique perspectives, ensuring a dynamic and engaging learning experience. Weekly readings and activities, along with occasional recorded materials, will provide the background and context for the course.

Course Assessments:

- **Participation and Engagement:**

Participation constitutes 150 points of the graded work in this course. This includes engaging in the post-prompt and participating in meaningful dialogue with your peers, which requires an initial response and at least 2 additional responses.

- **Written Assignments:**

Written assignments (10), which may come from the course textbook discussions, further readings, or course discussions, will constitute 100 points of your final grade.

- **Final Project:**

The final project will account for **200 points** of your final grade. Students will select a contemporary or historically significant natural resource policy issue and investigate the issue through an in-depth case study. Projects should examine the legal and policy framework surrounding the issue, relevant scientific evidence, stakeholders and competing interests, and the ecological, social, economic, and/or political consequences of different management approaches.

Rather than requiring a traditional research paper, students will have the opportunity to select a **creative, professional, or public-facing format** appropriate to their topic and intended audience. The goal is to communicate complex natural resource policy issues accurately, effectively, and in a way that could be useful to a real-world audience.

Tentative Course Schedule:

Term Week	Topic	Activities
1 - 8/24	The Basics (CH 1)	Discussion 1
2 - 8/31	State Ownership and Public Interest (Ch 2)	Discussion 2, Assignment 1 Due
3 - 9/7	Capturing and Owning (Ch 3)	Discussion 3, Assignment 2 Due
4 - 9/14	Wildlife on Private Land (Ch 4)	Discussion 4, Assignment 3 Due
5 - 9/21	Inland Fisheries (Ch 5)	Discussion 5, Assignment 4 Due
6 - 9/28	The Constitutional Framework (Ch 6)	Discussion 6
7 - 10/5	State Game Laws and Nuisance Species (Ch 7)	Discussion 7, Assignment 6 Due
8 - 10/12	Private Wildlife Operations (Ch 8)	Discussion 8, Assignment 7 Due
9 - 10/19	Tribal Rights to Wildlife (Ch 9)	Discussion 9, Assignment 8 Due
10 - 10/26	Key Federal Statutes (Ch 10)	Discussion 10, Assignment 9 Due
11- 11/2	Wildlife on Federal Lands (Ch 11)	Discussion 11, Assignment 10 Due
12 - 11/9	Endangered Species Act: Listing and Critical Habitat (CH 12)	Discussion 12
13 - 11/16	Endangered Species Act: Protections (CH 12)	Discussion 13, Assignment 10 Due
14 - 11/23	Thanksgiving Break Begins (11/25-11/27)	No Discussion, Final Project work
15 - 11/30	Selected readings from relevant literature (TBD) & Final Project Prep	Discussion 14
16 - 12/7	Final Project Presentations	Discussion 15, Final Due December 9th

*Subject to change if needed based on course progression, student interest, etc.

ADA Statement SRSU Accessibility Services:

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the 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. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mrs. Mary Schwartz Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director or Ronnie Harris, LPC, Counselor, at 432-837-8203 or email mschwartz@sulross.edu or ronnie.harris@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.

Academic Integrity:

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students should submit work that is their own and avoid the temptation to engage in behaviors that violate academic integrity, such as 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. Students should also avoid using open AI sources unless permission is expressly given for an assignment or course. Violations of academic integrity can result in failing assignments, failing a class, and/or more serious university consequences. These behaviors also erode the value of college degrees and higher education overall.

Student Responsibilities Statement:

All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Student Handbook and the Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog and for abiding by the University rules and regulations. Additionally, students are responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all federal, state and local laws and is expected to familiarize him/herself with the requirements of such laws.

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 a 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 in the student handbook.

Classroom Climate of Respect:

Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still, we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

Supportive Statement:

I aim to create a learning environment that supports diverse perspectives and experiences for my students. I understand that the recent pandemic, economic disparity, health concerns, or even unexpected life events may impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University, which is to create a supportive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

Marketable Skills (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board):

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of key NRM topics
2. Students will apply learning to projects including biostatistics, research methods, and scientific writing.
3. Students will demonstrate skills in scientific writing and analysis.