COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE TITLE  Cross Cultural Communication: Communities & Conservation
COURSE NUMBER  WFSC 681/600
CREDITS  1 credit seminar (workshop format)
PRE-REQUISITES  Graduate student status (audits by approval of instructor)

JUSTIFICATION

Conservation practitioners, those who actually apply the principles of biodiversity sciences to global problem-solving, experience the challenges of communicating with stakeholders from diverse cultures. Cultural gaps may be as subtle as the different jargon used by scientists from different academic disciplines, or as clear as language barriers, for example between Spanish and English. Most perplexing may be the diversity of stakeholder perspectives, as if people view the same issues through diverse cultural lenses acquired during their different personal life experiences.

The skills, knowledge and experience required to effectively bridge across cultural gaps can be improved through participation in the activities of a collaborative learning community. This course is designed to introduce students to a network of scientists and practitioners who share a desire to improve communication within communities engaged in conservation activities. The goal is to foster continued dialogue through creation, evaluation and revision of case studies that illustrate lessons learned and best practices for fostering cross-cultural communication.

OBJECTIVES

1. Enhance awareness of the on-line resources available for self-study regarding the principles and practices of cross-cultural communication, in particular relevant case studies on communities and conservation.
2. Stimulate dialogue about the (a) concept of a cultural model of conservation, (b) distinct viewpoints of stakeholders in selected case studies, (c) "tool-kit" of options available for effective communication within conservation communities and (d) application to cases from personal experience.
3. Expand the portfolio of relevant case studies to include those of participants in the collaborative learning community served by this course.
ANALYTICAL CONTENT

PART 1. ENHANCE AWARENESS IN PREPARATION FOR WORKSHOP
(Distance education procedures)

Module 1  Problem statement; interfaces between cultural and biological diversity; cross-cultural communication; cultural models; stakeholder perspectives as cultural lenses; relevance to research ethics

Module 2  Familiar lens(es); identifying the cultural lens(es) resulting from personal life-experience; factors influencing acceptance and rejection of new lenses

Module 3  Unfamiliar lens(es); identifying cultural boundaries; tacit understanding within a group with shared life experiences; listening for gaps in communication between groups; cognitive filters; ethical responsibilities

Module 4  Select case studies to stimulate dialogue at the workshop; relevant conservation challenges; grounding in bio-cultural georegions; expand understanding of unfamiliar lenses; ethical dimensions

PART 2. STIMULATE DIALOGUE DURING WORKSHOP
(2-day weekend, date and location to be arranged)

Module 5  Cultural Models Approach; presentation; small group discussion activity related to selected case study

Module 6  Stakeholders and Tools (same process as above)

Module 7  Collaborative Learning (same process as above)

Module 8  Application to Cases from Personal Experience (same process as above)

PART 3. EXPAND PORTFOLIO OF CASE STUDIES: WORKSHOP FOLLOW-UP
(Distance education procedures)

Module 9  Prepare to write up a case study: frame the problem, community and stakeholder perspectives; identify relevant readings

Module 10  Draft a 2-page case study relevant to personal experience; list resources for further reading

Module 11  Review a draft case study; comment on how well the conservation problem is framed, the community identified with multiple stakeholder perspectives; suggest revisions that could strengthen the presentation of the case study

Module 12  Finalize a case study to be added to the portfolio for the learning community; revise your draft based on peer review; submit it for publication on the website

EVALUATION SYSTEM

Pass: Successfully complete 8 of 12 modules

Fail: Complete fewer than 8 of the modules
### BIBLIOGRAPHY- READING LIST (Pick three)


### INSTRUCTOR
Dr. Jane M. Packard, j-packard@tamu.edu, 979-845-1465
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### COURSE MATERIALS
http://people.tamu.edu/~j-packard/courses/wfsc681/wfsc681home.html

### ELEARNING TOOLS
http://ecampus.tamu.edu

### RESOURCE LINKS
http://biodiversity.tamu.edu
http://library.tamu.edu => course reserves => WFSC-681
http://library.tamu.edu => databases => ISI Web of Science
http://software.tamu.edu => EndNote