Overview

The world’s water resources are widely considered to be in crisis—from prolonged drought and climate change, rapid urbanization and competing demands, and institutional breakdown. What are the drivers of crisis and governance failure? How should we respond? This course examines the major issues, concepts, debates, and organizations in the global governance of freshwater resources: including water markets and privatization, large dam development, water insecurity, transboundary disputes, urban provision and social equity, climate change and water supply alternatives. In this course, we explore how broader governance trends—such as the increasing role of market-based approaches in environmental policy—influence local manifestations of water policies, institutions, and outcomes. We pay special attention to the role of influential international organizations (e.g., The World Bank, Global Water Partnership, United Nations) in tandem with more in-depth analysis of countries and regions (e.g., Chile, Spain, Mexico, Australia, the United States, and the European Union) whose policy experiences and experiments hold international significance in the world of water. Overall, the central goal of the course is to equip students with an interdisciplinary understanding of the social and governance dimensions of global water problems, drawing on the different analytical perspectives of law, geography, political science, development studies, and institutional economics.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Define and contextualize key terms, trends, and organizations in global water policy.
- Characterize, compare, and critically assess policy reforms and case studies in water governance, drawing on different perspectives and disciplines.
• Critically analyze a key problem in international water governance, through the production of an original text (namely, a policy brief) that builds on individual research and applies the theoretical vocabulary and concepts learned in the course.

The Instructors

Dr. Katie Meehan (Main Instructor)
meehan@uoregon.edu
Office: Condon 164
Office hours: Thursdays 10:00am-12noon (and by appointment)
A little about me: I’m an expert in informal water use, household water provision and politics, water supply alternatives, and urban geography, especially in Latin America and the U.S. Southwest. This is the eighth time I’ve taught this course, and I always learn something new from students! The best way to reach me is via email, and I will do my best to respond within 24 hours. Students are always welcome to drop in my office hours to talk, even if you have no set agenda. Sometimes I bring my dog Zuzu to office hours--she gives free hugs.

Kate Shields (Graduate Employee or GE for this course)
kfs@uoregon.edu
Office: Condon 208
Office hours: Wednesdays 2:00-4:00pm (and by appointment)
A little about me: A little about me: I’m a second year PhD student in Geography. My background is in public health, and before returning to school I was a water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) researcher. I worked mostly internationally, with a focus on Ethiopia and countries in Melanesia. I took this class last year, and am very excited to be the GE for it this year! The best way to reach me is also via email, and I will do my best to respond within 24 hours. You are always welcome in my office hours.

Course Expectations

We welcome undergraduate, graduate, and professional students from all departments and intellectual backgrounds. A healthy appetite for water issues and a good sense of humor will help you succeed in this course.

At a minimum, students are expected to attend class regularly, actively engage in discussions and learning activities, and treat classmates and the instructors with respect. Policies regarding classroom behavior and academic misconduct are appended in the last section of this syllabus. In general, we support the principles, policies, and inclusive spirit of the University Student Conduct Code.
Three-hour class meetings are loosely divided into chunks. A typical session might include several learning activities: such as ‘signposting’ and informative lectures by the instructor or GE, small group discussions, concept map development, presentations by guest speakers, film or text interpretation, and/or other activities. Each week, we will dedicate a good portion of class time to collectively wrangling the topic at hand, utilizing the tools of discussion, unpacking main ideas, raising questions, offering insights, and facilitating healthy disagreement or debate. In other words, much of course learning will occur via active student engagement. Not surprisingly, individual attendance and active participation are essential to your achievement and to the overall success of the class.

**Coursework**

For the above reasons, reading is critical to this course and reflected in the somewhat heavy load of assigned material. To maximize your understanding, read assigned materials before class! Class activities will build directly on the assigned reading materials.

Your individual attendance and participation (A&P) is essential to your achievement in the class, as well as to the overall class learning environment. We will take attendance every class. Because we only meet nine times this term (one less than normal due to Thanksgiving break), attendance is mandatory. Students are allowed one missed/unexcused absence (e.g. for a wedding or personal circumstance); after that, missing class will penalize your A&P grade. We check A&P using a variety of mechanisms including (but not limited to): in-class activities, one-minute papers, pop quizzes on the assigned reading, and feedback on class topics. A&P activities will be graded for completion and not content; these activities are not announced beforehand and cannot be made-up.

Like all problems in environmental governance, water policy involves social and ecological trade-offs between different values, priorities, and points of view. To see this principle in action, in week 8 (November 16) we will take a field trip to the Cougar Dam and meet staff from the Army Corps of Engineers, the federal agency responsible for operating and managing many of the dams in the Willamette Valley. Field trips are also fun! Details will be provided in class.

As the term progresses, all coursework will be geared toward the production of a policy brief. In lieu of the brief, graduate students (i.e. 567 students) may opt to write a research paper that presents original data and analysis on a relevant water governance issue. Both 467 and 567 students will follow the same process of research development. Early on in the term, we will brainstorm possible topics and identify research resources. By week 6, students will produce a mini-proposal that includes a problem statement, brief introduction, and initial literature review. We will provide input and constructive comments. By the start of week 10, students will submit a solid first draft of their paper or policy brief to the professor and an assigned peer. Each student will read another’s draft and write a peer review due in week 10 (guidelines will be provided on how to produce an effective review). The peer review is designed to help writers
improve their structure, content, logic, and overall writing flow. At that point, students will address lingering issues, re-write, and submit a final version of the paper or policy brief, due during finals week.

Access to Readings

There is no single textbook for this course—we will consume an eclectic mix of peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, media articles, and policy papers that tackle key problems in water governance. Many of the readings are ‘key texts’ in academic and policy circles, and all will be available free of charge.

Students can access readings in one of two ways:

1) Through the UO Library or web, by independently searching and downloading the article via the library website or at home through a VPN connection (more information here: https://service.uoregon.edu/TDClient/KB/ArticleDet?ID=31471);
2) If the assigned reading is a book chapter or article that is difficult to obtain (unfortunately, the UO does not subscribe to many prominent water research journals), we will post readings as PDFs on Canvas.

Ultimately, students are responsible for obtaining and reading the assigned texts. Please bring assigned readings to class—electronic versions on your laptop or tablet are welcome—as we will discuss or engage the articles directly in class.

Assessment

While class meetings of GEOG 467 and 567 will be held jointly, the learning activities and assessment mechanisms will differ slightly between graduates and undergraduates. Your performance in the course will be evaluated on a variety of activities, with an emphasis on the final research project (policy brief or research paper). The final grade is based on the total cumulative points you earn over the term, divided as shown:

**Undergraduate Students (GEOG 467)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Trip Journal</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policy Brief

Proposal | 20
Graduate Students (GEOG 567)
For graduate students, the final grade is based on the total cumulative points earned over the term. The final grade is based on the total cumulative points you earn over the term, divided as shown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Responses (3 total)</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Trip Journal</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Final Project</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Draft</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Review</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Version of Policy Brief/Paper</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>210</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Final Grades
The final grade will be specified using the following approximate distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>97%-100%</td>
<td>A+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93%-96%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90%-92%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87%-89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83%-86%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67-69%</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-62%</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<tr>
<td>0-59%</td>
<td>F</td>
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</table>
GEOG 567 Book Club

In addition to taking active part in class activities in our joint 467/567 class meetings, students enrolled in the graduate section (GEOG 567) of this course are required to read and respond to three additional books.

These books are timely examples of cutting-edge research in critical water research and policy studies, based on individual cases of policy narratives and reforms, but relevant (in terms of conceptualization and methodological approach) to many places worldwide.

Students are responsible for purchasing or obtaining the books. Most books are accessible via the UO Library system, although eBook access can be clunky and frustrating. If you choose to buy the books, I recommend purchasing directly from the academic publisher (which usually sells the eBook version at a reduced price) or from a reputable independent bookstore, such as Powell’s. The book titles include:

- Abers, Rebecca Neera and Margaret E. Keck. (2013) **Practical Authority: Agency and Institutional Change in Brazilian Water Politics.** Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. Approximately $46.60 in print (paperback), also available as eBook via the UO Library.

For each assigned book, 567 students will write a response paper using the principles of the empathetic critique. A reading response is not just a platform for your unsubstantiated opinion; but a device to present your informed point of view, demonstrate your comprehension of the readings, and wrestle with the topic at hand.

The empathetic critique is a mode of critical expression that carefully assesses the nuances of an argument, outlines its productive points and limits, and builds on its useful components to advance knowledge and the field as a whole. Best practices might include panning for ‘gold’ in a complex or muddled text; quoting directly from the text to substantiate your claim (and not ‘inserting’ words into an author’s mouth); evaluating different conceptual applications (i.e. how might this argument or approach work in a different context or problem scenario?), and so on. Papers should be constructed as critical assessments of the readings, and should be thoughtful, provocative, well written, and well argued. Students are not being asked to regurgitate what they have read, but instead to process the readings. Please always bring assigned readings (in paper or digital format) to class.
Format: Reactions paper should consist of approximately 500 words, double-spaced, 1” margins, page numbers, and stapled. They are due in printed hard copy format at the scheduled time of our 567 meeting.

Because we meet directly after our normal class session, please feel free to bring your lunch or a snack! Location of 567 book club to be announced (most likely, Dr. Meehan’s office in Condon 164).

Dates for 567 Meetings

- Friday October 19, 12noon-1:00pm: Bakker, *Privatizing Water*
- Friday November 9, 12noon-1:00pm: Abers and Keck, *Practical Authority*
- Friday November 30, 12noon-1:00pm: Anand, *Hydraulic City*

*Late policy:* Reaction papers will not be accepted late. This policy is non-negotiable. It may seem arbitrary, but it is the only way to ensure that the papers serve their most important purpose (pre-class processing of ideas).

Why the extra labor? Per University policy, “graduate students in 4xx/5xx courses are expected to perform not only additional work, but work that is more in-depth and of higher quality as befits a graduate-level course.” In other words, a 4-credit course for undergraduates consists of 120 hours of work; by comparison, a 4-credit course for graduate students consists of 160 hours of work, roughly a third more than their undergraduate counterparts. The 567 Book Club serves as the additional time to meet graduate course credit standards.
## The Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activities and Due Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9/28</td>
<td><strong>What is Water Policy?</strong> The Hydrosocial Cycle</td>
<td>Introduction to the course. Overview of major paradigms and conceptual approaches in water policy and governance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10/5</td>
<td><strong>The Business of Water</strong> Markets, Privatization, Reform</td>
<td>What is the role of the market in global water governance?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10/12</td>
<td><strong>Why Institutions Matter</strong></td>
<td>What is an institution? Who makes the rules? Theories of common property theory and institutional economics. Foundations of legal traditions in the U.S.A. and elsewhere</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10/19</td>
<td><strong>Water Security and Justice</strong></td>
<td>What is the ‘water security’ approach? Water security, for whom and to what end? How do we ‘re-plumb’ cities for equitable and sustainable supply?</td>
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<td><strong>Due: Topic for Policy Brief</strong></td>
<td>Discuss your policy brief/research paper topic in office hours Week 4 or 5.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10/19</td>
<td><em>GEOG 567 Book Club: Privatizing Water by Karen Bakker</em></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>10/26</td>
<td><strong>Transboundary Waters</strong></td>
<td>Is water the next oil? Transboundary policy and cooperation</td>
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<td>Discuss your topic with Dr. Meehan or Kate in office hours week 4 or 5.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>11/2</td>
<td><strong>Policy Narratives and Expert Networks</strong></td>
<td>What inspires water policy? What narratives influence water policy and governance? How and why do policy ideas travel?</td>
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<td><strong>Due: Proposals</strong></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>11/9</td>
<td><strong>Dams in Theory</strong></td>
<td>Impact of large dams on people and the environment; efforts to</td>
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<td>remove small dams and restore rivers</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>11/9</td>
<td>*GEOG 567 Book Club: Practical</td>
<td><em>Abers and Keck</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Authority by Abers and Keck*</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>11/16</td>
<td><strong>Dams in Action</strong></td>
<td><strong>Field Trip to Cougar Dam</strong></td>
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<td>8:00am-3:00pm (please plan accordingly; logistic details to be</td>
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<td>provided in class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>11/23</td>
<td><em>Thanksgiving -- No class</em></td>
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<td><strong>DUE: Field Trip Reflection</strong>,</td>
<td>submit via Canvas by 12noon on Wednesday, November 22.</td>
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<td>submit via Canvas by 12noon on</td>
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<td>Wednesday, November 22.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>11/30</td>
<td><strong>Climate Change and Water Futures</strong></td>
<td>“Climate proofing” our water futures with desalination and</td>
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<td>drinking recycled effluent. And what kind of governance is</td>
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<td>required for what sort of equity?</td>
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<td><strong>Due: First Drafts</strong> of your Policy Brief (or Research Paper)</td>
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<td>are due to Canvas by Monday, November 26 at 5:00pm.</td>
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<td><strong>Due: Peer Reviews</strong> are due by the start of regular class</td>
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<td>time (9:00am) on Friday, November 30. **We will facilitate an</td>
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<td>in-class Peer Workshop.**</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>11/30</td>
<td>*GEOG 567 Book Club: Hydraulic</td>
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<td>City by Nikhil Anand</td>
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<td><strong>Finals Week</strong></td>
<td><em>Wednesday 12/5 by 12pm (noon)</em></td>
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<td>**Due: Final Version of Policy</td>
<td>Brief, submit to Canvas</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Assigned Readings**

**Introduction and the Hydrosocial Cycle -- Friday, September 28**

Optional (for those interested in this topic):


**The Business of Water -- Friday, October 5**


Optional (for those interested in this topic):


**Why Institutions Matter -- Friday, October 12**


Optional (for those interested in this topic):


**Water Security and Justice -- Friday, October 19**


Shiloh Deitz and Katie Meehan (2018) “Plumbing poverty: hot spots of racial and geographic inequality in U.S. household water insecurity.” *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* (coming soon to publication; PDFs will be provided)


Optional (for those interested in this topic):


Current research by Dr. Wendy Jepson (see her webpage)

**Transboundary Waters -- Friday, October 26**


http://www.transboundarywaters.orst.edu/publications/conflict_coop/


Optional (for those interested in this topic):


**Policy Narratives and Expert Networks -- Friday, November 2**


**Optional** (for those interested in this topic):


WaSH-related readings (would be great to include one):


**Dams in Theory -- Friday, November 9**


Optional (for those interested in this topic):

Any of the other articles from the *Water Alternatives* special issue on the WCD + 10


Coleen A. Fox, Francis J. Magilligan, and Christopher S. Sneddon. (2016) “‘You kill the dam, you are killing part of me’: dam removal and the environmental politics of river restoration” *Geoforum* 70: 93-104.


**Dams in Action -- Friday, November 16**

Field trip (no assigned readings)

**Thanksgiving -- Friday, November 23**

No class (no assigned readings)

**Climate Change and Water Futures -- Friday, November 30**


Optional (for those interested in this topic):


Matthew Goff and Ben Crow (2014) “What is water equity? The unfortunate consequences of a global focus on ‘drinking water’” Water International 39(2): 159-171


Other OPTIONAL readings, for those interested in the following topics:

Water and Legal Pluralism


Urban Waters


Rules and Resources

Affirmation of Community Standards

The University of Oregon community is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge and the development of integrity. In order to thrive and excel, our community must preserve the freedom of thought and expression of all its members. A culture of respect that honors the rights, safety, dignity, and worth of every individual is essential to preserve such freedom. We affirm our respect for the rights and well being of all members.

We further affirm our commitment to:

Respect the dignity and essential worth of all individuals
Promote a culture of respect throughout the University community
Respect the privacy, property, and freedom of others
Reject bigotry, discrimination, violence, or intimidations of any kind
Practice personal and academic integrity and expect it from others
Promote the diversity of opinions, ideas, and backgrounds, which is the lifeblood of the university

Students with Disabilities

The Geography department and the university are working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify Dr. Meehan if there are aspects of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. We encourage you to consult with the Accessible Education Center (located in 164 Oregon Hall) at 541-346-1155. The AEC supports accessible education and can help individual students in obtaining a notification letter, technology use, testing, advice/counseling, and other means of support. See: http://aec.uoregon.edu/

Laptop Use Policy

We welcome laptop and tablet use (or other electronic devices that support learning) in the classroom to advance learning. Cell phones must be silenced and stowed away during class meetings. Students that inappropriately use laptops, the Internet, and/or other digital technologies in ways that distract peers/instructors and subtract from the learning environment will lose the privilege of using devices in class.
**Late Assignment Policy**

As due dates and assignment details are provided in advance, no late assignments will be accepted unless proper documentation and instructor permission are secured in advance.

**Absences**

Because we only meet nine times this term (one less than normal due to Thanksgiving break), attendance is mandatory. Students are allowed one missed class/absence (e.g. for a wedding or travel or personal circumstances); after that, missing class will penalize your A&P grade. Course activities/components that are missed due to an unexcused absence cannot be “made up”.

Excused absences include:

1. You are traveling to an official university-sponsored event (e.g. an academic conference or event for Intercollegiate Athletics, Club Sports, or the UO Marching Band); or

2. You have a prescheduled medical appointment.

If you foresee an absence due to one of the reasons described above, contact the instructor a minimum of one week in advance of the anticipated absence with appropriate documentation. Appropriate documentation includes a letter (on official letterhead) from your coach, instructor, professor, or doctor that provides us with the details of the pre-existing time conflict and is signed by the appropriate party.

**Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct involves the violation of university policies regarding academic integrity. Examples include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, intentionally tampering with grades, or knowingly furnishing false information to a university official. Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else’s product, words, ideas, and data as one’s own work. Fabrication is the intentional use of information that the author has invented when s/he states or implies otherwise, or the falsification of research with the intent to deceive. Cheating is an act of deception by which a student misrepresents or misleadingly demonstrates that s/he has mastered information on an academic exercise (i.e., a test) that s/he has not mastered, including the giving or receiving of unauthorized help.

Sanctions for academic misconduct involve, at a minimum, a failing grade for that particular course component. Sanctions may involve further action with the Director of Student Conduct. [http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct.aspx](http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct.aspx)

To learn how to avoid plagiarism, please speak with the instructor before submitting an assignment. We will help you avoid mistakes and accidents!
**Classroom Behavior and Social Misconduct**

Above all, students should conduct themselves as adults and professionals. Classroom discussion should be civilized and respectful to everyone, and relevant to the topic at hand.

Please silence and stow away off cell phones and non-essential devices before class starts. You are expected to be on time. Packing up your things early is disruptive to class dynamics. Threatening or violent behavior will not be tolerated.

A disruption of class will result in a warning. After one warning, if the disruption continues, you will be asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of class. We adhere to the principles and practices of the UO Student Conduct Code.

**And finally, Subject to Change Statement**

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grading policy and course standards, may be subject to change with advanced notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.