



**George Mason University  
College of Education and Human Development  
School of Sport, Recreation & Tourism Management**

RMGT 501 DL1 - Introduction to Natural Resources Law  
3 Credits, Spring 2023  
Distance Education Blackboard on NET

**Faculty**

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**Prerequisites**

Graduate status OR permission of instructor.

**University Catalog Course Description**

Examines selected legal issues involving conflicting use and preservation demands on our nation's limited natural resource base, particularly those involving public lands, open space, and recreation resources. Uses case studies of recent court decisions.

**Course Overview**

Through the case study method, this course examines the role of the courts and federal and state law in addressing a variety of issues involving the acquisition, management, and preservation of natural resources, specifically public parks and recreation resources. Natural resource law will be defined by the administrative and environmental review process used by citizens and interest groups to challenge governmental actions. Further, the course will examine the mission and authority of individual federal resource agencies within the context of specific environmental and resource conservation laws. In particular, this course will examine a number of natural resources legal issues involving recreation resources on federal lands.

## Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered online (76% or more) using an asynchronous format via the Blackboard Learning Management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and password. The course site will be available on the first scheduled class day of the semester.

Under no circumstances may candidates or students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or online) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

### *Technical Requirements*

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with a standard up-to-date browser. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see:  
[https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting\\_Started/Browser\\_Support#supported-browsers](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers)
- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download:
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
  - Windows Media Player: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player>
  - Apple Quick Time Player: [www.apple.com/quicktime/download/](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)

### *Expectations*

- Course Week: Because asynchronous courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, the course week will start on Monday and finish on Sunday.
- Log-in Frequency: Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 3 times per week.
- Participation: Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, and completing course activities and assignments.
- Technical Competence: Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.

- Technical Issues: Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.
- Workload: Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities, and assignments due.
- Instructor Support: Students may schedule a one-on-one virtual meeting to discuss course requirements, content, or other course-related issues via telephone or web conference such as Skype or FaceTime. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates and times.
- Netiquette: The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them so that others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach to others and diplomatic in selecting your words*. Remember that you are not competing with classmates but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.
- Accommodations: Online learners who require effective accommodations to ensure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

### **Learner Outcomes or Objectives**

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

1. Define the role of the courts in balancing conflicting use and preservation demands on our nation's limited natural resource base, particularly those involving public lands, open space, and recreation resources.
2. Analyze the relevance and significance of specific facts in a particular case involving the acquisition, management, and preservation of natural resources, specifically public park and recreation resources.
3. Identify the issues/questions of natural resources law to be resolved by the court in a particular case involving the acquisition, management, and preservation of natural resources, specifically public park and recreation resources.
4. Identify the relevant sources and rules of law applied by courts to resolve issues of natural resources law involving the acquisition, management, and preservation of natural resources, specifically public park and recreation resources.
5. Describe the legal analysis and methodology applied by courts to resolve issues of natural resources law, including the role of cases, regulations, legislative materials, and other relevant law-related information used by courts to resolve natural resources law issues.

## Professional Standards

2013 Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Related Professions (COAPRT) standards met.

Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following professional standards:

- 7.03 Students graduating from the program shall be able to demonstrate entry-level knowledge about operations and strategic management/administration in parks, recreation, tourism and/or related professions.

## Required Texts

The "textbook" in this course is a compilation of case reports and related articles from the "NRPA Law Review" column in *Parks & Recreation* magazine (the official publication of the National Recreation and Park Association). These case reports and related articles will be available for reading, downloading, and printing from links on the Blackboard site.

## Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to access and complete all examinations as scheduled on Blackboard.

## Examinations Course Performance Evaluation Weighting

3 EXAMS on Blackboard (open book, weighted equally, each exam worth 33%)

## Grading Policies

Final grades are based solely on the percentage of points earned out of the total number of points available on all three exams. **THERE IS NO EXTRA CREDIT.** The grading scale for final grades is based on the number of points earned out of a possible 150 on all three exams:

|            |                      |              |
|------------|----------------------|--------------|
| <b>A+</b>  | <b>120 and above</b> | <b>80%</b>   |
| <b>A</b>   | <b>105 - 119</b>     | <b>70%</b>   |
| <b>A -</b> | <b>90 - 104</b>      | <b>60%</b>   |
| <b>B +</b> | <b>82 - 89</b>       | <b>54.6%</b> |
| <b>B</b>   | <b>75 - 81</b>       | <b>50%</b>   |
| <b>B -</b> | <b>67 - 74</b>       | <b>44.6%</b> |
| <b>C</b>   | <b>60- 66</b>        | <b>40%</b>   |
| <b>F</b>   | <b>59 and below</b>  |              |

## Professional Dispositions

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

Blackboard provides extensive data on each exam to determine any irregularities on individual exams and identify patterns that may indicate collusion among students on RMGT 501 exams that may warrant further investigation pursuant to the Honor Code. Moreover, any irregularities could artificially inflate and skew the scores on individual exams and questions which might produce an adverse effect on the course curve to the detriment of individual students and the class as a whole. Accordingly, you are reminded that the Honor Code is in effect for all exams in RMGT 501 on Blackboard. Further, to clarify and reiterate, no collaboration or group participation whatsoever is permissible during PRLS 501 examinations.

Further, you are not to discuss the exam with any other student during or after the time which the exam is accessible. Providing or reproducing any information to another student about any questions on a PRLS 501 exam would constitute cheating within the context of the Honor Code, i.e., unauthorized use of study aids, memoranda, books, data, or other information.

## Class Schedule

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

**Exam One: February 20-26, 2023 (Units One through Four)**

**Exam Two: April 3-9, 2023 (Units Five through Eight)**

**Exam Three: May 1-7, 2023 (Units Nine through Eleven)**

**UNIT ONE** (January 23-29, 2023) – National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and section 4(F) (Webstream Lectures 1A & 1B)

**UNIT TWO** (January 30 – February 5, 2023) – National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Webstream Lectures 2A & 2B)

**UNIT THREE** (February 6-12, 2023) – National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Webstream Lectures 3A & 3B)

**UNIT FOUR** (February 13-19, 2023) – Recreation Resources: Recreation on Federal Lands (Webstream Lectures 144A & 4B)

**EXAM ONE: February 20-26, 2023 (Units One through Four)**

**UNIT FIVE** (February 27 – March 5, 2023) – Land And Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF)  
(Webstream Lectures 5A & 5B)

**UNIT SIX** (March 6-12, 2023) – Unconstitutional Taking of Private Property (Webstream Lectures  
6A & 6B)

**SPRING BREAK (March 13-19, 2023)**

**UNIT SEVEN** (March 20-26, 2023) – Diversion of Public Park & Recreation Resources  
(Webstream Lectures 7A & 7B)

**UNIT EIGHT** (March 27 – April 2, 2023) – First Amendment Issues in Parks & Recreation  
Resources (Webstream Lectures 8A & 8B)

**EXAM TWO: April 3-9, 2023 (Units Five through Eight)**

**UNIT NINE** (April 10-16, 2023) – Federal Liability for Recreational Injuries (Webstream Lectures  
9a & 9b)

**UNIT TEN** (April 17-23, 2023) – Wildlife Resources & Endangered Species Protection  
(Webstream Lectures 10a & 10b)

**UNIT ELEVEN** (April 24-30, 2023) – Themes & Variations (Webstream Lectures 11a & 11b)

**EXAM THREE: May 1-7, 2023 (Units Nine through Eleven)**

**Core Values Commitment**

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

**GMU Policies and Resources for Students**

*Policies*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/> ).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students **solely** through their Mason email account.
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the

time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).

- Students must silence all sound-emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

### *Campus Resources*

- Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to [viahelp@gmu.edu](mailto:viahelp@gmu.edu) or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

### **Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:**

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as the Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730 or emailing [titleix@gmu.edu](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu).

**For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/> .**