Michigan State University
ESP 810: *Understanding Trust in the Environmental Governance Context*
Fall 2025

Class Day/Time: Wednesday 3-550pm
Location: ESPP Conference Room (273 Giltner Hall)
Google Drive: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1NZ5rNFf5eKDu-YP09jamBC8JGVBTTE3G?usp=sharing
Instructor: Joe Hamm
Office Hours: by appointment
Contact Information:
   E-mail: jhamm@msu.edu (please include the course number [ESP 810] in the subject line)
   Office: 518 Baker Hall

Content Overview:
From global climate change to local land use, governance relationships sit at the root of identifying and responding to virtually all of the major environmental problems in today's world. Students in this course will use the state of the science of trust as a lens for thinking through a variety of environmental governance challenges. The overarching questions of this seminar are two:

1. *What is the role of relationships in effective environmental governance?*
2. *What does the state of the science of trust offer to scholars and practitioners trying to improve the governance of a given environmental problem?*

Additionally, because of their direct relevance to the course materials, students in this course will gain a strong working knowledge of foundational social science issues in theoretical development, measurement, and statistics and experience in academic grant writing**.**

Reading Materials:
Readings for this course will come from an edited volume (see below; available from the MSU bookstore) and original research articles (available online).

Textbook: *Handbook on Trust in Public Governance*; Frédérique Six, Joseph A. Hamm, Dominika Latusek, Koen Verhoest, Esther Van Zimmeren; Edward Elgar Publishing
ISBN: 9781802201390

Assignments:
Discussion Questions. You will be responsible for posting four discussion questions about the assigned articles to the Google Doc by 11:59pm each Friday, before our course meeting. The questions should have some nexus with the overarching questions of the course above but should reflect your individual engagement with the readings (what is interesting/perplexing/curious to *you*?). This responsibility is worth 10pts of your class grade.

Mock Grant Proposal. The term paper for this course will be a mock project proposal. The proposal will require you to design a project that leverages the social science of trust to address a governance challenge that is important to your interests within environmental science and policy. Proposals will be graded using NSF's focal criteria of intellectual merits (which refers to the proposal's theoretical contribution) and broader impacts (which refers to the proposal's potential to result in practical advances). To assist you in successfully completing this responsibility, you will be required to turn in a one pager which should include an overview of the project, an explanation of the intellectual merit and broader impacts, and the proposed activities (due dates in the schedule below) and I will completely review one draft at whatever stage of development on the due date. This responsibility is worth 60pts of your class grade.

Course Module. You will be responsible for preparing a course module during the course. As these will be toward the end of the semester, you should be familiar with the trust literature applied to your area of interest from your work on the mock proposal. For this assignment, you will need to select one important publication that will help your classmates understand the literature in the area: I will work with you to select a second one. You will be responsible for a brief, informal presentation at the beginning of class that will briefly outline your research proposal. We will then discuss your chosen articles as a class and workshop your research proposal idea as a group. This responsibility is worth 20pts of your class grade.

Participation. This is a discussion-based class so you will be expected to come to class prepared: **You will have to read for this class**. This responsibility is worth 10pts of your class grade.

Assignment		Value	Points
Discussion Questions		trying = 10; phoning it in = 0	10
Proposal	One Pager	trying = 10; phoning it in = 0	10
	Final	% * .5	50
Course Module		trying = 20; phoning it in = 0	20
Participation	Attendance	there (or excused) and	10
	Preparation	prepared = 10	
Total Possible Points			100

Grading Scale: **4** = 100 - 95*pts*; **3.5** = 94.99 - 90*pts*; **3** = 89.99 - 85*pts*; **2.5** = 84.99 - 80*pts*; **2** = 79.99 - 75*pts*; **1.5** = 74.99 - 70*pts*; **1** = 69.99 – 65*pts*; **0** = less than 65*pts*

Housekeeping:

I have long been of the opinion that the core of a successful class is students and teachers who fulfill their responsibilities to each other. I offer you a considered and deliberate guided tour through the social science of trust in environmental government. From you I simply ask your genuine and respectful engagement. This means that I will expect you to do all of the readings and turn in all assignments on time, and that you will find respectful ways to engage with disagreements when they happen.

Absences. Please reach out ahead of time if you need to miss class to ensure you don't lose points.

Late Assignments. Technically, late assignments are missed assignments which merit a zero, but I do understand that things happen. Please talk to me if you have issues in the course but know that I will be far more understanding if you contact me *before* the issue rather than after.

Academic Integrity. Please know that I do and will take violations of academic integrity very seriously. See http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html for further clarification and note that Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards."

Use of genAI (e.g., Chat GPT). We are all in the process of learning how AI and higher education will impact each other. I am happy to help you explore this emerging technology as you feel comfortable. Note there is no need to use AI in this course if you prefer not to and I suspect you will get more out of the course if you don't. If you want to use it, you are welcome to, but you must always, clearly explain how it was used, typically in writing and as part of the deliverable. Please ensure that you have spent a little time reading through the various (but often context- or discipline-specific) AI guidance documents out there. It is good practice to liberally reference these when you explain how you used AI.

One of the better guides for AI use in class contexts that I have seen is here:
> https://www.usg.edu/teaching-and-learning-excellence/centers/program_spotlight/student_guide_genai_literacy

Specific guidance for each assignment in our class:
- If you use genAI for the generation of <u>discussion questions</u>, I expect you to select the discussion questions *you* care about from among a larger list. Because they are meant to help direct our class discussion to things of interest to you all, no one is helped if the only person who cares is the AI. Please disclose your use here verbally in class.
- If you use genAI for the <u>one-pager</u> or <u>project proposal</u>, be very careful. As a journal editor, I have seen a few different uses of AI for manuscript preparation and have yet to see one that does not come with significant risks. The main one seems to hallucinations which seem to be especially problematic for citations and data/figures/tables. The most workable use seems to be asking the AI to prepare an outline that is then heavily edited by the user, but I expect this will evolve as the technology does. Please disclose any use here in an AI Use Statement at the end of the proposal.
- If you use genAI for the <u>course module</u>, I would be very interested in what you do. Please disclose your use here in a slide at the end (or start) of your deck that explains how it was used.

Bottom line, feel free to use the tools at your disposal but don't cheat (and *any* undisclosed use of genAI is cheating 😊). If you are ever in doubt, please ask.

Confidentiality. It is important to promote a vibrant exchange of ideas while respecting the privacy of students taking this class. Comments taken out of context are often misleading and undercut the environment of trust and respect that is essential for learning. Given these factors and the importance of

supporting one another, recordings of the class, lecture notes, other materials created by the instructor, and screenshots of the class (including online discussions) should not be uploaded to other online environments. Impermissible use of class recordings and lecture notes or other material may violate the rights of other students and the MSU Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy (https://ossa.msu.edu/srr).

Special Accommodations:
If you feel that you have needs that are not addressed in our course, please contact me directly to discuss. I am more than happy to work with you, but it is your responsibility to engage me if there is an issue.

MSU's portal for formally addressing accommodations is here: https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/services/accommodations.

Note also MSU's religious observance policy: https://reg.msu.edu/roinfo/notices/religiouspolicy.aspx

Tentative Course Schedule (*subject to change*):

Date (wk)	Topic	Read before class	Assignments	
			Turn in before class *(Friday by 11:59pm)*	**Turn in on the day of class** *(Wednesday by 5:50pm)*
8/27 (1)	**No Class**			
9/3 (2)	Planning the course	Handbook Chapter 1		
9/10 (3)			Discussion Qs	
9/17 (4)	**No Class**			Proposal one-pager
9/24 (5)			Discussion Qs	
10/1 (6)			Discussion Qs	
10/8 (7)			Discussion Qs	
10/15 (8)	**No Class – Fall Break**			Proposal draft
10/22 (9)	Student 1		Discussion Qs	
10/29 (10)	Student 2		Discussion Qs	
11/5 (11)	Student 3		Discussion Qs	
11/12 (12)	Student 4		Discussion Qs	
11/19 (13)	Student 5		Discussion Qs	
11/26 (14)	**No Class - Thanksgiving**			
12/3 (15)	Revision Day			
12/12 (16)	**Final Exam - December 12, 2025, 12:45 PM - 2:45 PM**			Final proposal