WATR7003 - Water governance and policy (2 units)

Foundation module

Module description

In this Foundation module, participants are introduced to governance frameworks at the global/international, national, regional/basin, transboundary and local levels. Across five components of the module, participants consider current themes influencing water governance and policy including that of sustainable development, collaborative management, water rights and access, and equity for marginal groups. Water planning as a key governance mechanism at regional and basin levels form one of the components, with comparisons drawn between Australia and other countries.

Module introduction

Water governance refers to the range of legal, policy and administrative arrangements in place to: develop, allocate and manage water resources and deliver water services at different levels of society. Understanding governance requires awareness of the historical, cultural and socio-political contexts in which it operates, and of the complexities of multi-level, multi-institutional processes and methods. This module provides an introduction to the basic elements of good water governance in developed countries and those seeking industrialisation and sustainable development. Throughout the module, participants are encouraged to develop an interdisciplinary perspective.

Module delivery

- **Full-time** (on-campus) students, including international students, are required to enrol in the internal offering in Semester 1. Semester 1 begins with a three day field trip to North Stradbroke Island.
- **Part-time** (external) students are required to enrol in this module in Semester 3. They are required to attend a six-day intensive workshop in Brisbane, at the beginning of the semester, where two days of the module are taught face-to-face and the remainder of the module is taught externally on-line.

Students inspecting water sensitive urban design of parkland adjacent to the Brisbane River.

Assumed background

This is a postgraduate module in general water science offered as part of the IWC Master of Integrated Water Management. Participants are expected to have basic background knowledge through undergraduate science or engineering programs, however this is not essential.

Learning objectives

After successfully completing this module participants are able to:

- Grasp the concepts underpinning water governance initiatives at different scales i.e. global/international, national, regional/ catchment, and local levels
- Acquire an interdisciplinary perspective to governance, policies and practices related to integrated water management in developing and developed country contexts
- Be aware of water planning as a key governance mechanism in developed and developing country contexts
- Discuss, critique and evaluate transboundary governance arrangements, particularly how they implement international norms for sharing water and their methods of resolving conflict
- Communicate an understanding of basic governance policies and challenges as identified above in a systematic and contextually appropriate way, either orally or in written form or through multimedia, with attention to the diverse needs of governments, the private sector and civil society
- Undertake individual research on governance issues, critically evaluate materials accessed from a variety of standpoints and communicate essential points of such materials in an accurate, engaging and contextually appropriate way
- Demonstrate the use of personal reflection to improve their own ability, and their ability as part of a team, to analyse, explore and evaluate governance initiatives to practical water planning and management problems exemplified in case studies presented in this module
- Show, through the associated project work component, how relevant theories, integration tools and decision support systems presented in this module can inform the analysis of case studies and help to identify practical, integrated solutions to water planning and management problems.

Teaching staff

Lead Lecturer: Prof Poh-Ling Tan (Griffith Law School, Griffith University)

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) projects

PBL projects run throughout the semester, comprising roughly 50% of the assessment weight. These enable participants to develop skills that complement the content delivered in the four Foundation modules.

Full-time students complete two PBL projects per semester while part-time students complete one PBL per semester:

- **PBL1:** Situation analysis and critique of an existing water management project or program *(Group project)*
- **PBL2:** Design of a project proposal to address a real-world water management issue from an integrated water management perspective *(Individual project)*

A significant amount of project time is spent exploring the case study material with respect to the topic content of the Water governance and policy module. Participants are provided with an introduction to the case study catchments from the governance and policy perspective. They examine governance initiatives in the different catchments, including relevant policy and legislative documents. Participants are asked to critically evaluate governance arrangements in the case study catchments based on good governance principles. Participants take a comparative approach to analysing case study catchments which allows them to consider the case studies against other catchments explored in lecture and workshop sessions. Participants consider the policy implications of different management actions, and also look at governance and policy issues as they sit within the broader 'sustainability and development' discourse.

Field trips

Participants begin the Foundation semester with a three-day field trip to North Stradbroke Island. The cost of the trip (including transport from Brisbane, accommodation and meals) is included in the tuition fees.

For a complete list of field trips that participants undertake during the Foundation semester, please refer back to "Field trips" on page 7 of this syllabus or visit the IWC website.

Photos: students on a field trip to Maroochy Catchment and North Stradbroke Island.