

WATR7003 - Water governance and policy (2 units)

Foundation module

Course description

In this Foundation course, students will be introduced to governance frameworks at the global/international, national, regional/basin, transboundary and local levels. Across five components of the course, students will 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 will form one of the components, with comparisons drawn between Australia and other countries.

Course introduction

Water governance refers to the range of legal, policy and administrative arrangements in place to: (a) develop, allocate and manage water resources and; (b) 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 course provides an introduction to the basic elements of good water governance in developed countries and those seeking industrialisation and sustainable development. Throughout the course, students are encouraged to develop an interdisciplinary perspective.

Course 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 course in Semester 3. They are required to attend a five-day intensive workshop in Brisbane, at the beginning of the semester, where two days of the course will be taught face-to-face and the remainder of the course will be taught externally on-line.

Assumed background

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

Learning objectives

After successfully completing this course, students should be 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 familiar with water planning as a key governance mechanism in developed and developing country contexts. They will demonstrate understanding of processes used to reconcile interests of governments, the private sector and civil society through examples from Australia, South Africa and other countries;
- be able to 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 course;
- show, through the associated project work component, how relevant theories, integration tools and decision support systems presented in this course can inform the analysis of case studies and help to identify practical, integrated solutions to water planning and management problems.



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



IWC Graduates receive a co-badged degree from four leading Australian universities, ranked amongst the top 1% of the best universities in the world for teaching and research. (QS Global Ranking)

Teaching staff

Course Coordinator: [Dr Steven Pratt](#) (The University of Queensland)

Lead Lecturer: [Associate Prof Poh-Ling Tan](#) (Griffith University)

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) projects

PBL projects and field trips will run through the semester, comprising roughly 50% of the total contact time and assessment weight. These enable students to develop skills that complement the content delivered in the four co-requisite courses: WATR7000, WATR7001, WATR7002, WATR7003. Please see other co-requisite course profiles to cross-reference.

The PBL stream for the Foundation semester comprises an individual project and a group project conducted in multidisciplinary teams (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 will be spent exploring the case study material with respect to the topic content of the Water governance and policy course. Students will be provided with an introduction to the case study catchments from the governance and policy perspective. They will examine governance initiatives in the different catchments, including relevant policy and legislative documents. Students will be asked to critically evaluate governance arrangements in the case study catchments based on good governance principles. Students will 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. Students will consider the policy implications of different management actions, and will also look at governance and policy issues as they sit within the broader 'sustainability and development' discourse.

Field trips

Students 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 students undertake during the Foundation semester, please refer back to "Field trips" on page 4 of this syllabus or visit [IWC website](#).



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