INSTRUCTOR:
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Emeritus Professor of Economics
Professor of Applied Economics
Oregon State University
E-Mail: joe.kerkvliet@oregonstate.edu
Phone: 541-737-5354
Office Hours: After class, MW from 4:00-5:00pm, and by appointment
Teaching assistant: None
Teaching assistant office hours: None

PREREQUISITES: NONE

COURSE CONTENT Goals and Objectives
In this course we will explore the increasingly popular phenomenon of conservation on private land. This exploration includes the explosive growth of land trusts and the use of conservation easements to restrict the use of private land and to promote ecological and social goals. We will look at the reasons behind the growth, the major tools used for private land conservation, how land trusts select land for conservation efforts, land stewardship, and some of the major trade-offs faced by land trusts. We will also look at some of the issues in private land conservation that have emerged in the popular press and the academic literatures. Students in this course will also have the opportunity to speak with practitioners of private land conservation and to obtain on-the-ground experience during a field visit to several land trust properties near Corvallis.

In addition, we will explore tools increasing used by federal, state, and local governments and private land owners to align private land use with biodiversity conservation. Authorized by the Endangered Species Act, these tools are Habitat Conservation Plans, Safe Harbor Agreements, and Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances.

MEASURABLE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
By the end of AEC 453/553, students will demonstrate their ability to:

- Describe what land trusts do and explain the reasons behind their rapid growth in the last four decades.
- Describe the major tools used by land trusts for land protection and restoration and their relative advantages and disadvantages.
- Explain the incentives for land owners to place conservation easements on their land.
- Explain the incentives of supporters of land trusts.
- Be familiar with the welfare-economic rationale for private land conservation.
- Describe some of the methods used by land trusts to decide what land to protect and how.
- Describe and evaluate the major trade-offs faced by land trusts in their use of land conservation tools, including fee-simple ownership versus conservation easements and protection at the intensive versus extensive margin.
- Describe and evaluate the components of conservation easements.
• Understand how stewardship and legal defense of conservation easements enter the decision making processes of land trusts.
• Describe the origins, characteristics, and purposes of Habitat Conservation Plans, Safe Harbor Agreements, and Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances, including their place within the Endangered Species Act and their current use.

In addition, students registered for AEC 553, students will demonstrate their ability to:
• Explain the welfare-economic rationale for private land conservation.
• Utilize available information to synthesize and describe the strategies, opportunities and challenges of one Oregon land trust or the Oregon-based actions of a regional or national land trust.

EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

AEC 453
For students registered for AEC 453, evaluation of student learning has three components: in-class participation, completion of assignments, and a final examination. The material you are responsible for is contained largely in the readings, including the textbook and the assigned readings. The lecture notes contain a broad outline of most of the material in the texts and assigned readings, as well as providing some additional discussion of empirical work. You are also responsible for the information provided by in-class visitors and the field trip.

Assignments: On Canvas, I will post assignments that pose problems for you to solve and issues to discuss. Along with the assignment, I will post a due date and time. The assignments relate to class material and you all may work cooperatively in developing answers. I invite you to work with others on completing these assignments. However, I expect each student to deliver an individual answer. Late assignments will receive a maximum of 75 percent of the assignment value.

Exam: There will be one final examination. The examination will be a mixture of choice/response, short essay, and analytical questions. I take questions from the textbooks, assignments, readings, and the lectures. Following OSU’s Academic Regulations, the final examination will be given at the time assigned for this class, as listed in the Schedule of Classes. Students must take the final examination and the result must be part of the final grade determination.

Class participation: I expect and require your in-class participation, including participation in active learning activities, class discussions, and attendance. At three random times during the term I will take attendance and your presence will be part of your in-class participation evaluation. I also ask that you submit a self-evaluation of your participation and engagement with the class material. The self-evaluation form will be available on Canvass. Due dates for self-evaluations are April 15th, May 6th, and May 27th.

AEC 553
For students registered for AEC 553, evaluation of student learning has the three components listed for AEC 453 and an additional required report. The report will be a detailed description of an Oregon land trust or the Oregon-based actions of a regional or national land trust. The report will cover at least following:
  o The trust’s strategy and major foci;
  o Major funding sources;
  o Featured land conservation project;
- Use of conservation tools;
- Interview with a trust manager (executive director, conservation director, etc.) on the trust’s operations, opportunities, and challenges;
- Interview with a land trust board member or regular member on trust’s operations, opportunities, and challenges.

**Grading policies:**

**AEC 453**

Your final grade will be determined by the percentage of total points you receive on in-class participation, assignments, and the final examination. The maximum points earned by one or more of your class peers determine total possible points. In addition, I reserve the privilege of subjectively assigning up to 5 percentage points to account for improvement, inventiveness, and other factors. I may or may not exercise this privilege.

Grades will be assigned on the following basis.

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Graded materials will have the following weights on your final grade:

- Final examination: 25%
- Assignments: 50%
- In-class participation: 25%

**AEC 553**

Your final grade will be determined by the percentage of total points you receive on in-class participation, assignments, the final examination, and the required report. The maximum points earned by one or more of your class peers determine total possible points. In addition, I reserve the privilege of subjectively assigning up to 5 percentage points to account for improvement, inventiveness, and other factors. I may or may not exercise this privilege.

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Graded materials will have the following weights on your final grade:

- Final examination: 25%
- Assignments: 25%
- In-class participation: 25%
- Required report: 25%
STATEMENT REGARDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). Students with accommodations approved through SSD are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through SSD should contact SSD immediately at 541-737-4098.

LINK TO STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT CONDUCT
http://studentlife.oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/offenses-0
Students are expected to be honest and ethical in their academic work. Intentional acts of academic dishonesty such as cheating or plagiarism may be penalized by imposing an “F” grade for the relevant component of grading.

Plagiarism You are expected to submit your own work in all your assignments and other communications, and to clearly give credit to the work of others when you use it. Academic dishonesty will result in a grade of “F.”

COURSE EVALUATION
We encourage you to engage in the course evaluation process each term – online, of course. The evaluation form will be available toward the end of each term, and you will be sent instructions by Ecampus. You will login to “Student Online Services” to respond to the online questionnaire. The results on the form are anonymous and are not tabulated until after grades are posted. I take your evaluation of my class very seriously and encourage you to complete a course evaluation.

COURSE OUTLINE (subject to adjustment)

Lecture 1, Weeks 1-3.
Topic(s)
The rising importance of voluntary methods of land use control and why.
Land trusts—what are they, what do they replace?
Major tools used by land trusts
Critiques of conservation easements.

Required Readings
**Lecture 2, Weeks 3-5**
Economic rationale for conservation of private land.
The business of land trusts—landowner motivations, membership, obtaining, preserving, monitoring, and defending conservation easements.

Kerkvliet, Simple economic rationale for subsidizing protected land.
Brewer. Chapter 6 (Stewardship), Chapter 8 (Defending Conservation Easements).

**Lecture 3, Week 6-7.**
**Topic(s)**
**Wednesday, May 6, Guest Lecture by Dan Bell, Willamette Basin Conservation Director.**
**Monday May 11, 2015 Guest Lecture by Bill Thompson, Oregon Land Stewardship, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.**
**Wednesday, May 13, 2015 Class cancelled for Fieldtrip.**
**Friday, May 15, 2015 Field trip to Greenbelt Land Trust properties near Corvallis 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.**

**Lecture 4, Week 8**
**Topic(s)**
Choosing the land to protect
Assessing the effectiveness of land trusts.

**Required readings**
Greenbelt Land Trust. no date. Tier and criteria for land conservation.
Brewer, Chapter 5 (Choosing the Land to Save)
Brewer, Chapter 10 (The Nature Conservancy)
Brewer, Chapter 11 (The Land Trust Alliance)
Brewer, Chapter 12 (Farmland Protection)
Brewer, Chapter 13 (Trails and Greenways)
Brewer, Chapter 14 (A Diversity of Local Land Trusts)
Lecture 5, Weeks 9-10
Topic(s) Habitat Conservation Plans, Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances, and Safe Harbor Agreements.

Required Readings

Final Examination: TBA

LEARNING RESOURCES
See the resources listed in the course outline.