Course Description & Objectives

This course takes seriously the notion that the management, restoration, and/or protection of forest resources requires knowledge of both ecological as well as social processes: far too often managers, policymakers, and citizens have only limited knowledge of one realm and perhaps none of the other. Hence, Forest Ecology and Policy seeks to overcome this dilemma by utilizing a case study approach integrating current understanding of forest policy and ecology. Because of its cross-disciplinary content, this course will require each of us to pay attention to types of information and knowledge with which we might be uncomfortable: scientists will have to consider the relevance of the methods of behavioral scientists, philosophers, and policy analysts; social scientists will be required to contemplate the ways of biologists, soil scientists, and biogeographers. Thus, keeping an open, engaged, and diligent mind is necessary for success in, and enjoyment of this course!

Specifically, this course will utilize both class and field instruction to develop the ecological and biogeographical knowledge necessary to assess current research on forest ecosystem health. Using the same venues, we will also explore the content and context of contemporary public and private policies informing forest management. Given our ideal location for such a program of study, we will focus primarily on the ecology and policies of Oregon forest ecosystems, highlighted by a two week-long field trip prior to the start of school. We will stress a wide range of research in forest ecology and policy culminating in a practicum, in which each student works with a professional in the field of forest ecology and policy for a month.

Course Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course, students will:

1) Understand and integrate the basic principles of forest ecology and policy, especially as they relate to the PNW

2) Read and interpret the forest landscape to better understand human and natural legacies

3) Obtain, critically evaluate, and communicate both scientific and policy information

4) Use knowledge and skills from the course in their role as consultants with professional foresters and policymakers in a practicum setting

Texts Required

Required - purchase PRIOR to field trip and bring along with you on the field trip.


Required Readings for Field Trip and Class

Please link to Resources under Course Tools to access additional readings.
Course Requirements

Course Website
This WISE site has been created for the course. Lecture slides, supplemental readings, relevant links, course announcements, and other materials will be uploaded to this website throughout the semester.

Exam (250 points)
There will be two exams. The first exam will cover the field trip and will be administered on August 25th. The second exam will cover course materials post field trip and will be administered in late September (125 points each).

Practicum (100 points)
Each student will participate in a month long practicum in October. The practicum allows students to work closely with state agency personnel and private foresters on topics such as forest pathogens, use of GIS in wildland fire, forest policy development and analysis, and forestry planning. The student practicum will be evaluated based on a paper written by the student (75 points) and a written evaluation by the practicum supervisor (25 points).

Field Trip (30 points)
Prior to the start of the semester the class will take a two week field trip through Oregon to view the wide variety of forest types and to learn about their ecology and related policy issues. Students may earn up to 30 points for demonstrating appropriate enthusiasm, citizenship, and engagement with the readings, lectures, and tour leaders while on the trip.

Discussion papers (20 points)
Students will prepare two discussion papers based on guest lectures and readings. (10 points each)

Attendance
Attendance is expected and viewed as a minimal requirement for satisfactorily completing this course. Students who are absent more than twice during the semester without a valid excuse (legitimate medical condition or mandatory university activity) will be penalized 10% from their total grade, and another 10% for each additional two absences. We have final discretion on what is considered a legitimate absence.

Grading Policy
We do not accept assignments, papers, or exams beyond the established due date without PRIOR notice or a proof of a valid excuse (for example: severe illness, death in the family).

Any student eligible for and desiring academic accommodation due to a disability should provide documentation to Disability and Learning Services located in the Bishop Wellness Center within the first two weeks of the semester.

For field trip and regular semester schedule, please see WISE