Course Syllabus

Conservation Techniques

Course number: 11:216:470

Online

Professor: Dr. Marci Meixler (meixler@aesop.rutgers.edu)

Description

Many of you want to know how the knowledge you learn in Ecology or Environmental Science classes can be used in the application of conservation and management. This course is an introduction to the diverse ways information is used for regulations, decisions, and conservation actions. Online lecture material will present the principles and review the methods used for each approach. Case studies will illustrate how conservation actions were developed and applied. Discussions will evaluate the merits and limitations for each approach in theory and practice.

Learning goals:

• To understand the ways that information is used for decision-making and conservation actions
• To gain knowledge of tools used in the practice of conservation
• To practice critical thinking regarding the proper use of conservation techniques

Course Format

This course will use web-based education consisting of readings, critical scientific papers, online threaded discussions, a conservation paper and a final exam.

You will begin each topic area by reading an overview which, in addition to providing an introduction to the content, will also contain example applications, benefits and drawbacks of each technique and in most cases, a case-study detailing application. The overviews have references to other optional readings many of which are posted in the doc sharing section of the website. You may use these to learn more about the topic and as references for your answers in the discussion forums. In addition, I posted most images in the doc sharing section (in images.zip) so you can better view an image that might appear blurry or hard to read in the readings.

Discussion forums provide you with an opportunity to explore your ideas on each topic with the instructor and the other students. You will be expected to go deeper into the topic than the material covered in the overview using resources you find yourself. You will also be expected to post your answer to the forum and review and comment on the postings of other students. Thus, there will be lots of communication between students throughout the class.
Grading System
This course utilizes student-directed learning as the primary means of instruction and evaluation. Consequently, grading is based largely on your participation and performance in online discussions. The class grading scheme is outlined and described in detail below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in online discussions</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field visit conservation paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review questions/answers</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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1. Online discussion- You will have until midnight EST the Sunday after the discussion topic opens to post to a discussion forum. You will be expected to post your initial response to the weekly discussion question and to respond to the posts of other students. Grading will follow this formula:
   \[\text{Time} + \text{frequency} + \text{quality}\]
   
   \[
   \frac{\text{#minutes spent researching & writing (0-3 pts)}}{3} + \frac{\# \text{ responses (0-3 pts)}}{3} + \frac{\text{quality (0-4 pts)}}{4}\]

2. Field visit conservation paper-1 page, 12 pt font, 1 inch margin, double-spaced paper on the types of conservation currently underway and your thoughts on future management of a conservation site near your home. Your final paper will be turned in to the dropbox by midnight the day before class ends. Late papers will be docked 10 pts per day.

3. Submit 1 question and answer per topic to the dropbox by the deadline (see class schedule below for due date). You should have 14 total questions/answers (science and conservation through habitat assessment). Any format is fine: multiple choice, T/F, matching, short answer, etc.

4. Final exam-The final exam comprises 20% of the overall grade. The exam is open notes, open internet but is limited to 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Readings
There is no required textbook for this class. All information is provided in the online readings and associated papers. References are provided at the end of each reading for optional additional material on each subject. These references may be helpful in researching your responses to the discussion questions.

Policy for excuses
To qualify for special consideration, all excuses must be submitted by email with supporting documentation (i.e. medical note, army drill notice, etc). Excuses submitted ‘before’ the event are given more weight. Whether or not special consideration is given is entirely at the discretion of the instructor. **Excuses without supporting documentation will not be granted. Do not email asking for special consideration without including supporting documentation.**

Things that do not qualify: vacation, work travel, long hours at work, etc.
How to do well in this class
Each weekday over the next three and a half weeks a new topic (unit) will be introduced. You will be expected to review the reading (and any associated papers) and respond to the discussion question for each unit.

The due date for responding to the discussion question is midnight EST the Sunday following the week in which the discussion was opened (see due dates in Class Schedule below). That way you can use the weekend to catch up if needed. At midnight on Sunday the discussions for that week will be closed and no further postings will be allowed (no exceptions). The next week a new set of discussions will open, one each weekday. This format is designed so that you have time to post on a reasonable timeline (given other things going on in your life) but that there is not too much of a backlog of open discussions that still need your attention. This also means that some discussion topics will be open longer than others. Thus, I expect that these topics will be explored in more depth.

One note: this is a 16 week class shrunk down into just three and a half weeks. It will be intense. On average you would normally spend 3 hours/week in class plus additional time outside class for assignments. Since each unit here is the equivalent of a single week of normal class, be prepared to spend several hours researching and writing about each unit’s topic.

To do well in this class you should:
- Review all readings on the day they are assigned
- Post a thoughtful response to the discussion question (within 48 hours of opening)
- Post throughout the week asking questions, moving the discussion along, and remembering to go back to earlier discussions to see if you can add any additional insight as the discussion morphs and to see if anyone has responded to your postings
- Respond to other student’s postings with thoughtful responses and questions that move the discussion forward
- Research your discussion topic using additional resources beyond those provided in the class; cite your sources using MLA (or other) format
- Use your own words. Remember anything copied verbatim needs to be in quotes and cited appropriately
- Meet all deadlines (post to the discussion forums within 48 hours of opening and respond continually before the discussions end at midnight EST on Sunday)
- Turn in your paper on time; make sure it is convincing and well researched
- Review the readings once more before the final exam and make sure you understand the basic concept of each unit
## Class schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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| 1    | Science and Conservation  
Online reading  
Threaded discussion  
Respond to icebreaker |
| 2    | Standards and Criteria  
Online reading  
Threaded discussion |
| 3    | Rewilding  
Online reading  
Donlan paper and rebuttal to Donlan paper  
Threaded discussion  
Submit final project idea (to final paper idea submission dropbox) |
| 4    | Endangered Species Part 1  
Online reading  
Threaded discussion |
| 5    | Endangered Species Part 2  
Online reading  
Endangered species paper  
Threaded discussion |
| 6    | Sustainability  
Online reading  
Threaded discussion |
| 7    | Ecosystem-Based Management  
Online reading  
Threaded discussion |
| 8    | Biological Criteria and Indexing  
Online reading  
Threaded discussion |
| 9    | Ecosystem Services  
Online reading  
McCauley paper  
Threaded discussion |
| 10   | Restoration |
Online reading
Threaded discussion

11 Renaturing
Online reading
Kareiva paper
Threaded discussion

12 National Environmental Policy Act
Online reading
Threaded discussion

13 Adaptive Management
Online reading
Threaded discussion

14 Habitat Assessment
Online reading
Threaded discussion

15 Conservation and You
No reading
Threaded discussion

16 REVIEW QUESTIONS/ANSWERS SUBMITTED

17 FIELD VISIT PAPER SUBMITTED

18 FINAL EXAM