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University of Montana Course Syllabi, 2021-2025

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Spring 2-1-2023

### **NRSM 494.01: Ecosystem Science and Restoration Seminar**

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**Syllabus**  
**NRSM 494 Ecosystem Science and Restoration Seminar**  
**Spring 2023: Mondays and some Tuesdays, Room Clapp 452**

**Online (as needed):**

<https://umontana.zoom.us/j/97948418512?pwd=NTFKd29iMWJYWIVM MnM0TIZMTHNtZz09>

**Instructor information:**

- Instructor: Ben Colman
- Email: [ben.colman@umontana.edu](mailto:ben.colman@umontana.edu)
- Phone: (406) 243-6315
- Office Hours: please schedule through <https://ben-colman.youcanbook.me/>

**Overview:**

This class is the third and final installment of the Ecosystem Science and Restoration Capstone Experience. Students started in the capstone class and continued with either the practicum, an internship, or a senior thesis. In this seminar, we will discuss ways to improve the efficacy of our writing, discuss the peer review process, use peer review to improve upon the research papers that you began the previous semester, finalize those papers, and create presentations to communicate the findings of your work.

**Outcomes:**

1. Given a paper or presentation, students will be able to provide a summary of its strengths and weaknesses and offer constructive suggestions for its improvement.
2. Students will be able to describe the motivation, methods, and results from their independent or group projects, and discuss the importance and implications of those findings in both written and oral formats.

**Class format:**

Class will be conducted largely through irregularly scheduled class periods. Assignments must be submitted through Moodle, which will also be used to distribute feedback, and document any modifications.

**Assignments:**

This class has several assignments, including assigned readings, peer reviews of one another's papers, revisions of your own papers (two drafts), and an UMCUR presentation. Assignments will be due before class starts. Detailed descriptions of expectations and rubrics for grading these assignments will be posted on Moodle for this course.

## Course guidelines and policies:

### Grading:

Rubrics for each assignment will be posted along with the descriptions of those assignments on Moodle. The overall distribution of points for different assignments is summarized in the table below.

Assignment	Total Points	Description
Peer reviews	30	15 points for each of two peer reviews
Revisions	30	15 points for each of two revisions
Presentation	30	5 points for UMCUR abstract 15 points for content 10 points for delivery
Participation	10	5 points for attendance, 5 points for engagement

*This course is offered for a traditional letter grade. Students cannot change to credit/no credit at any time during the semester.*

Table of group numbers (I assigned), team names (I took creative license), group members, days of the week for practice talks (see schedule below), and the group numbers for the two papers that members will peer review.

Group	Team	Members	Talk Practice days	Peer review paper A	Peer review paper B
1	Dam willows	Dylan, Hannah	Monday	3	4
2	Thirsty shady trees	Jake	Monday	3	4
3	Milltown Mini-fauna	Kenzie	Tuesday	1	2
4	Thirsty hillslope trees	Fin	Tuesday	1	2
5	Missoula plankton	Meredith	Tuesday	1	2
6	Firewise	Fred, Rowan, Kendal	Tuesday	7	8
7	Plants and soils vs. pesticides	Lauren	Monday	5	6
8	Active learning lesson plans	Zane	Monday	5	6

### Schedule and attendance policy:

We will meet on the days and times outlined in the schedule table below. Because of the nature of this class, attendance is mandatory and points will be deducted for unexcused absences. I may excuse brief and occasional absences for reasons of illness, injury, family emergency, religious observance, or participation in a University-sponsored activity. (University-sponsored activities include for example, field trips, ASUM service, music or drama performances, and intercollegiate athletics.) I will also excuse

absences for reasons of military service or mandatory public service. Requests for excused absences require an email before class with “NRSM 494 absence request” in the email subject, and a description of why you will be absent.

If you can't make class in person, I'm happy to zoom you in, just let me know in advance and use the zoom address at the top of this assignment/on moodle.

Date	Time	Attendees	Homework (due by start of class)	In class
January 17	6 to 8	All	None!	Edit syllabus and catch-up
January 23	4 to 5	All	Read Nicholas and Gordon, 2011	Discuss peer review (1 hour)
January 30	No class		No class	
February 6	No class		1) Read Gopen and Swan, 1990 2) Write Draft UMCUR Abstract,	Discuss reader expectations (through moodle forum by 2/10)
Feb 13 to Feb 27	No class		<b>Papers for groups 1 to 4 due February 27</b>	<b>No class</b>
March 6	4 to 6	All	Peer reviews 1 to 4	Discuss papers 1 to 4
March 13	No class		<b>Papers for groups 5 to 8 are due 4/13, write peer reviews before spring break!</b>	<b>No class</b>
March 20	No class		<b>None, SPRING BREAK! Have fun in Moab!</b>	
March 27	4 to 6	All	Peer reviews 5 to 8	Discuss papers 5 to 8
April 3	<b>No class, but work on talks</b>			
April 10	4 to 6	Monday groups	Draft talks (Group 1,2,7,8)	Talk run-throughs
April 11	4:30 to 6:30	Tuesday groups	Draft talks (Groups 3-6)	Talk run-throughs
April 17	4 to 6	Monday groups	Edited talks all Groups	Talk run-throughs
April 18	4:30 to 6:30	Tuesday groups	Edited talks all Groups	Talk run-throughs
April 14	Final abstract edits uploaded to ScholarWorks			
April 21	UMCUR!!!			
April 25	<b>No class</b>			
May 2			Final paper due	Wrap up
May 12	<b>Capstone celebration, 4:30 to 6 pm, 10 Spoons</b>			

### Academic Honesty:

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students should read and be familiar with the policies contained in the [Student Conduct Code](http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php) ([http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student\\_conduct.php](http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php)).

### Adjustments for Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting me; know that I required modifications when I was in college, and I will be understanding and work with you. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and the Office for Disability Equity (ODE). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance and you have not already registered with ODE, please contact them by:

Option 1: Submit [the inquiry form](#)

Option 2: Email them at [ode@umontana.edu](mailto:ode@umontana.edu)

Option 3: Call them at (406) 243-2243

### Communication:

All course communications outside of class will be sent to students' University of Montana email accounts. If you would like extra credit, practice your communication skills and email me a personal anecdote involving a rodent. Make sure to put "rodent story" in the subject of the email. Do not mention this within class or everybody else will get a point but you. It is your responsibility to regularly check your University account. In general, my policy is to respond to email within 24 hours (except on weekends).

### Illness policy:

Let's hope we all stay healthy and well this semester despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the reemergence of cold, flu, strep, and other illnesses. If you do encounter health issues this semester and are not sure what it is, please play it safe and join us remotely using the zoom link above until your symptoms abate and it is safe for you to rejoin us.

For class, do not attend in person if you have had a close contact with anyone with COVID-19, or if you come down with symptoms which may include but are not limited to:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

All students and the instructor will follow all UM safety protocols.

Please contact the Office for Disability Equity for an accommodation for any safety protocol modification you may need. If students decide not to follow all safety protocols consistently, they will be asked to leave the classroom and will be referred to the Dean's office for further review and action.

These precautions are for your safety, my safety, and the safety of the community and will help to minimize any risk of transmission. Secondary contacts of asymptomatic people will likely occur for all of us whether through family, work, socializing, or school. Working to reduce transmission increases the probability that we all stay healthy, that we'll be able to maintain all planned face-to-face activities, and the better the class will be for all. That said, we will be prepared to have the activities completed remotely if needed, so if you are feeling sick or have been exposed, please follow UM Policy.

If you feel uncomfortable with attending class in person for any reason or have had a close contact, need to quarantine, or need to isolate, please reach out and let us know, and join us through zoom at the link above and in the Moodle. Again, this is an ongoing but novel and ever-changing landscape so mutual respect, honest and early communication, and flexibility is needed for us to have a successful semester.