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Spring 1-2016

SCN 105N.02: Montana Ecosystems

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Instructor: Greg Peters

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Required Text:

Laboratory activities and course reading are provided in the *Montana Ecosystems* coursepack, available only through the Missoula College bookstore or the online Moodle supplement.

Course Description:

Montana Ecosystems explores the living systems of Montana with a focus on dominant habitat types. We will explore the geologic and climatological settings that influence the distribution of Montana’s remarkable diversity of ecosystems and species. We will examine the dominant vegetation patterns across Montana and how these patterns influence distribution of common species of animals. We will connect these systems to discussions of energy dynamics in living systems. The course will conclude by examining the human influence on natural systems.

Course Policies:

- Your lowest exam score will be dropped from your final grade; therefore, there will be NO make-up exams offered. The final exam is a comprehensive exam offered only on its scheduled date during finals week. Students will be expected to work alone and without outside resources.
- Lab activities can only be completed for full credit during class time, as scheduled.
- Students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations. Please contact me and provide a letter from your DSS coordinator so that accommodations can be made.
- After the 45th day of the semester, drops, adds, or changes of grade options are only approved through petition accompanied by documentation of extreme circumstances.

Assessment:	points	grade
1) Exams (highest 4 of 5)	400	90-100% = A- to A
2) Classroom labs (9 @ 10 pts ea.)	90	80-90% = B- to B+
3) Your Choice Assignment	20	70-80% = C- to C+
4) Lab reports (3 @ 30 pts ea.)	90	60-70% = D- to D+
TOTAL:	600	< 60% = F

Recommendations:

The most important things you can commit to for a successful experience in this course are regular attendance and timely submission of quality work. Keep up with available readings in the coursepack to get the most out of classroom meetings. The Moodle supplement for this course includes portions of class presentations, records of your grades, and resources to submit written work online.

Choice Assignments:

You will be asked to turn in one assignment outside of regular lab activities and lab reports. The due date is listed in the class schedule. This assignment is meant to inspire you to explore a feature of Montana Ecosystems of your choosing and to help our class build a body of knowledge that we can all use. Detailed instructions will be made available in class.

Laboratory:

The lab portion of this class is integrated into the course meetings. Be sure to check the course schedule for the timing of lab activities and assignment due dates. Lab meetings include:

- **Field labs:** Our field trips are opportunities to explore wild habitats and practice the process of scientific investigation in the field. Labs meet in the scheduled classroom, even on field trip days. Field trips cannot be made up without documentation of extreme circumstances.
- **In class lab activities:** Some lab classes will be in the classroom, with investigation of the dominant flora, fauna, and habitats of Montana. These activities are outlined in your coursepack.

Class Schedule

lab group A or B: _____

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Chapter. Topic:</u>	<u>Lab:</u>	<u>Turn in:</u>
Unit One: Montana's Landscape and Climate			
1/25	1. Earth's ecosystems & Course Introduction	--	
1/27	2a. Montana physiography	1. MT Places	
2/1	2b. Montana mountains & landscapes	2. Map a	
2/3	2c. Montana climate	3. Trivia	
2/8	3. Montana ecosystems overview	4. Map b	
2/10	EXAM 1		
Unit Two: Montana's Mountain Ecosystems			
2/15	<i>No class: Presidents' Day</i>		
2/17	4. Classification of Life & 5. Alpine habitats		
2/22	6a. Trees of Montana	5. Conifers	
2/24	6b. Montana forests: forest types	6. Flowers	
2/29	6c. Montana forests animals	7. Mammals	
3/2	6d. Forest dynamics	8. Birds	
3/7	EXAM 2		
Unit Three: Montana's Valley Ecosystems			
3/9	7a. Grasslands	9. Field trip intro	
3/14	7b. Shrublands & 8a. Wetlands		Your Choice
3/16	Floodplain Forests	Field Lab 1A	
3/21	8b. Wetlands continued and 9. Deserts		
3/23	Floodplain Forests	Field Lab 1B	
3/28	EXAM 3		Lab Report 1
3/30	Grasslands	Field Lab 2A	
Unit Four: Montana's Ecosystem Dynamics			
4/11	10. Energy transformations & 11a. Biodiversity		
4/13	Grasslands	Field Lab 2B	
4/18	11b. Species interactions & 12a. Human impacts		Lab Report 2
4/20	Montane forests	Field Lab 3A	
4/25	12b. Human Habitats		
4/27	Montane Forests	Field Lab 3B	
5/2	12c. Montana Wildlands & Course wrap-up		Lab Report 3
5/4	EXAM 4		
5/9	FINAL EXAM: Monday, 10:10-12:10, same room		