

Wildland Resources 5650
Urban Forestry
Spring 2009

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PRINT THIS PAGE NOW! If it is online and something bad happens to your computer, you will not be able to reach us, and we will not be able to help you.

Office hours: Because this is an online course we assume that most of you who need to contact an instructor will do it via e-mail or phone. We will try to answer any phone or e-mail questions within one working day. If you need to visit with one of the instructors in person, please make an appointment via e-mail or phone.

Course Objectives: Urban Forestry is a broad and diverse field that borrows from many disciplines. This course will expose you to those disciplines that an urban forester needs in his or her toolbox. We cannot ground you in all disciplines; you will become familiar with many areas. You will leave the course with resources for further study in areas you encounter along your career path.

Textbook:

No textbook is required for this course. All of the readings are online. Additional information on the subjects covered in the course is available in the References/Recommend Links located at the bottom of each content page.

Course Organization: This is an online course. Like a conventional face to face course, we too have a classroom. Attendance at that classroom facilitates passing this course. Our classroom, however, is an electronic discussion room. Each week, you will read about a topic. We post several questions for you to discuss with us and your classmates. In this discussion, you will learn from each other. Participation is essential for you to come away with anything in this

course. It is mandatory, because we are relying on you to help teach others. You are part of a learning community. Each topic has activities for you to do, ranging from literature searches to field surveys. You will also discuss your findings with your colleagues. We have no exams in this course, just short quizzes that help to keep you current.

This course is not designed for an individual student to sit in front of his or her computer and become an urban forester. An urban forester must be familiar with elements of many disciplines. Each of you brings expertise to the course that no one else has. We use the discussion format to capture that contribution. **YOU CANNOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST WEEK OF THE SEMESTER TO DO THIS COURSE!** Everyone else will have already discussed your topics. What would you get out of that? We tackle one topic each week and move through the subjects .

Courses taught in a traditional classroom setting provide opportunities for students and teachers to see each other, communicate desires and problems, and to develop relationships. The online environment used for this course may pose both challenges and opportunities for establishing relationships and judging the intent of communications from others. When we converse in person, we use visual cues such as facial expressions and body language, in addition to verbal communications, to establish the meaning of the communication. Online communications are, for the most part, limited to written communication, which if developed with care can convey all of the information usually conveyed through visual cues. However, be aware that miscommunication can occur in online postings due to the lack of visual feedback, so be careful to convey your intent with your own postings. And be aware that others may also experience difficulty communicating, so if you feel that someone else is being particularly harsh or just rubs you the wrong way, do not assume that they intended to offend you, rather attempt to clarify their comments to alleviate any misunderstandings. In other words, don't over react!

A word of caution. **EVERYONE** sees what is posted to the discussion forums; if you want to say something privately, use the **MAIL** tool! If you select the "reply privately" option, the system will automatically put you into the mail system for your reply.

Grading: One third of your grade is based on discussion participation. Two thirds of your grade is based on homework and activities. You will succeed in this class if you stay current in the discussions and promptly turn in assignments. You will not succeed if you procrastinate.

Discussion postings are more effective learning tools if they include **indications of social, cognitive and teaching presence**. **Social presence** is demonstrated by introducing personal comments into the discussion. Personal experience relevant to the topic, pictures that illustrate a point or mentioning events in your personal life as appropriate let the rest of the class know a real person is at the other end of the computer screen. **Cognitive presence** is demonstrated by introducing facts, ideas and/or theories into the discussion. This is more valuable (and results in a higher grade) when the facts and ideas come from sources outside the class readings. Don't forget to cite your sources. **Teaching presence** is demonstrated by such actions as: steering the discussion in useful directions, making sure students understand the topic with additional questions, detecting and dispelling misconceptions, bringing in additional information as needed

and helping resolve those vexing technical problems that always creep in. **Only discussion postings that contain some indication of these types of presence will receive points towards your grade!** 3 points for social presence, 4 points each for cognitive and teaching presence. Maximum possible is ten points.

Class Schedule: Please view the calendar for an in-depth schedule outline (calendar link in left menu). The last week is for final exams that we don't have. You have until the last day of final exams to submit all assignments. We do grades by the following Monday. You can access course materials and participate in the course during holidays and weekends, but be aware that others may be taking a break.

Spring Semester 2009	
5 January	Classes begin
19 January	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
16 February	President's Day
9-13 March	Spring Break!
24 April	Classes end
27 April - 1 May	Final Exams (All assignments due!)
1-2 May	Graduation

At all times, however, keep in mind that we are here to learn, and learning is most effective if it is enjoyable. We are all here because of an interest in urban forestry; our challenge is to learn as much as we can about urban forestry, not just from this web site and the instructors, but from each other. We hope you will be comfortable using the discussion forum to exchange ideas and ask questions of the instructors and each other. If you feel you are a novice and don't have ideas or comments worth sharing, please reconsider. All comments and thoughts are welcome. If you want to talk about topics not directly related to the current topic, please use one of the private chat rooms or email others directly. We have had problems in the past with extensive off-topic chatting that can be distracting to the learning process. It is sort of like whispering in class while others are trying to pay attention.

We all have computer crashes, internet problems, personal life crisis, work, family life, etc. If you stay current and some crisis distracts you, we can work with you. Let one of the instructors know so we can help you. Perform the browser check on the main class page to make sure Blackboard likes your setup.

Tips for [good online study skills can be found here](#). If you have questions, challenges, or other issues that affect your performance, please let us know. Our job is to help you succeed in this course!