Course Syllabus

Conservation Techniques

Course number: 11:216:315

Online

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Description

This course teaches you how the knowledge you learn in Ecology, Evolution or Environmental Science classes can be used in the application of conservation and management. It is an introduction to the diverse ways information is used for regulations, decisions, and conservation actions. The material in this course will present the principles and review the methods used for each approach. Case studies will illustrate how conservation actions have been developed and applied.

Learning goals

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

Course Format

This course will utilize textbook readings, discussion activities, on-line quizzes, a conservation project, and a final exam.

You will explore a topic area each week by reading the textbook chapter which, in addition to providing detail on the content, will also contain example applications, benefits and drawbacks of each technique and a case-study detailing its application. The chapters have references to other optional readings.

Grading System

Online quiz for each chapter (13 – 2.5% each)	32.5%
Online discussions (13 - 2.5% each)	32.5%
Conservation-in-action project	15%
Final exam	20%
Extra credit	Up to 1%

- Online quizzes - you are required to take an online quiz related to the chapter assigned that week to ensure the readings are done and to serve as a template for how the final exam will feel. Quiz questions will be pulled from a pool so each student will be given a unique quiz. You should take notes while reading each chapter so you can better answer the questions. You will have 10 mins for each quiz. You have limited time given the expectation that you already read the chapter and took notes to use in answering the quiz questions. Quizzes will be open until midnight EST on the due date. Quizzes submitted late will be docked points.

- Online discussions - each Monday a new discussion will be opened related to the chapter of the week and will remain open for the remainder of the work week. You will be asked to present a unique example of the conservation technique and discuss with your classmates. Make your initial post to the weekly discussion question plus at least one response to a classmate's top post ***within the first 2 days*** (which means by midnight Tues) of the time the discussion opens and interaction with other students throughout the week. You are not required to post every day but you should be involved in the discussion more than just at the beginning and end of the week. Grading will based on these factors:
  quality timeliness frequency consistency interaction
  See section called "how to do well in this course" for more detail on grading scheme

  The discussion with the lowest score will be dropped.

- Conservation-in-action project - you will participate in a variety of conservation related projects of your choosing. You will need to document your activity with photos, post the photo in the conservation-in-action project discussion and write about how your experience relates to the topics in this course. Intermediate deadlines apply. See conservation-in-action project information in modules on Canvas for more information.

- Final exam-The final exam covers all topics in the textbook. The exam is open notes, open internet but is limited to 1 hour and 30 minutes. Questions will be pulled from a pool so each of you will be given a unique version of the exam.

- Extra credit - optional

Readings

There is an online freely available textbook for this class. It can be found in the modules section of Canvas. It can also be found online at: https://doi.org/10.7282/00000159

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity. You are responsible for understanding the RU Academic Integrity Policy. I will strongly enforce this Policy and pursue all violations. For all examinations and assignments, you will be required to uphold the RU Honor Pledge, which states, "On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination or assignment." For all written assignments, we will screen your work through an automated plagiarism detection service that compares your work against a large database of past work.

AI Statement

The use of generative AI tools or apps for assignments, discussion posts, projects, or exams in this course, including tools like ChatGPT and other AI writing assistants, is prohibited.

How to do well in this course

Each week a new topic will be introduced. You will be expected to read the associated chapter in the textbook, take a quiz, and participate in the discussion. Throughout the course you will participate in a variety of conservation actions of your choosing (e.g. the conservation-in-action project) and will write about your experiences.

To do well in this class you should:

- Do the assigned reading early in the week
- Take the quiz before the deadline
- Participate in the weekly discussion by making your top post and at least one response to a classmate's top post before the deadline, respond on at least two additional days of the week (but not just the last two days of the week), have back and forth interactions throughout the week with at least 6 students, and make sure all posts are high quality and in your own words with thoughtful responses and questions that move the discussion forward
- Meet all deadlines
- Participate in conservation actions throughout the course (post in the conservation-in-action discussion anytime you do an activity)
- Review the material before the final exam and make sure you understand the basic concepts of each chapter; take the final exam before the due date

Class schedule

Note: all due dates are at midnight unless otherwise noted

Week	Topic
Fundamental techniques	
1	***Science and Practice*** Chapter 1 Quiz Discussion Project: research conservation actions you will undertake
2	***Standards and Criteria*** Chapter 2 Quiz Discussion Accrue conservation-in-action project points
3	***National Environmental Policy Act*** Chapter 3 Quiz Discussion Accrue conservation-in-action project points
Biologically-focused techniques	
4	***Rewilding*** Chapter 4 Quiz Discussion Accrue conservation-in-action project points
5	***Endangered Species Protection and Recovery*** Chapter 5 Quiz Discussion Accrue conservation-in-action project points
6	***Biomonitoring***

Chapter 6
Quiz
Discussion
Accrue conservation-in-action project points

Habitat-focused techniques

7 ***Habitat Assessment***
Chapter 7
Quiz
Discussion
Accrue conservation-in-action project points

8 ***Restoration***
Chapter 8
Quiz
Discussion
Accrue conservation-in-action project points

9 ***Spring Break***

10 ***Ecological Engineering***
Chapter 9
Quiz
Discussion
Accrue conservation-in-action project points

Holistic techniques

11 ***Ecosystem Based Management***
Chapter 10
Quiz
Discussion
Accrue conservation-in-action project points

12 ***Adaptive Management***
Chapter 11
Quiz
Discussion
Accrue conservation-in-action project points

13 ***Ecosystem Services***
Chapter 12
Quiz
Discussion
Accrue conservation-in-action project points

14 ***Sustainability***
Chapter 13
Quiz
Discussion
Accrue conservation-in-action project points

Final course activities

15 ***Turn in Conservation-in-action project table***
FINAL EXAM
Extra credit