

# Syllabus

## NRSM 495 ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PRACTICUM

### Schedule TBD

#### Course information:

- Instructor: Ben Colman
- Email: [ben.colman@umontana.edu](mailto:ben.colman@umontana.edu)
- Phone: (406) 243-6315
- Office Hours: by appointment

#### Course Objectives:

Students will:

- Gain real-world experience in the practice of ecosystem science, ecological restoration, and/or the science of restoration ecology
- Implement a restoration, monitoring, and/or research plan as a service learning project for a community partner (*i.e.*, private entity, nonprofit group, management agency or other sponsor)
- Collect, analyze, and describe data collected

Instructor will:

- Provide feedback on project scope and implementation
- Assist in troubleshooting the inevitable pitfalls and problems that arise in project management and implementation
- Assist in analyzing data, determining what story the data reveal
- Work with students to turn the results of their projects into a written document

The scope of work for the practicum will have been developed in collaboration with a potential sponsor during NRSM 344 (*Ecosystem Science and Restoration Capstone*). Final responsibility rests with the student for collaborating with the community partner and for establishing meeting times and locations. Students will only be able to register after faculty approval of the proposal. The practicum can be done in any semester and can continue for more than one semester. After completing all practicum credits, students are expected to enroll in NRSM 494, *Seminar in Ecosystem Science and Restoration*, in which they will revise their practicum report (described below), give a presentation on their findings, and reflect on their practicum experience and findings.

### **Prerequisites for enrollment:**

Enrollment in this course requires senior standing in the Ecosystem Science and Restoration major and formal consent of instructor. Prior to enrollment, students *must* have:

1. Completed: NRSM 265, Elements of Ecological Restoration; and NRSM 344, Ecological Restoration Capstone
2. Completed a faculty and sponsor approved practicum proposal
3. Developed a draft scope of work to be completed during the practicum

### **Course Objectives:**

After completing this course, students should be able to:

1. Work effectively with local professionals, community partners, and organizations
2. Conduct key aspects of ecosystem science and restoration projects, including designing and implementing restoration and/or monitoring projects
3. Communicate effectively with restoration professionals and community partners

### **Requirements:**

All of the following must be completed before credit can be assigned:

1. At least three meetings must be scheduled with the instructor and sponsor to develop the practicum work and to reflect on the practicum experience. It is the student's responsibility to initiate these meetings and to come to the instructor with any concerns or questions during the practicum. These meetings are the minimum: more meetings are welcome and bi-weekly times will be established during which the instructor will be available. The three mandatory meetings will be as follows:
  - a. First (by September 22<sup>nd</sup>), this meeting will serve as a chance to write and finalize the contract (described below)
  - b. Second (by November 9<sup>th</sup>), this meeting will serve as a midway check-in during which the students will provide a status report
  - c. Third (by December 12<sup>th</sup>), this final meeting will serve as an exit interview
2. A practicum contract, to be signed by the students, instructor, and sponsor after the first meeting. This contract must list:
  - a. Description and expectations for specific work to be performed
  - b. Requirements for the final paper (see below)
  - c. A process and rubric for evaluation
3. A final group narrative of activities performed and hours worked based on the scope of work set forth in the contract and the hour logs maintained by the individual students. Note, the practicum requires a minimum of 135 hours of work for 3 credits, with a maximum of 270 hrs for 6 credits, or 45 hours per credit. This report should be a synthetic (summarizing all group members' efforts) and more narrative version of the hour logs kept by individual students
4. A final paper summarizing practicum findings and/or projects. This paper must include a significant amount of literature research to serve as background as well as to place the results of the work in context. Its length and format should be determined by the instructor and sponsor upon the start of the practicum. A first draft of the paper must be

submitted to the instructor and sponsor at least three weeks before the end of classes for review and specification of revisions required

5. A self assessment by students, reflecting on the practicum experience and students self- and group-evaluations of performance
6. A letter from the sponsor evaluating the student's performance. Students should ask the sponsor to send this letter directly to the course instructor

#### **Due dates:**

1. First meeting with instructor and sponsor by September 22
2. Second meeting with instructor and sponsor by November 9<sup>th</sup>
3. Draft papers are due November 21<sup>st</sup>
4. Final papers are due December 4<sup>th</sup>
5. Group narrative and other products for the sponsor are due December 8<sup>th</sup>
6. Third meeting with instructor and sponsor by December 12<sup>th</sup>
7. Self assessments are due no later than December 12<sup>th</sup>
8. Sponsor evaluations letters should be received by the instructor no later than December 20<sup>th</sup>

#### **Evaluation:**

Student performance will be evaluated according to a rubric which will be included in the practicum contract (described above). This rubric will account for the level of initiative exhibited by the students, the quality of work completed during the practicum, including the final paper and any other deliverables for the sponsor. The final grade will be assigned by the instructor in consultation with the sponsor.

#### **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. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. "Reasonable" means the University permits no fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications. [Disability Services for Students \(http://life.umt.edu/dss\)](http://life.umt.edu/dss) will assist in the accommodation process.