

Wildland Fuel Management

Carl Seielstad, Professor of Fire Science & Management

FORS331 – B01; CRN: 33513
Wildland Fuel Management

WA Franke College of Forestry and Conservation
CHCB441, 243.6200, carl.seielstad@umontana.edu

8:00-9:20am Tue-Thu Office Hours: Mon 10-11:30; Wed 9:00-10:30 or by appt.

Social Science 352 Zoom: <https://umontana.zoom.us/my/carl.seielstad>

Spring Semester 2021

Logistics

Location: Social Science 352 (this may change to synchronous online depending on circumstances)

Location: Zoom link: <https://umontana.zoom.us/j/92925770169>

Web Site: <https://moodle.umt.edu>

Course Overview

Broadly, fire management is the process of manipulating fire and fuels to protect people, property, and natural resources, and to restore and maintain ecosystem integrity. Historically, we have prevented or suppressed most wildland fires in favor of using mechanical interventions and planned ignitions (prescribed fires) to meet land management objectives. More recently, unplanned ignitions are also being used to manage fuels and restore landscapes. Integrated fuels management, then, combines the treatments provided by wildfire with prescribed treatments in the form of thinning/harvesting, grazing, and burning. In practice, treatments achieved by wildfire dwarf all other treatments in scope and scale, and thus are an important consideration in fuel management.

In this class, students will consider how fire and fuels are managed. We will start by examining how wildfires are managed in the context of fire policy, land management planning, hazards, values, and probability. Students will work through a decision document step by step to understand opportunities and constraints in fire decision-making. From there, we will examine the fire management organization and command structure and its strategies, tactics, and tools. Students will develop incident action plans for an incident and discuss and defend proposed actions. Finally, we will study the practices of treating fuels using mechanical techniques and prescribed fire.

The class is targeted at students who have gained at least modest exposure to fire science and management through an introductory fire class (e.g., FORS230 or similar) and/or experience working fire in summer jobs. It is intended to provide a current overview of the complexities of decision-making, incident action-planning, and fuels treatments in the United States.

The class will combine lecture, reading, discussion, writing, and group activities.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this class, students should be able to:

- Conceive of wildfire as fuels treatment and discuss the major issues related to treating fuels with wildfire.
- Articulate fire/land management policy, provide an historical context for it, and relate it to current management practices.
- Understand the decision process for managing fires and complete a rational decision document for a wildfire that considers hazards, values, and probability.
- Describe the American fire management organization, command structure, its strategies, tactics, and tools and develop an incident action plan to achieve desired results from a wildfire.
- Understand terminology, measurements and sampling techniques related to fuel treatments.
- Describe common techniques and approaches for fuels management, and develop SMART objectives for managing wildfires and fuels.
- Know the basic principles of fuel reduction.
- Measure fuels in the field, calculate basic fuel metrics from them, and estimate fire behavior from them across a range of environmental conditions.
- Contrast effectiveness of various treatments.
- Develop well-informed opinions on current societal issues involving fire and fuels, including climate change, forest management, restoration, and land use.

Course Organization

The class is organized in three units.

Unit 1. Wildfire as a Fuels Treatment; Wildfire Management (weeks 1 – 6)

Unit 2. Incident Action Planning (weeks 7 – 9)

Unit 3. Fuels Management (weeks 10 – 16)

Readings

The assigned readings include parts of book chapters, reports, and peer-reviewed literature. They will be made available through Moodle. Although you are required to read only parts of some of these readings, I have selected them in part because they are good references for the future. In each assigned reading, you should check the required page numbers in the table at the end of this document. Where TBA appears in the table, a reading has not yet been assigned.

Course Policies

Attendance: Attendance is required and will be taken randomly. If you are going to miss class, please let me know ahead of time. Take good notes, and if you miss a class, get notes from a classmate. I am happy to answer questions, clarify issues, and elaborate on lecture and reading topics during office hours.

Communication: Moodle and email will be the primary forms of communication. All course materials will be made available through Moodle, along with announcements, updates, and changes. Please check Moodle often and refer to it first if you have questions about what to read or do.

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 need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. [Student Conduct Code](#).

Cell Phone Use: Please disengage from cell phones (texting, browsing, etc.) during lecture. If you need to engage in these activities, please remove yourself from the classroom before doing so. If we are using zoom, please respect your fellow student's learning experience by muting your mic and sharing your video appropriately. In general, your video should be on during class (unless you are unable to do so, for whatever reason), and your mic should be off until you wish to speak. Although the impacts of electronic device use are different in online, synchronous settings, we remind you that distractions such as texting, browsing, and checking-email take away from your focus and learning. Please be conscious of the things that will distract you from class and minimize them.

Make-up/Extra Credit: There will be no make-up assignments and no opportunities for extra credit. I will not administer exams early or late except under the most extenuating of circumstances and with at least 60 hours of advanced notice. Assignments will lose 10% for each day past the due date.

Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting me. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction for students with disabilities in collaboration with instructors and Disability Services for Students, which is located in Lommasson Center 154. The University does not permit fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications.

Assignments

Projects: Three group projects are required. The first will be to complete and justify a decision document for a fire including a wildfire risk assessment. The second will be to develop a specific incident action plan. The third is to conduct a fuels assessment and present findings.

Writing/Quizzes/Exercises: Land management requires that you make and justify decisions but also effectively communicate those decisions along with the reasoning behind them. There will be four short written assignments, no more than *two* pages in length related to course material. A short analytical exercise and write-up of data and findings may replace a writing assignment, TBD. These are not intended to be busy-work but to spur critical thought and hone concise writing skills. Additionally, a relative risk assessment will be completed individually as part of the first group project (decision document).

Field Trip: We will travel to Lubrecht Experimental Forest to sample fuels in a variety of fuel treatments. This activity will most likely occur on a weekend, e.g. April 11/12 (dependent on snow cover). Reasonable accommodations will be made if you cannot attend and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Grading

Decision Document & Presentation (group) 20

Fuels Assessment & Presentation (group)	20
Writing/Exercises/Quizzes (individual) - 5	20
Wildfire Risk Assessment (individual)	10
Incident Action Plan (group)	10
Participation/Field Trip	05
Final Exam	<u>15</u>
	100%

Tips for success

- READ and TAKE NOTES! We will not cover everything in the readings during class but all of it is important in gaining comprehensive understanding of fire.
- It is imperative that your university email works and that you can use Moodle. These will be the primary means of communication between me and you. I will update Moodle frequently with notes, class material, assignments, and readings.
- PARTICIPATE! Your contributions will significantly improve the learning environment. The three projects are all group-based and will require coordination and effort from each team member.
- Ask questions and take advantage of office hours. Don't wait until the last minute to do the work.
- Be enthusiastic, curious, and open-minded.

Tentative Course Schedule:

Subject to change, updates will be given in class and on Moodle.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings (due on day listed)	Assignments	
		Course		Distributed	Due
1	Jan 12	Introduction			
1	Jan 14	Unit 1: Wildfire Management Fire Management Issues and Trends	Pyne, Call of the Wild, 2012 North et al. 2015	Writing 1	
2	Jan 19	Federal Policy and Guidance	RedBook – Chapter 1; Hubbard Letter 2012		
2	Jan 21	Fire Planning – LRMPs and FMPS	RedBook – Chapter 9 Flathead Draft Forest Plan; BMWC FMP		
3	Jan 26	A Review: Fire Ecology, Fuels, People	JFSP Synthesis Chapter 3		Writing 1
3	Jan 28	WFSA, WFIP, WFDSS- Relative Risk – Hazards, Value, Probability – START PLANNING	WFDSS Author Guide WFDSS_Paper_Form_2016	Risk Assessment (individual) & Planning Exercise (group)	

Week	Date	Topic	Readings (due on day listed)	Assignments	
		Course		Distributed	Due
4	Feb 02	Risk	Scott et al. 2013		
4	Feb 04	Seasonal Severity, Daily Severity, Time of Season	NFDRS PMS 932 Parts 1.02, 1.03, 1.07		
5	Feb 09	Planning Areas, Fuel Condition, Barriers to Spread	Decision Document Workday		
5	Feb 11	Fire Behavior, Potential Fire Growth	TBA	Writing 2	
6	Feb 16	Practical Considerations – Values/Social/Eco nomic concerns –	Uncle Stu		Relative Risk Assess- ment
6	Feb 18	Presentations			
7	Feb 23	Presentations			Planning Exercise
7	Feb 25	Unit 2. Incident Planning Fire Organization	Guide to ICS		Writing 2
8	Mar 02	Incident Planning- IAP	TBA	Incident Action Plan	
8	Mar 04	STUDENT BREAK	NO CLASSES		
9	Mar 09	Resource Advising; Burned Area Recovery	TBA		
9	Mar 11	Unit 3. Fuel Treatments: Intro to Fuel Treatments –	Keyes et al. Chapters 5-7	Writing 3	Incident Action Plan
10	Mar 16	STUDENT BREAK	NO CLASSES		
10	Mar 18	Fire-Fire Surrogate	Stephens et al. 2009	Writing 4	Writing 3
11	Mar 23	TBA	Agee and Skinner 2005		
11	Mar 25	Fuel Sampling and Measurement	FIREMON Fuel Load (rmrs gtr 164) and TBA	Fuel Project	
12	Mar 30	Fuel Calculations	TBA		
12	Apr 01	Fuel Calculations - Analysis	TBA		
13	Apr 06	Fire Modeling	BehavePlus User Guide		Writing 4

Week	Date	Topic	Readings (due on day listed)	Assignments	
		Course		Distributed	Due
13	Apr 08	Field Trip Prep	TBA	Writing 5	
13	Apr 10/11	FSS Field Trip	Lubrecht Experimental Forest		
14	Apr 13	TBA	TBA		
14	Apr 15	Presentations	TBA		Writing 5
15	Apr 20	Presentations			
15	Apr 22	Course Review			Fuel Project
16	Apr 30	FINAL EXAM	FINAL EXAM, FRIDAY April 30 0800 – 1000		

Important Dates for Dropping a Course ([Spring 2021 Official Dates and Deadlines calendar](#))

Deadline	Description	Date
To 15 th instructional day	Students can drop classes on CyberBear with refund & no “W” on Transcript	Feb 01 @5 PM
16 th to 45 th instructional day	A class drop requires a form with instructor and advisor signature, a \$10 fee from registrar’s office, student will receive a ‘W’ on transcript, no refund.	Feb 02 - March 18 @5 PM

Deadline	Description	Date
Beginning 46 th instructional day	<p>Students are only allowed to drop a class under very limited and unusual circumstances. Not doing well in the class, deciding you are concerned about how the class grade might affect your GPA, deciding you did not want to take the class after all, switching majors, and similar reasons are not among those limited and unusual circumstances. If you want to drop the class for these sorts of reasons, make sure you do so by the end of the 45th instructional day of the semester. Requests to drop must be signed by the instructor, advisor, and Associate Dean (in that order) so if you pursue this request, leave sufficient time to schedule meetings with each of these individuals (generally this will take at least 3-5 working days). A \$10 fee applies if approved. Instructor must indicate whether the individual is Passing or Failing the class at the time of request.</p>	March 19 – Apr 23 @5 PM

Writing Grading Rubric

Score	Content	Organization	Development	Use of Language
4 (A)	Answer is appropriate to the question and demonstrates critical thinking.	Clear sense of order. Thesis or topic sentence is apparent. Supporting points are logically presented.	Develops each point with details. Answers question entirely.	Uses language appropriately. No major grammatical or spelling errors.
3 (B)	Answer is appropriate.	May lack a clear thesis but argument is somewhat logically presented.	Each point with some support. Points answer question sufficiently.	Accurate word choice. No more than 2 major language errors and few minor errors.
2 (C)	Content relates only peripherally to the question and/or contains significant factual errors or lack of critical thinking.	Argument is minimally perceivable. Supporting points presented somewhat randomly but do still support argument.	Sparse details or evidence. Question only partially answered.	Ordinary word usage. Avoids any technical terminology. Some serious language errors but don't significantly impair communication.
1 (D)	Content unrelated to the question.	Lacks any organization.	Statements unsupported by detail or explanation. Incoherent development.	Limited vocabulary; language errors impair communication.

Each writing grade will be calculated from the average of each category score with half scores rounded up. Scores of 0 (F) will only be applied if no essay is turned in.

Example: Content = 4 (A); Organization = 3 (B); Development = 4 (A); Use of Language = 3 (B)

Final Grade = 3.5 $((4+3+4+3)/4) = A$