Summer Session 2018
BIOE 451 Landscape Ecology
Syllabus
3 credits; Lectures, Labs, Field Work
Course dates: July 9–July 20, 2018
Instructor: Dr. Solomon Dobrowski
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Prerequisites: One year of college-level biology, chemistry, and mathematics, and an ecology course (can be met via BIOE 342 Field Ecology at FLBS) or equivalents; or consent of instructor.

Course Description:
This course will introduce students to the physical and ecological processes that shape landscapes, how these biological and physical processes interact, and how they are responding to global change. We will examine how plants and animals are distributed across landscapes, how the physical template of the environment shapes species distributions and how biotic feedbacks can influence the physical environment. We will examine processes of pattern formation in the environment such as disturbance from fire and how landscape pattern can affect both physical and biological processes. Field trips will underscore concepts and allow data gathering and interpretation by students. Students are introduced to geospatial technologies such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Students will analyze and interpret spatially explicit data through analyses and written presentations.

Landscape ecology focuses on the causes and consequences of spatial patterns in landscapes, and originated from the recognition by ecologists that spatial heterogeneity in ecosystems can be assessed and should not be ignored. Landscape ecology examines concepts, theory, and methods for characterizing spatial heterogeneity, its effects on the dynamics of ecosystem processes, and how these may vary through time. The fundamental concepts of landscape ecology are the basis for decision-making in many contemporary problems in conservation science and resource management.

This course will be principally focused on exploring landscapes of the Northern Rockies firsthand. We will spend a great deal of time hiking through landscapes, discussing concepts, and at times collecting data. We will utilize geospatial technologies to assist with this process where appropriate but these technologies are not the focus of this course. The course will entail generally short lectures that introduce a concept, a field trip related to that concept, data collection, and a written lab assignment that reinforces the focal concepts presented. Much of this learning will occur in the field so students should be prepared to take notes and ask questions while hiking. Along with a basic understanding of landscape ecology, students will gain exposure to the natural history of the Crown of the Continent Region. This will include basic knowledge of the geologic history, climate, disturbance regimes, flora, and fauna of the area. This information will be reinforced with daily quizzes.

Student Learning Objectives:
After taking this course students will be able to:

1) Identify and describe many of the physical, biological, and anthropogenic processes that influence the distribution of organisms in the Northern Rockies.
2) Identify common woody plant species of the Northern Rockies.
3) Describe basic concepts used in landscape ecology such as island biogeography theory, the importance of landscape connectivity for organisms, and the role of disturbance in ecosystems of the Northern Rockies.

4) Apply simple geospatial technologies to study landscapes such as conducting analysis within a GIS for problem solving.

5) Describe why broad landscape-scale approaches to monitoring ecosystems are important for contemporary conservation and resource management problems.

**Required Text:** A textbook is not required although Turner’s (below) is a good general resource.


**Reference Texts:** Electronic and hard copies of reference readings will be provided by the instructor. This course will emphasize readings from the primary literature. A paper or two will be assigned to read, prior to each field trip, related to the concepts that will be emphasized during that field trip. Students are expected to read the assigned reading prior to the field trip.

**Course and Field Supplies/Equipment:** (*available for purchase at the FLBS Bookstore) This field course requires a lot of hiking both on and off trail. Students must be prepared for the rigors of steep terrain, inclement weather, and field data collection. **We will hike up to 15 miles in a single day over steep terrain. Additionally, we will camp away from the Bio Station.** Students must be prepared for spending time in the field. It is important that students adequately prepare for field trips by making certain they have the appropriate equipment and resources for the trip. Weather in the N. Rockies is highly variable and can change quickly so students should always carry layers for warmth and rain gear. **Students should bring the following supplies:**

- Rite in the Rain field notebook with pencils*
- Hiking boots & hiking socks (wool, not cotton socks)
- Good water shoes for fording streams and rivers
- Day pack
- Field clothing for overnight trips
- Warm jacket and rain gear
- Sun hat for field use
- Lunch pack-up re-sealable container(s)*
- Hot/cold mug*
- Water bottles to hold 2 liters of drinking water*
- Personal tent, sleeping bag and sleeping pad
- Headlamp and extra batteries
- Insect repellent and sun screen
- Laptop computer (recommended)
- Bear spray (optional)
- First aid kit (optional)
- Map of Glacier Park trails and day hikes (optional)
- Camera, memory chip, film, binoculars (optional)
- Hip boots or waders (optional)
- Handheld GPS (optional)

**REQUIRED Overnight Field Gear and Other Items to Bring Checklists:** [http://flbs.umt.edu/urls/lists](http://flbs.umt.edu/urls/lists)

**Evaluation and Grading:**

1) Participation in class and discussion – 10%
2) Daily Quizzes – 30%
3) Labs – 60%
**Course Policies:**
Students will adhere to University of Montana Student Conduct Code and Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Stalking, and Retaliation Policy (policy website: [http://www.umt.edu/safety/policies/](http://www.umt.edu/safety/policies/)) and to the Biological Station Code of Conduct form signed during student registration. Students must also follow FLBS Rules and Regulations and abide by the Safety Orientation Checklist. Students who have not already completed the University of Montana PETSA training may access the Moodle module at this link: [http://www.umt.edu/petsa/](http://www.umt.edu/petsa/).

**Schedule:** The schedule below is subject to change.

*Note: Make sure you pack your brown bag lunch each day at breakfast!*

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lectures/Lab/Field Work</th>
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| 9-Jul-18 (M) | *Lecture and discussion* What is a landscape and what is landscape ecology?  
**Fieldtrip - FLBS Station Grounds:** Plant ID, orienteering  
| 10-Jul-18 (T) | **Fieldtrip - Glacier lake or TBD:** vegetation communities along an elevation transect.  
Vegetation and site characteristic sampling.  
*Readings* – Swanson et al. 1988; Dobrowski 2011 |
| 11-Jul-18 (W) | Lecture and discussion  
The Physical Template: climate, topography water, soils.  
Lab 1- Extrapolating climate -MTCLIM and vegetation communities along an elevation transect. (due Monday)  
*Reading* - Yu and Lei 2001 |
| 12-Jul-18 (Th) | **Fieldtrip - Wild Horse Island**  
Lecture and discussion Island Biogeography and landscape conservation  
| 13-Jul-18 (F) | **Fieldtrip - Marshall Lake.** Landscape Conservation in the Seeley Swan Valley.  
*Reading*  |
| 16-Jul-18 (M) | **Fieldtrip - Nyack Research Natural Area.** Landscape dynamics of an alluvial floodplain.  
**Camp at Two Medicine Lake**  
*Readings* – Pederson et al. 2005 |
| 17-Jul-18 (T) | **Fieldtrip - Pitamakan Pass.** Geology, regional climate, glacier dynamics, climate change.  
**Camp at Two Medicine Lake**  
*Readings* - Reice 1994 |
| 18-Jul-18 (W) | **Fieldtrip - West Glacier NP:** Fire and disturbance as an agent of landscape pattern formation. Avalanche Creek. Return to FLBS.  
*Readings* – Turner et al. 1993 |
| 19-Jul-18 (Th) | Lecture and discussion - Disturbance regimes and landscape equilibrium  
Lab 2 - Intro to GIS and Disturbance in GNP (due Friday) |
| 20-Jul-18 (F) | Lab 2 Report writing  
Course review |

*Students with disabilities may request reasonable modifications by contacting the instructor. The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction for students with disabilities in collaboration with instructors and Disability Services for Students (406.243.2243, [http://www.umt.edu/dss/default.php](http://www.umt.edu/dss/default.php)). The University does not permit fundamental alterations of academic standards or retroactive modifications.*