

FOR 414: WORLD FORESTRY
SPRING 2014 SYLLABUS

LOGISTICS

Time: Tu - Th, 11:45 – 1:00

Classroom: 2104 Biltmore (on January 16, we will meet in Biltmore 3032)

Readings: Sands (2005) *Forestry in a Global Context*, available from the bookstore; plus readings linked to the Moodle course site and occasional handouts distributed in class

Instructor: Erin Sills, 3112 Jordan Hall, sills@ncsu.edu
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Office hours: 2-4PM on Wednesdays, starting on January 22

TA: Connor Rice, 3020 Biltmore Hall, clrice@ncsu.edu
Office hours: 3-4:30 on Thursdays

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will learn about the global supply and demand for forest goods and services, ranging from timber to tourism, carbon sequestration to biodiversity. This includes understanding trends in forest cover, human demands on forests in different parts of the world, how national and international institutions and policies regulate forest use, and current events and policy developments. While we will consider all aspects of forest management and all forested regions of the world, the focus will be on (a) human dimensions – including policy and understanding the behavior of firms and households that use forests, (b) natural forests in the tropics and developing countries, and (c) the role of forests in global climate change and its mitigation. With this background, students will be able to

- define and explain the significance of current trends, concerns, and proposed solutions regarding major forest goods and services;
- critically evaluate forest management proposals (public or private) from the perspectives of different stakeholders and disciplines;
- explain and analyze opposing sides of debates over current issues in international forestry.

Students will develop skills in writing memos, identifying and evaluating information sources, and constructing websites.

GRADES

Class participation

6% Attendance and participation in discussion

Major assignments

22% Research project: emails with topic and citations (1%), paper (15%) and webpage (6%)

15% Two memos (7% and 8%)

8% Country profile on paper (5%) and on web (3%)

Minor assignments

3% News item

3% Website evaluation

3% Q&A for midterm and final exam (1.5% each)

Exams

18% Midterm (Thursday, 6 March, during class)

22% Final (Tuesday, 29 April, 8-11AM)

Exams: Each student may bring a “cheat sheet”: one side of one standard letter size paper with any information that you think will be useful. Students with an A or A+ average for the course may opt out of the final exam.

Extra credit: one point will be awarded for identifying and notifying instructor of a relevant extra-curricular activity, attending that activity, sending instructor an email summarizing information gained from activity, and reporting key points to the class in 1 to 3 minutes.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

Tentative due dates for assignments (always due at the beginning of class; late submissions penalized)

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|--------|--|
| Jan 21 | First possible date for news item |
| Jan 23 | Website evaluation |
| Jan 30 | Country profile (MSWord doc format) |
| Feb 13 | County profile (Webpage format; google sites will be introduced in first week of February) |
| Feb 20 | Memo #1 |
| Feb 27 | Q&A for midterm exam |
| Mar 6 | Midterm exam |
| Mar 18 | Email proposing topic for research project |
| Mar 25 | Email with three citations to scientific literature relevant to research project |
| Apr 1 | Paper of 2250 – 2750 words, plus reference list |
| Apr 10 | Memo #2 |
| Apr 15 | Paper converted to webpage |
| Apr 17 | Q&A for final exam; last possible date for news item |
| Apr 29 | Final exam (8-11AM) - you will be informed by Apr 25 if you can opt out |

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. ‘Excused absences’ are anticipated absences cleared with the instructor in advance and absences for emergencies/ illnesses reported to the instructor in the next class. Such excused absences and up to three unexcused absences can be ‘made up’ with a half-page written summary of the readings (both required and supplemental) for the class session missed. This summary should be turned in within two weeks of the absence in order to maintain credit for class participation. It is up to the student to submit this written summary (you will not be reminded). More than three unexcused absences cannot be made up and will count against your course grade.

Readings will be posted on the Moodle site at least one week before class. You are responsible for completing the readings and coming to class prepared to discuss. This contributes to your participation grade. Course assignments should reference concepts from readings, and readings will be covered on the exams.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Your signature or electronic submission of any test or assignment in this course is considered equivalent to the NCSU honor pledge that “I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this test or assignment.” You are expected not to engage in any form of academic dishonesty, defined as “the giving, taking, or presenting of information or material by a student that unethically or fraudulently aids oneself or another on any work which is to be considered in the determination of a grade or the completion of academic requirements.”

Students are encouraged to discuss class assignments and share resources with each other. However, all assignments submitted for a grade must be individual work, written in an individual student’s own words. All sources must be cited appropriately. In general, you should paraphrase and summarize materials from multiple sources, but in instances where you would like to directly quote a source, you must cite it appropriately (including quotation marks and page number).

EVALUATION

Online class evaluations will be available for students to complete during the last 2 weeks of spring term in April. Students will receive an email message directing them to a website where they can login using their Unity ID and complete evaluations. All evaluations are confidential.

DISABILITIES

During the first week of classes, students with documented disabilities should contact the instructor. Documentation may be obtained from NCSU Disability Services for Students. All reasonable accommodations will be given to students with documented disabilities.

ASSIGNMENTS

NEWS ITEM (each student assigned a date)

(1) Find a news item that is 400-2000 words, from the last three months, published in a reputable news source, about forest resources and management in countries outside of the US, and related to topics that we are discussing in the 2 weeks before or 1 week following your assigned date. The NR Librarian will discuss how to search for appropriate news items in class meeting in computer lab on 16 January.

(2) At least 24 hours before your assigned class session, post your news item to moodle, either by uploading the file or linking to the article on-line, and a brief summary and analysis of how the article is related to class, along with two questions for class discussion.

If you would like to show the article, a ppt slide, or some related resource as part of your presentation, you should arrive early to class to load onto the computer. Your presentation should be no longer than 5 minutes, and you should try to generate at least 5 minutes of discussion on your questions about the news item.

WEBSITE EVALUATION (post to moodle before class on 23 January)

(1) Identify a website that provides information about the forests or forestry sector of your assigned country. This should be a website, not just a single article posted on the web, although you may select just the most relevant section of a large complex website - not just a single page, and not the entire website. Try to find a website that is interesting and information rich. It does not have to be completely “unbiased” or “authoritative”, but it should offers lots of relevant content. Each student must evaluate a different website, so if you would like to claim a website (on a first come, first serve basis), you should select wikis from the course moodle page, then in the text box that appears on the wiki page, post the title or name of the website that you plan to evaluate, link it to the URL by using the link symbol that appears above the text box, and then write your name inside double square brackets, e.g. [[Erin Sills]].

(2) After completing step #1, a question mark should appear next to your name. Click on that question mark in order to start a new wiki page for your annotation. Provide a title for the website that you are annotating (make this short and descriptive), the author of the site (the institution or person who developed the content; not just a webmaster), the URL (copy & paste, and then confirm that the link works), and the date that you accessed. Then briefly describe (in your own words) the site’s currency (how up to date is it?) and content (what topics are covered, and what type of information is provided?). Finally, the most important part of your wiki entry is your critical evaluation of the website. In your evaluation, answer the following questions:

1. Who made this website (not just their names, but who/what they are)?
2. What is the agenda of the person or organization that made this website (e.g., who funds it)?
3. What is the purpose of the website?
4. Who is the intended audience of the website?

5. How authoritative is this source to address this topic (e.g., do authors have relevant credentials, do they cite scientific literature)?
6. How well is the website designed (is it easy to understand the structure and navigate the site; are internal and external links working; has the designer chosen formatting that makes the website easy to read)?

If the answers to any of these questions are not clear (e.g., you cannot figure out who is responsible for the website), explain why.

COUNTRY PROFILE (post to moodle before class on 30 January, and bring a hard copy to class)

You will be assigned a country. Research and construct a 2 page “handout” including 1 page of content and 1 page with your sources. The content should be organized with headers, maps, charts, bullet points, and boxes to help concisely present key information on the forestry sector and forests in your assigned country. Your sources should include at least three references from the scientific literature (e.g., articles in peer-reviewed journals, or book chapters).

Provide key summary statistics on forests in your country, and then more detail on some themes that seem prominent in the literature and webpages on your country. All profiles should include a map with information on forests and 2005 statistics on land area, forest cover, population, and GNI.

The second step in this assignment is to convert your profile into a webpage. You may use any software for this and post the link to your webpage in the appropriate forum on moodle. However, we will provide information and support for Google Sites, including an introduction in the computer lab in class during the first week of February.

TWO Q&As (post to moodle before class on 27 February and 17 April)

Design a question for the midterm/final exam that focuses on one of the key topics covered in the first half of the semester. You may choose the format of the question, except that it should not be multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank. For example, your question could require determining whether a statement is true, false, or uncertain and explain why. Or your question could require a graphical or short essay answer. Post both the question and your suggested answer in the appropriate forum on Moodle.

TWO MEMOS (post to moodle before class on 20 February and 10 April, and bring a hard copy to class)

Write a one page memo on the assigned topic, using single-spacing within paragraphs and double-spacing between paragraphs for a total of 450 – 500 words. Start your memo with a header including lines stating To: From: Date: and Re:

In both business and policy, memos are a common form of communication. They are typically used to (i) lay out issues and options, and (ii) make recommendations and argue persuasively for them. They are written for an audience (often your boss) who is busy and unwilling to take much time or trouble to understand what you are saying. Thus, they must be concise, logically organized, and focused on your main points.

Memos are not an opportunity to demonstrate everything that you know about a subject. But they are also not a “lawyer’s brief” that presents only one side of an argument. Even when the purpose of your memo is to make a recommendation, you should acknowledge and explain why you do not agree with the most important counter-arguments.

The first paragraph of the memo should provide context, re-state the problem or question from the assignment, and explain how you will approach the problem or answer the question. It should be a guide to the arguments that you will make in the rest of the memo. After you finish writing your memo, return to your first paragraph and make sure that you have covered all of its points in your memo. If not, revise the paragraph (or the memo).

RESEARCH PROJECT: PAPER AND WEBSITE

Over spring break, think about a topic related to this course that you would like to further investigate. Topics must be related to forests in countries other than the US. Pick a topic and a research question that matter for forest policy globally or in a particular region. You should also pick a topic of interest to you, since you will spend most of March working on the topic.

By March 18, email the instructor a summary of your topic in the following format:

- Topic: what are you studying? (in a few words that could be the title of your project)
- Question(s): Who/how/why/what do you want to find out about this topic? (2 or 3 key questions that you are investigating)
- Rationale: Why do the answers matter? What are the implications? What are you trying to understand by investigating these questions? Who is likely to be interested in your findings?

By March 25, email the instructor a list of a literature that you are using for your project, including at least three citations to the scientific literature (journal articles or book chapters).

Before class on April 1, submit your research paper (2250 – 2750 words, plus reference list) through moodle.

Before class on April 15, convert your paper into a webpage on your topic, with relevant images, graphics, and links, and post the link to the relevant forum on moodle. You may use any software for this, but we recommend and will provide support for websites constructed in Google Sites.