



	Instructor	Teaching Assistant
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	Term:	Spring 2018
	Course Credits:	3
	Course Delivery:	Online

Course Overview

Grassland and shrubland ecosystems occupy approximately 40% of the terrestrial surface of the Earth. These systems evolved and have been maintained by interactions between periodic droughts, recurrent fire, and herbivory. They also have a long history of use by humans for production of food and, more recently, energy. This course is intended to provide you with an understanding of the physiological, population, community, and ecosystem processes that characterize these systems, as well as the roles of fire and grazing in their maintenance. You will also learn about current issues in grassland ecology dealing with land use change, species invasions, and climate change.

Course Goals and Objectives

At the completion of the course, you will be able to

1. Identify factors leading to observed spatial distributions of grasslands and shrublands from landscape to global scales.
2. Apply principles of plant population and community ecology to explain functioning of grassland and shrubland systems.
3. Articulate the role of disturbance in maintaining ecosystem structure and function in grassland and shrubland ecosystems
4. Explain and predict the impacts of global change on grassland and shrubland ecosystems, including land use change, species invasions, and climate change.

Course Prerequisites

One course in ecology or admission into the MNRS program.

Required Texts and Materials

*Gibson, D.J. 2009. Grasses & Grassland Ecology. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.

Available through the CSU Bookstore, as well as through many online retailers. Other required and optional reading materials will be provided either directly through Canvas or through CSU Libraries Course Reserves (E-Reserve).

All other course material, assignments, grades, readings, and other important information will be posted on the course in Canvas; it is your responsibility to check Canvas regularly.

Technical Support

Need technical assistance with your online course? Try the following:

- Visit the [Canvas Student Resources](#) for guides and videos.
- Visit [Central I.T. Technical Support Helpdesk](#) for technical support.
- Call 970-491-7276.
- Email [Help Desk Support](#).

System, Multimedia, and Software Requirements

You may need access to Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and/or Excel to complete assignments. If you do not have access to the Microsoft Office applications, you may use one of the following free resources that allow you to save your files with Microsoft Office file extensions (.docx, .pptx, .xlsx):

- [Google Apps for CSU](#)—a free, outsourced communications suite endorsed by The University Technology Fee Advisory Board (UTFAB)
- [Office 365](#)—the full version of Microsoft Office free of charge for CSU students.

You must have speakers installed and working properly on your computer before beginning the course. Also, it is highly recommended that you access your course via a high-speed Internet connection. Having trouble with the multimedia in this course? See the solutions below.

- Problems with opening PDFs? Download [Adobe Reader](#).
- Canvas acting funny? Review Canvas guide for [Supported Browsers](#).
- YouTube videos not playing? Download [Flash Player](#).
- Videos not opening or playing on your Mac? Download [Windows Media Components for QuickTime](#).
- Still having issues: Call the CSU Help Desk at 970-491-7276 or [Email Help Desk Support](#)

Library & Research Help

The CSU Libraries Help Desk provides research and technical assistance either in person at Morgan Library or by phone at 970-491-1841. Jocelyn Boice is the librarian supporting this course. Contact her by email at jocelyn.boice@colostate.edu or by phone at 970-491-3882 to ask questions or set up an appointment for in-depth research help.

Important Dates to Remember

Last Day to Add/Drop Classes Without an Instructor Override: Sun, Jan 21, 2018

Registration Closes: Wed, Jan 31, 2018

Withdrawal Deadline: Mon, Mar 19, 2018

Spring Recess: Sat, Mar 10 – Sun, Mar 18, 2018

Last Day to Process a University Withdrawal: Fri, May 4, 2018

Final Paper Due: Wed, May 9, 2018, by 11:59PM MST

Course Schedule and/or Schedule of Assignments

Organization of content: 16 modules presented on a weekly basis comprised of a short review quiz, module objectives, a brief mini-lecture, readings, and assignments will be posted on Canvas. Some reading materials will be posted on E-Reserves through the CSU Library; there will be a link to E-Reserves on Canvas. All materials posted through E-Reserves are available to you free of charge, but you must be logged in through the CSU Secure VPN gateway.

Course Assessments

Previous Module Review Quizzes

Because each module builds off previous modules, you will take a brief 5-point quiz at the beginning of most learning modules to refresh your mind on the content of the previous module. These quizzes will also highlight important points you should have taken away from the previous module and serve as aids for exam preparation.

Discussion

Discussion participation: These discussions will allow students to gain a deeper understanding of content as they discuss material and concepts related to modules. This forum will also give students an opportunity to ask questions related to module content about which they may be curious or confused. You will be expected to compose at least two (2) posts for each discussion: one (1) in response to a discussion question on or before Thursday and one (1) in response to a post generated by another student on or before Sunday. Depending on course enrollment, students may be split into smaller groups for discussion. More information regarding expectations for discussions is available in the Discussion Guidelines document on Canvas.

Leading discussion: Students (individually or in groups, depending on enrollment) will be assigned at least one module for which they will lead and facilitate discussion of module content. Leaders will be responsible for 1) writing a brief summary of the 3-5 main points they took away from the module readings and activities, 2) providing 2-3 thought-provoking questions for discussion, and 3) writing a brief summary of discussion. Students are also encouraged to actively participate in discussion, but are not required to do so. More information regarding expectations for discussion leading is available in the Discussion Guidelines document on Canvas.

Review and Synthesis Paper and Prep Assignments

You will prepare your own paper comparing and contrasting the ecology of two different grassland or shrubland ecoregions based on published scientific literature. Preparation of the paper will be supported, in part, by a series of preparation ("prep") assignments prior to the first submission (50 points) of the complete paper in Module 13. It is expected that instructor feedback on preparation assignments will be used to help prepare your paper. Upon receiving instructor feedback on the first submission, you will have at least one week to revise and submit a final version of the paper (100 points) by 11:59PM on Wednesday of Module 16. More information regarding requirements for the Review and Synthesis paper is available on Canvas.

Exam Review Questions

The module prior to exams you will be tasked with composing potential exam questions based on the material you felt was *most important* in each module. You will also be asked to provide a complete and correct answer for each question you prepare. Student-submitted questions, but not answers, will be compiled and posted as an exam review document. There is a high probability that the instructor will use some of these questions (either as submitted or modified) on exams. Details will be provided in Modules 4, 9, and 14.

Exams

There will be 3 open-book, open-note exams (Modules 5, 10, and 15). Exams will cover material from lectures, readings, and discussions. Exam questions will focus on material covered in each module, but they will be

cumulative in so far as the material in the course builds upon previous material. You will have a maximum of 90 minutes to complete each exam. Question formats may include multiple choice, true/false, matching, short answer, and short essay questions. There will *not* be a comprehensive final exam.

Basis for Final Grade

It is my commitment to you to respond individually to the work you submit in this class and to return your work in a timely manner. Smaller, weekly assignments and quizzes will be returned within 3 working days and major assignments, exams, and essays will be returned within 1 week. (If, however, due to unforeseeable circumstances, the grading of your work takes longer than the times I have listed here, I will keep you informed of my progress and make every effort to return your work with feedback as soon as I can.) If you think there was a grading error or do not understand the feedback you receive on graded work, please contact me as soon as possible and no more than 2 weeks after the graded work has been returned to you.

RS630 Assignment	Points	Percentage
Module Review Quizzes:		10%
• 14 quizzes @ 5 pts each	70	(10%)
Discussions:		20%
• 13 Discussions over module content @ 10 pts	130	(18%)
• 1 Leading discussion @ 15 pts	15	(02%)
Review and Synthesis Paper:		30%
• 6 Prep Assignments @ 10 pts each	60	(09%)
• First Submission	50	(07%)
• Final Submission	100	(14%)
Exams:		40%
• 3 Exam Review Assignments @ 25 pts each	75	(10%)
• 3 Exams @ 70 pts each	210	(30%)
Total:	710	100 %

A = 90-100%, B = 80-89%, C = 70-79%, D = 60-69%, F = < 60%

Course Policies

Late Work Policy

As a student enrolled in this course, one of your responsibilities is to submit course work by the due dates listed in the Course Schedule. With that said, I take my role as your instructor very seriously; I care about how well you do in this course and that you have a satisfying, rewarding experience. If you experience a life event or crisis that impacts your academic performance in this class, please contact CSU Student Case Management (<http://www.studentcasemanagement.colostate.edu>) for assistance and to ensure the instructor is able to make appropriate accommodations for you.

Assignments will be penalized one letter grade (10% of points possible on assignment) for each day late. Assignments will not be accepted if 5 or more days late, and a grade of 0 (zero) will be recorded for that assignment. There will be no makeup exams unless prior arrangements have been made or if there are documented extenuating circumstances (e.g., family emergency, attendance of professional conference, etc.). Contact the instructor as early as possible if there is a conflict with a scheduled assignment, discussion, or exam.

Extra Credit Policy

Extra credit opportunities may be provided at the discretion of the instructor.

Grades of "Incomplete"

Per university policy, an instructor may assign temporary grade of Incomplete to a student who demonstrates that he or she could not complete the requirements of the course due to circumstances beyond the student's control and not reasonably foreseeable. A student must be passing a course at the time that an Incomplete is requested unless the instructor determines that there are extenuating circumstances to assign an Incomplete to a student who is not passing the course. When an instructor assigns an Incomplete, he or she shall specify in writing using the Department Incomplete Grade Form the requirements the student shall fulfill to complete the course as well as the reasons for granting an Incomplete when the student is not passing the course. The instructor shall retain a copy of this statement in his or her grade records and provide copies to the student and the department head or his or her designee. (Section I.6 of the *Academic Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual*)

Disability Access

Colorado State University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need accommodations must first contact Resources for Disabled Students before requesting accommodations from the professor. Resources for Disabled Students (RDS; <http://rds.colostate.edu/home>) is located in room 100 of the General Services Building. Their phone is (970) 491-6385 (V/TDD). Students who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations.

Participation Policy

This is a 3-credit course, so it is expected that you will spend approximately 9 hours per week working on course-related activities (reading, viewing content, contributing to discussion, preparing assignments, etc.). I encourage you to spend at least a little time each day on this course though I recognize it is not always be possible. *The more students are involved in the course, the more they tend to get out of it.*

Religious Accommodation

Participation in official University activities, e.g., an out-of-town athletic event, or special religious observances may provide a legitimate reason for an excused absence. The student is responsible for discussing this with the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

Final Exam Policy

Final examination week is part of the regular semester. Student attendance shall be consistent with University policy. There is no final exam for this course; the Review & Synthesis paper takes the place of a final exam.

Professionalism Policy

You are expected to conduct yourself in a manner conducive to learning so the experience of fellow students is not disrupted. Questions and discussion in a respectful manner are strongly encouraged. Students who habitually disturb the class and have been warned may suffer a reduction in their final class grade. If emailing the instructor directly (not through Canvas), please include your full name, CSU ID, and the course number in your email.

Academic Integrity

The Department of Forest and Rangeland Stewardship takes academic integrity seriously. At minimum, academic integrity means that no one will use another's work as their own. The CSU writing center defines plagiarism this way:

Plagiarism is the unauthorized or unacknowledged use of another person's academic or scholarly work. Done on purpose, it is cheating. Done accidentally, it is no less serious. Regardless of how it occurs, plagiarism is a theft of intellectual property and a violation of an ironclad rule demanding "credit be given where credit is due."

Source: (Writing Guides: Understanding Plagiarism.

<http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/guide.cfm?guideid=17>)

If you plagiarize in your work you could lose credit for the plagiarized work, fail the assignment, or fail the course. Each instance of plagiarism, classroom cheating, and other types of academic dishonesty will be addressed according to the principles published in the CSU General Catalog (under "Academic Integrity/Misconduct: <http://catalog.colostate.edu/general-catalog/policies/students-responsibilities/>.)

Of course, academic integrity means more than just avoiding plagiarism. It also involves doing your own reading and studying. It includes regular class attendance, careful consideration of all class materials, and engagement with the class and your fellow students. Academic integrity lies at the core of our common goal: to create an intellectually honest and rigorous community. Because academic integrity, and the personal and social integrity of which academic integrity is an integral part, is so central to our mission as students, teachers, scholars, and citizens, we will ask to you sign the CSU Honor Pledge as part of completing all of our major assignments. While you will not be required to sign the honor pledge, we will ask each of you to write and sign the following statement on your papers and exams: "I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance."

Title IX Information

CSU's Student Sexual Harassment and Violence policy, following national guidance from the Office of Civil Rights, requires that faculty follow CSU policy as a "mandatory reporter" of any personal disclosure of sexual harassment, abuse, and/or violence related experiences or incidents shared with the faculty member in person, via email, and/or in classroom papers or homework exercises. These disclosures include but are not limited to reports of personal relational abuse, relational/domestic violence, and stalking. While faculty are often able to help students locate appropriate channels of assistance on campus (e.g., see the CSU Health Network link below), disclosure by the student to the faculty member requires that the faculty member inform appropriate CSU channels to help ensure that the student's safety and welfare is being addressed, even if the student requests that the disclosure not be shared.

For counseling support and assistance, please see the CSU Health Network, which includes a variety of counseling services that can be accessed at: <http://www.health.colostate.edu/>. And, the Sexual Assault Victim Assistance Team is a confidential resource for students that does not have a reporting requirement and that can be of great help to students who have experienced sexual assault. The web address is

<http://www.wgac.colostate.edu/need-help-support>.

Source: <http://oeo.colostate.edu/title-ix-sexual-assault>

Non-Discrimination Statement

Colorado State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, creed, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender, disability, veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or pregnancy. The University complies with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, related Executive Orders 11246 and 11375, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 402 of the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, as amended, The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Civil Rights Act of 1991, the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, and all civil rights laws of the State of Colorado.

Accordingly, equal opportunity of employment and admission shall be extended to all persons. The University shall promote equal opportunity and treatment in employment through a positive and continuing affirmative action program for ethnic minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and veterans. The Office of Equal Opportunity is located in 101 Student Services. Source: <http://oeo.colostate.edu/non-discrimination-statement>

