



	Instructor	Teaching Assistant
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Term:	Spring 2021
Course Credits:	3
Course Delivery:	Online Asynchronous

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.

CSU's Land Acknowledgment Statement

Colorado State University acknowledges, with respect, that the land we are on today is the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute Nations and peoples. This was also a site of trade, gathering, and healing for numerous other Native tribes. We recognize the Indigenous peoples as original stewards of this land and all the relatives within it. As these words of acknowledgment are spoken and heard, the ties Nations have to their traditional homelands are renewed and reaffirmed.

CSU is founded as a land-grant institution, and we accept that our mission must encompass access to education and inclusion. And, significantly, that our founding came at a dire cost to Native Nations and peoples whose land this University was built upon. This acknowledgment is the education and inclusion we must practice in recognizing our institutional history, responsibility, and commitment.

<https://landacknowledgment.colostate.edu>

This is an Inclusive Classroom

Inclusive teaching involves deliberately cultivating a learning environment where all students are treated equitably, have equitable access to learning, and feel valued and supported in their learning. Such teaching attends to social identities and seeks to change the ways systemic inequities shape dynamics in teaching-learning spaces, affect individuals' experiences of those spaces, and influence course and curriculum design.

– Adapted from <http://crlt.umich.edu/node/90467>

CSU's Principles of Community

- **Inclusion:** We create and nurture inclusive environments and welcome, value and affirm all members of our community, including their various identities, skills, ideas, talents and contributions.
- **Integrity:** We are accountable for our actions and will act ethically and honestly in all our interactions.
- **Respect:** We honor the inherent dignity of all people within an environment where we are committed to freedom of expression, critical discourse, and the advancement of knowledge.
- **Service:** We are responsible, individually and collectively, to give of our time, talents, and resources to promote the well-being of each other and the development of our local, regional, and global communities.
- **Social Justice:** We have the right to be treated and the responsibility to treat others with fairness and equity, the duty to challenge prejudice, and to uphold the laws, policies and procedures that promote justice in all respects.

<https://diversity.colostate.edu/resources/principles-of-community/>

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.

- Some required and optional reading materials will be provided through CSU Libraries Course Reserves (E-Reserve).
- All other course material, assignments, grades, readings, and other important information will be posted on or linked in 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 basic research and technical assistance either in person at Morgan Library or by phone at 970-491-1841. Virtual assistance is also available via the Libraries' Ask Us chat and email services (<http://lib.colostate.edu/help/ask-us>). Jocelyn Boice is the librarian supporting the Forest and Rangeland Stewardship Department and this course. Contact her for in-depth assistance at: jocelyn.boice@colostate.edu / 970-491-3882.

Important Dates to Remember

Last Day to Add/Drop Classes Without an Instructor Override: Sun, Jan 24, 2021

Registration Closes: Wed, Feb 3, 2021

Withdrawal/Repeat/Delete Deadline: Mon, March 22, 2021

Spring Recess: Sat, April 10 – Sun, April 18, 2021 (*all instruction and exams are remote after this*)

Last Day to Process a University Withdrawal: Fri, May 7, 2021

Final Examinations: Mon-Fri, May 10-14, 2021

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 (13 quizzes, 1 dropped)

Because each module builds off previous modules, you will take a brief 5-point quiz at the beginning of most learning modules to highlight key points from content of the previous module. There will be 13 quizzes, with the quiz receiving the lowest grade being dropped at the end of the semester. These quizzes, along with the Questions to Consider as You Read on the Readings and More page of each module, can also serve as aids for exam preparation.

Discussion Boards

Discussion participation (16 discussions, 1 dropped): 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. Participation in each discussion is worth 10 points. 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. The grading rubric and additional information regarding expectations for discussions is available in the Discussion Guidelines document on Canvas.

Leading discussion (1): Each student will be assigned one module that they will lead and facilitate discussion of module content. In addition to participating in discussion like all other students (10 points), discussion leaders (30 points) 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, 3) facilitating discussion through the week, and 4) writing a brief summary of the main topics discussed. The grading rubric and more information regarding expectations for discussion leading is available in the Discussion Guidelines document on Canvas.

Review and Synthesis Project

You will write a paper comparing and contrasting the ecology of two different grassland or two different shrubland ecoregions based on published scientific literature. Preparation of the paper will be supported, in part, by a series of six preparation ("prep") assignments prior to the first submission (50 points) of the complete paper in Module 13. It is expected that instructor feedback on prep assignments will be used to help prepare your paper. During Module 14, you will be assigned another student's first submission and be tasked with providing a constructive peer-review (20 points). Upon receiving instructor and peer feedback on the first paper 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. The grading rubric and more information regarding requirements for the Review and Synthesis paper is available on Canvas.

Exam 1 Review Questions (1)

The module prior to Exam 1 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 some of these questions (either as submitted or modified) will be used on exams. The exam review assignment is worth 20 points. Details will be provided in Module 7.

Exams (2)

There will be 2 open-book, open-note exams worth 50 points each (Modules 8 and 15). Exams will cover material from lectures, readings, and discussions. Exam 1 will cover material in Modules 1 through 8, and Exam 2 will primarily cover material in Modules 9 through 15. 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 response choice, true/false, matching, calculation, short answer, and 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 generally be returned within 7 days and major assignments and exams will be returned within 14 days. If, due to unforeseeable circumstances, grading takes longer than the times listed here, I will keep you informed of my progress and return your work 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 5 days after the graded work has been returned to you.

RS630 Assignment	Points	Percentage
Discussions:		30%
• 15 Discussions over module content @ 10 pts	150	(25%)
• 1 Leading discussion @ 30 pts	30	(5%)
Quizzes/Exams:		30%
• 12 module review quizzes @ 5 pts	60	(10%)
• 1 Exam Review Assignment @ 20 pts	20	(3%)
• 2 Exams @ 50 pts each	100	(17%)
Review and Synthesis Paper:		40%
• 5 Prep Assignments @ 10 pts	50	(8%)
• 1 Prep Assignment @ 20 pts	20	(3%)
• 1 Peer-review @ 20 pts	20	(3%)
• First Complete Submission	50	(8%)
• Final Complete Submission	100	(17%)
Total:	600	100 %

Grading scheme:

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

Course Policies

Participation Policy

This is a 3-credit course, so it is expected that you will spend 9-12 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.*

Late Work Policy

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. 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, there will be 1 discussion participation and 1 quiz grade that you will be able to drop at the end of the semester because I recognize that there may be a time when you may be unable to complete these tasks fully or on time.

Assignments will be penalized one letter grade (10% of points possible on assignment) for each day late unless arrangements have been made prior to the due date or there are documented extenuating circumstances (e.g., family emergency, professional obligations, etc.). Late assignments will be accepted up to 4 days late. If more than 4 days late, the assignment will not be accepted and a grade of 0 (zero) will be recorded for that assignment. Late exams will not be allowed unless prior arrangements have been made or if there are documented extenuating circumstances. Contact the instructor as early as possible if there is a conflict with a scheduled assignment, discussion, or exam.

If you experience a life event or crisis that impacts your academic performance in this class, please contact CSU Student Case Management for assistance and to ensure I am able to make appropriate accommodations for you. (<http://www.studentcasemanagement.colostate.edu>)

Extra Credit Policy

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

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.

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*). For more information: <https://registrar.colostate.edu/incomplete-grades/>)

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.

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.

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. You can find an overview and CSU's definition of plagiarism on the CSU Writing Center website found here:

<https://writing.colostate.edu/guides/page.cfm?pageid=311&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.