

**SCI 338U Online: Investigating Forest Ecosystems
Fall 2020**

Instructor: Gabe Sheoships gts@pdx.edu

Office hours: M 9-9:30 & Thur 8:30-9, by appointment also

What brought you to this course? What do you hope to take away at the end of the term?

Acknowledgement: *It is important to ground ourselves and acknowledge the people whose land we are utilizing; the Clackamas Chinook, the Wasco-Wishram, the Willamette Tumwater, the Multnomah, and other Chinookan peoples, as well as the Tualatin Kalapuya, the Cayuse, the Molalla and other tribes and bands of the Columbia and Willamette Rivers. It is important to acknowledge the original inhabitants of the land now known as the Portland metro area, and to recognize that we are here because of the sacrifices that were forced upon them. We also remember that we are guests of this land and must do our best to honor the original peoples, through authentic cultural narratives and continued stewardship of the water, the land, and plants that make up this forest community.*

COVID-19: Please note the content outlined below is for an ideal situation. Due dates, course content, or any other aspect of the course may be subject to change as the situation evolves. If these changes occur, you will be notified via email and it will be announced on the course D2L page. If you have any questions or concerns at any time please do not hesitate to contact the instructor.

Course Objectives:

- 1) To explore the complex physical, ecological, and social elements of forest ecosystems through readings, videos, discussion, and activities related to urban forests;
- 2) To learn to ask relevant ecological questions and pursue answers through careful observation and experimental design
- 3) To learn to organize and analyze data, draw sound conclusions, and present findings.

Weekly modules will include readings and videos, as well as quizzes and other assignments. Students will also participate in weekly discussions in assigned groups on D2L

Desire to Learn (D2L): All materials for this course will be posted to D2L. Quizzes and discussions will also happen here, and this is where students will submit assignments. I will also post grades and other feedback to D2L. Please note I prefer to be emailed and contacted via my direct email, gts@pdx.edu, rather than through the D2L system.

Required Technology: To successfully complete this course, you will need access to a computer and an internet connection. The word processing and spreadsheet work for this course can be completed in the Google suite, which you have access to through your PSU account. Assignments may also be completed in the Microsoft suite, no Pages, please.

Assignments: There will be a total of six assignments based on the assessment of research media (e.g., videos, pictures) and data analysis. All assignments will be submitted via D2L. Scanned copies of hand-written journal entries or data collection may be submitted if they are legible. Students will be asked to resubmit illegible assignments for a 2-point deduction. Each assignment is worth 20 points; cumulatively assignments are worth 120 points.

30% of the final grade.

Discussion: Active discussion will be a major component of this class. Students will be placed into groups of up to 5 on Google Drive for discussion. Weekly discussions will consist of two components: an initial post, due Thursday of each week, and a response to your peers, due Sunday of each week. There will be 9 discussions, one per week. Each discussion is worth 11 points; cumulatively discussions are worth 99 points, 25% of the final grade.

Final lichen project: Students will design and report on a small field study of lichens growing on trees. Weeks 8 through 10 will be largely dedicated to working on the final project. The final project (with proposal, progress report, and final report) will be worth 80 points, 20% of the final grade.

1) Research proposal: Students will specify the research question, hypothesis, and proposed field methods. The proposal will be graded on completeness and allow me to provide feedback before you jump into fieldwork. The proposal will be due Week 8 and worth 20 points, 5% of the final grade

2) Research presentation: Students will record themselves presenting their research proposal in PowerPoint slide format. A 10 minute minimum video will be the major product of the final project. Slides should focus on research questions, hypothesis etc. Students will record their presentations, and turn them in via D2L and they will be available for viewing by the rest of the class. The final presentations will be due during finals week and worth 50 points, 12.5% of the final grad

Course Grading

94-100%	A	84-85%	B	74-75%	C	64-65%	D
90-93%	A-	80-83%	B-	70-73%	C-	60-63%	D-
86-89%	B+	76-79%	C+	66-69%	D+	59% and below	F

Late Submission: All assignments are due via D2L as listed. Notify me if you require Dean-approved accommodations.

Any concerns about grading practices or the quality of instruction should first be brought to me. I believe in the value of ongoing evaluation and welcome comments or students' concerns. Students should try to resolve issues with me as they arise.

Accountability

This class relies heavily on collaborative and group learning. Exceptional circumstances like illness (mental as well as physical) or family obligations will be considered differently.

Questions and Email: As much as possible, please ask questions via email and zoom. If you email me gts@pdx.edu, please follow these general guidelines:

- include an informative subject line (e.g., Human/Nature, assignment #1)

Do not expect an immediate reply. Some days I will be able to respond to your email within the day, while other times it may take me 1-2 days to respond.

Grading Philosophy & Breakdown:

The generic Grading Rubric is as follows:

- **An A assignment** is one that demonstrates original thought and synthesis of ideas, sophisticated, cogent analysis, and is clearly written or presented. Outstanding work.
- **A B assignment** presents above average analysis with appropriate evidence to support the ideas and is clearly written or presented. Very good work.
- **A C assignment** shows a basic level of understanding, with analysis limited to the most obvious arguments. Writing is competent. Adequate work.
- **A D assignment** misunderstands or misrepresents the material, or is so poorly written or presented as to obscure the analysis. Inadequate work.

Access and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities

PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty (including any form of plagiarism, cheating on assignments, etc.) in any portion of the academic work for a course is grounds for a grade of F for the entire course. I will report such dishonesty. You may refer to PSU's policies for greater detail. In this class, academic dishonesty is broadly defined as the use of someone else's work as yours. This includes some obvious actions such as:

- Having someone take a class for you
- Having someone take or complete part of your test or an assignment for you
- Having someone else write a paper, or a section of a paper for you

- Using a quote or direct passage from some secondary source (e.g., book, article) in a paper without citing it (this does not include your responses provided on tests that are taken directly from the professor's lecture or other class material]
- Working collaboratively on projects or assignments that are expected to be completed on an individual basis.
- There also other actions that are considered academically dishonest that are not as obvious, such as:
 - Submitting a paper that utilizes another person or source's theories, thoughts, ideas, concepts without proper citation
 - Using a paper or assignment, or a segment of a previous paper or assignment created by another group in which you participated.
 - Taking material off of the Internet and using it without full and proper citation.

The above list of actions is not intended to be exhaustive. If you have any question about what is an appropriate way to cite particular information, please contact your instructor or teaching assistant.

