Description: This seminar examines the biogeography of the Pacific Northwest from a historical and ecological perspective. Major topics include historical and current plant and animal distributions, the abiotic constraints to species distributions, ecological communities, and the exogenous (external) and endogenous (internal) processes that shape these communities. Students will spend most of the course time reading, presenting and discussing ecological processes such as succession, competition, coexistence, and disturbance ecology of the main tree species across the PNW (i.e., impact of insect outbreaks, volcanic eruptions, landslides, climate variability, human land-use, wildfire, and grazing on main vegetation types). Biogeography theory and its application to management and human modification of ecological communities will also be examined. Examples from temperate regions in Patagonia, Tasmania, and New Zealand will be shared throughout the course. The course includes a self-guided field trip and 1-2 all-day field trips.

Strongly suggested prerequisites: Introductory biogeography, ecology, physical geography or consent of instructor.

Format: This seminar’s format will include a mix of lecture, discussion, group work, and reading and research time.

Grading: Final grades will be based on class participation (20%), research articles presentation, discussions, and reviews (50%), a self-guided fieldtrip (15%), and a term paper (15%). Optional opportunities (i.e., take-home message reports) to improve students’ grade will be available from 1-2 all-day field trips.