Course title and number: Applied Biodiversity II (ABSII)
Term: Spring 2016

Course Description and Prerequisites

Course Description
The most important forest, land and water conservation issues around the world are the result of complex processes driven by human societies. Successfully addressing these problems will require accurate scientific information, effective policies and innovative governance arrangements. ABSII is a graduate course being offered as part of the Applied Biodiversity Science Program that will explore the practice of biodiversity science through the examination of real world conservation interventions by different actors and at different scales and their impact on biodiversity conservation and improved livelihoods. Conservation frameworks set forth by international conventions, nation-states policies, NGO programs and community-based initiatives will be examined and students will be encouraged to think about the policy and governance implications of their own research as well as to embed their work in the prism of these different frameworks and theories. The main goal of ABSII is to build cross-disciplinary awareness of biodiversity conservation practices and their theoretical foundations.

Prerequisite: Graduate classification

Course requirements:
- Attend all seminar meetings.
- Read all required material, and complete all assigned homework.
- Participate actively in discussions.
- Lead one week's discussions.
- Participate in group project.
- Develop final project.

Email will be the primary means of communication for the course. Check your email frequently and keep your inbox below quota!

Learning Outcomes

Our goal in this course is to build cross-disciplinary awareness of the practice of biodiversity conservation. Specific learning objectives include:

1. Develop the skill set to assess the policy drivers and governance responses across a range of ecological threats that affect biodiversity conservation.
2. Understand the role of policy advisors and policy brokers and how to develop and present scientific information to policy makers.
3. Design policy briefs based on students’ interests and research.
4. Students will improve their ability to work in an interdisciplinary setting and consider the different perspectives of conservation actors.
Instructor Information

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Email address: patrick.bixler@ag.tamu.edu/patricia.baiao@tamu.edu
Office hours: TBD
Office location: Old Heep 401

Grading Policies

Participation (20 pts.): You will be expected to attend all seminar meetings and to contribute thoughtfully to discussion. Seminar participation will be evaluated on the basis of the consistent quality of your interventions and professional contributions to the class. "Quality" contribution in this context includes demonstration of careful preparation for class and insightful engagement with the theoretical material. "Professional" contribution includes helping maintain a fruitful and respectful discussion.

Facilitation of discussion (20 pts.): Each of you will be responsible for facilitating one of the weekly topics. You will work in pairs. Preparation will include reading and synthesizing the main messages from that week’s readings, building a discussion plan, and guiding our conversation.

As part of the facilitation, one-page commentaries for each reading assigned are to be prepared for the week. These commentaries should be concise and tightly focused on some aspect or related aspects of the reading that can serve as basis for seminar discussion. The commentaries should be handed in hardcopy to the instructors and posted for electronic distribution to the rest of the class by 9 A.M. on the day of the class of each week.

Final Project (50 pts): For this assignment you will assume the role of a policy advisor. You will focus on a topic of professional interest (for many of you this will be your thesis or dissertation research topic) and develop policy and governance suggestions of the environmental problem of your focus. The project has two parts: 1) policy proposal and 2) presentation. The policy proposal will present the problem based on scientific evidence and make informed policy and governance suggestions. Your policy suggestions will be presented to a panel of “policy-makers”.

Group Project (10 pts): A group of 3-4 students will make up a “policy panel” that will assess the policy proposals presented by your peers. Each panel will be responsible for responding to the final policy proposals developed and presented by your peers.

Attendance and Make-up Policies

Students are expected to attend all seminar meetings. Absences for previously scheduled activities will only be excused if they are communicated well in advance. If you have not discussed an absence with one of the instructors ahead of time, it will be considered unexcused unless proper documentation is provided. See http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07

Prompt completion of work in this class is important. Past due assignments will receive 50% credit if completed and handed in within 24 hours of the due date, after which it will receive grade zero. Late work will only be accepted without penalty if under University Excused Absence rules (http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07). We will grant extensions in situations not covered by university rules only in extenuating circumstances, and only if you contact us before the due date for the assignment.
# Course Topics, Calendar of Activities, Major Assignment Dates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Required Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 (Jan 26)</td>
<td>Climate Change Policy and Governance I</td>
<td>Guide to UN Climate Change process <a href="http://bigpicture.unfccc.int/">http://bigpicture.unfccc.int/</a></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Borie, M. and M. Hume. 2015. Framing global biodiversity: IPBES</td>
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http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/08/24/the-weight-of-the-world


Caron, J., S. Raush, and N. Winchester. 2015. Leakage from sub-


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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>References</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 (Mar 15)</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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12 (Apr 5)  Guest Speaker


http://www.theguardian.com/science/2013/dec/02/scientists-policy-governments-science


Sutherland, W. J., Armstrong-Brown S., Armsworth P. R. et al. 2006. The identification of 100 ecological questions of high policy relevance in the UK.


14 (Apr 19)  Final Assignment presentations

15 (Apr 26)  Final Assignment presentations

16 (May 3)  Course conclusion

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, in Cain Hall, Room B118, or call 845-1637. For additional information visit [http://disability.tamu.edu](http://disability.tamu.edu)

**Academic Integrity**

For additional information please visit [http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu](http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu)

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do.”