

Course objectives

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Through this course, you will:

- Analyze biophysical and social aspects of sustainable forest management
- Create a Research Project proposal that addresses a real-world problem in forest sustainability. For most of you, this will be a MESM Group Project proposal, but other options will be available for PhD and MEDS students
- Join a community of students, practitioners and scholars interested in forest sustainability

Course format

This course has two primary components:

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1. Learning about substantive topics in forest sustainability
2. Developing MESM Group Project proposals (or other research proposals) that are related to forest sustainability.

The class will meet weekly on Tuesdays from 2:00 to 3:15. Most sessions will address both course components.

Topics in forest sustainability

We will examine forest sustainability from a variety of perspectives, including ecology, hydrology, climate science, and policy. Many of these will be led by guest experts from Bren and across UCSB. To do this, students will

1. Read one or two papers on the subject
2. Post responses to the readings and other course material on the Discussions workspace
3. Participate in a class discussion with the guest instructor

Group Project (GP) proposals

For MESM students, a particularly exciting aspect of this course is the opportunity to develop GP proposals in topics that you are interested in working on. In past years, most or all of the proposals generated in this class have been selected to move forward as official Bren group projects. The full details of the GP proposal generation are in the section "[Preparing your group project proposal](#)." In brief, we will spend the first few weeks of the quarter identifying potential topics and clients; the middle of the quarter drafting and getting feedback on proposal components; and the end of the quarter finalizing the substance of the proposal (some aspects, such as formal letters of support from the client, can come after the class is over).

MEDS and PhD students may participate in drafting a MESM GP proposal; or they may work on a proposal type that is more appropriate to their program. Details on these options are forthcoming.

Textbook

There is no textbook for this course. Links to readings will be posted in the relevant week's block on the Canvas page.

Grading

- Participation in class and online discussions (40%)
- Written GP proposal (40%)
- Final presentation of GP proposal (20%)

Online participation

Full credit requires:

- Posting at least once each week in the Discussions workspace
- Regularly engaging with other students' posts
- Posts demonstrate engagement with the readings and other preparatory material

In-Class participation

Full credit requires:

- Attending <most> class sessions (please let me know in advance if you are unable to attend a session). If circumstances make this difficult for you to achieve, contact me to arrange alternative ways of engaging with the in-class discussion.
- Regular participation during class (asking and answering questions, contributing insights to discussions, etc.)
- Co-establish a standard of inclusion

Research project proposal





The research project proposal will be graded based on the final written version; there will be opportunities for feedback on preliminary versions throughout the quarter (see below).

- The Objectives and Significance sections are clearly stated, and make a compelling case for the project's need
- The Background section indicates a clear understanding of the project context, includes many citations and well-written important details
- The Approaches section describes a sound methodology that can effectively address the project questions
- For MESM GP proposals, the proposal follows the Bren School Guidelines for Group Project Proposals and contains all elements prescribed therein (except 4g (internships), 5b (budget), and 5c (client letter of support))

Schedule

Exact topic titles may be updated! The corresponding blocks from further down the GS page will be unhidden as soon as I have materials from the guest instructor.

Week	Date	Topic	Instructor	GP activity
1	10/1	Course intro, Forests as complex adaptive systems	Joan Dudney	Overview of class and GP proposals/initial pitches
2	10/8	Forest disturbances and climate change	Joan Dudney	Iterate on ideas and start reaching out
3	10/15	Wildfire, climate and forests	Max Mortiz ➞	Continue to iterate on ideas and clients
4	10/22	Management and inequality	Sarah Anderson ➞	Finalize groups and projects
5	10/29	Indigenous forest management	Irene Vasquez	Start drafting GP
6	11/5	Forests and water	Naomi Tague ➞	Continue drafting GP

7	11/12	Causes of, and policies to stop, tropical deforestation	Robert Heilmayr 	Continue iterating on GP
8	11/19	Deforestation and disease	Andy Macdonald 	GP Draft due in class for peer review
9	11/26	GP working group day; in class or online		Peer Feedback due; Work on proposal revisions
10	12/3	Economic of climate change and forests	 Andrew Plantinga 	Work on revisions and presentations
11	12/10	Wrap-up and GP presentations	Joan Dudney	Present GP proposals to class

Discussions

Discuss-wkxx (xx = 01, 02, etc.): discussions for material related to the class in week xx. Most discussion activity will be prior to the class meeting, but if you are someone who likes to discuss ideas that came up in class, feel free to post to your peers after class as well. Joan will provide specific discussion prompts each week, but you're welcome to ask questions about the reading or class session, or point out something that you found particularly interesting.

Group project ideas and clients: discussion for suggesting potential Group Project clients and ideas. To post a new suggestion, please

1. First write a new post in the main discussion.
2. Then use the *Reply* option to write a more detailed description of the organization and the topics they may be interested in. You can also include relevant links and details about individuals with whom you've been in contact. This will start a new thread and will keep the topics in the main channel easier to find.

When discussing or commenting on a client, please do so in the topic's thread.

Once group project proposal teams have gotten established, we will add discussions for each team to facilitate their ongoing interaction.

Best practices

- Keep your tone informal, but clear and polite. Frame your comments and questions in a similar way as you would if we were having an in-person discussion.
- If you are criticizing the content of a post, be sure to focus your critique on the ideas (and be as specific as possible); don't disparage the person who wrote the post.
- If you want to say something that is a direct response to or elaboration on an existing post, use the "Reply" feature.
- Feel free to like responses but only if it is a genuine reaction--we don't want to create a contest to see who can collect the most likes!
- If you are overwhelmed by notifications, you can modify, to some degree, what triggers a notification on your computer or phone. All critical course announcements will be sent via email, so you are safe turning notifications off altogether (but if you do this, remember to check the discussions periodically!).

Contacting your instructor

For routine communication, you can reach me via **email** @ dudney@ucsb.edu. I will endeavor to respond to emails **within two business days**.

For time-sensitive communication, please include "TIME SENSITIVE" in the title of your email and I will try to respond within a few hours.

How should you address your instructor?

You are welcome and invited to call me by my first name, Joan. If you prefer greater formality, Dr. Dudney works too.

A typical week

Because class meets on Tuesdays, much of the preparation for week n will have to be done during week $n-1$. All material will be posted to Canvas at least a week in advance.

I recommend that you establish a regular schedule; here is a suggestion:

- Wednesday: Take a day off from thinking about forests
- Thursday-Friday: do the readings and watch any video material
- Friday: Post on the course Discussions workspace
- Monday: Read your classmates' posts, and respond where appropriate
- Tuesday after 12: briefly review your notes and posts to remind yourself of previous discussions
- Tuesday 2:00: Come to class, discuss readings, and post your ideas afterwards if you feel inspired

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Similarly, you own the copyright in your original papers and exam essays. If I am interested in posting your answers or papers on the course web site, I will ask for your written permission.