

The syllabus below is for the most recent iteration of this course, and should give a clear indication of the broad thematic content and structure. However, each iteration of this course is novel, and so the syllabus for the upcoming course is currently under development and will be posted later.

BIOL 416

Terrestrial Ecosystems

Winter Term (2018-19)

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Principles of terrestrial ecosystem ecology: soils; plant-soil interactions; energy and water balance; carbon and nutrient cycling; species effects; landscape-level and whole earth biogeochemistry; global change.

NOTE Overnight field trip: estimated cost \$50.

PREREQUISITE BIOL 300/3.0 or GPHY 317/3.0. ONE-WAY EXCLUSION May not be taken with or after BIOL 510/3.0.

SCHEDULE

Lectures: Mondays 10.00-11.30; Wednesdays 8.30-10.00. BIOSC 3110.

Lab: Mondays: 2.30-5.30. BIOSC 3311.

Instructor	Dr. P. Grogan
Instructor Contact	groganp@queensu.ca Phone: 613-533-6152
Office Hours	To be determined
TA:	Mike Lavender
TA Contact Information	E-mail: mike.lavender@queensu.ca Room 4231, Biosciences complex. 533 6000 ext. 78493
Office Hours	To be determined

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Explain and evaluate the major concepts in terrestrial ecosystem ecology that distinguish it from lower hierarchical levels such as community and population ecology
2. Describe and contrast the major processes and features that distinguish local terrestrial ecosystem-types with special emphasis on the winter season
3. Search, critically assess, and synthesize primary and secondary literature in the natural sciences
4. Present a synthetic, logical, and individualistic seminar on a fundamental conceptual issue in terrestrial ecosystem ecology

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5. Develop, conduct, and analyse an experimental research study on some aspect of plant-soil relationships that affects ecosystem functioning
6. Develop an original, cohesive, synthesis essay on the distinctive concepts of ecosystem-level ecology that are fundamentally necessary to understand global planetary boundaries and our future sustainability.

Learning Hours

<i>Teaching method</i>		<i>Average hours per week</i>	<i>Number of weeks</i>	<i>Total hours</i>
In-class hours	Lecture			
	Seminar	3	12	36
	Laboratory	3	6	18
	Tutorial			
	Practicum	1	12	12
	Group learning	1	12	12
	Individual instruction			
Other	Online activity	1	12	12
	Off-campus activity	16	1	16
	Private study	1.5	12	18
Total hours on task				124

Course Outline

The ecosystem approach to ecology treats organisms and the physical aspects of their environment as components of a single integrated system. Terrestrial ecosystem functioning is governed by interactions amongst animals, plants, and soil organisms, as well as exchanges of energy and resources with the atmosphere, soils, rocks, and aquatic environments. This advanced undergraduate level ecology course is focused on plant-soil interactions as being a fundamental determinant of the structure and functioning of terrestrial ecosystems around the world. As a group, we will attempt to synthesize recent advances arising from the ecosystem approach with established ecological theory to describe and explain ecosystem-level patterns and processes in the terrestrial environment.

The course content for the 2019 iteration will be centered around developing and applying terrestrial ecosystem ecological concepts to address the following thematic question: ***What fundamentally distinctive concepts does ecosystem-level ecology provide that are essential in understanding global planetary boundaries and our future sustainability?***

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Initial seminars by the course professor will introduce The ecosystem concept; The climate system; Soil development; Soil transformations; Soil physical and chemical properties; The biology of soils; Decomposition; Plant-soil interactions; Sustaining socio-ecological systems. Subsequent seminars will be led by individual students on particular topics of their choosing.

Textbooks/Readings

Principles of Terrestrial Ecosystem Ecology. 2011. 2nd edition. Chapin, F.S. III, Matson, P.A. and Mooney, H.A. Springer.

Selected seminar papers chosen by prof and by the students to be posted on the onQ system and referenced on the course web site (<http://post.queensu.ca/~biol416/index.html>).

Grading Scheme

Component	Weight (%)	Date
Participation in discussion	15	Ongoing through course
Seminar questions	15	Ongoing through course
Seminar	25	To be determined
Participation in research experiment	15	To be determined
Final synthesis essay	30	To be determined

Grading Method

All components of this course will receive numerical percentage marks. The final grade you receive for the course will be derived by converting your numerical course average to a letter grade according to Queen's Official Grade Conversion Scale:

Queen's Official Grade Conversion Scale

Grade	Numerical Course Average (Range)
A+	90-100
A	85-89
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72

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C+	67-69
C	63-66
C-	60-62
D+	57-59
D	53-56
D-	50-52
F	49 and below

Location and Timing of Final Examinations

The exam dates for each Term are listed on the Faculty of Arts and Science webpage under "Important Dates." Student exam schedules for the Fall Term are posted via SOLUS immediately prior to the Thanksgiving holiday; for the Winter Term they are posted on the Friday before Reading Week, and for the Summer Term they are individually noted on the Arts and Science Online syllabi. **Students should delay finalizing any travel plans until after the examination schedule has been posted. Exams will not be moved or deferred to accommodate employment, travel/holiday plans or flight reservations.** Also, as indicated in Academic Regulation 8.3, students must write all final examination in all on-campus courses on the Kingston campus.

Statement on Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is constituted by the six core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage (see www.academicintegrity.org). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University (see the Senate Report on Principles and Priorities <http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senate/report-principles-and-priorities>).

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available in the Arts and Science Calendar (see Academic Regulation 1 <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/regulations/academic-regulations/regulation-1>), on the Arts and Science website (see <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/undergraduate/academic-integrity>), and from the instructor of this course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.

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Accommodations for Disabilities

Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for people with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. The Senate Policy for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities was approved at Senate in November 2016 (see <https://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.uslclwww/files/files/policies/senateandtrustees/ACADACCOMMPOLICY2016.pdf>). If you are a student with a disability and think you may need academic accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the **Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS)** and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the QSAS website at: <http://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services/>

Academic Consideration for Students with Extenuating Circumstances

Queen's University is committed to providing academic consideration to students experiencing extenuating circumstances that are beyond their control and are interfering with their ability to complete academic requirements related to a course for a short period of time, not to exceed three months. Students receiving academic consideration must meet all essential requirements of a course. The Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances was approved at Senate in April, 2017 (see <http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.uslclwww/files/files/policies/senateandtrustees/Academic%20Considerations%20for%20Extenuating%20Circumstances%20Policy%20Final.pdf>) Each Faculty has developed a protocol to provide a consistent and equitable approach in dealing with requests for academic consideration for students facing extenuating circumstances. Arts and Science undergraduate students can find the Faculty of Arts and Science protocol and the portal where a request can be submitted at: <http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/accommodations>. Students in other Faculties and Schools who are enrolled in this course should refer to the protocol for their home Faculty.

If you need to request academic consideration for this course, you will be required to provide the name and email address of the instructor/coordinator. Please use the following:

Instructor/Coordinator Name: Dr. Paul Grogan

Instructor/Coordinator email address: groganp@queensu.ca

Copyright

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