RESEARCH APPROACHES IN THE
HUMAN DIMENSIONS OF ECOSYSTEM SCIENCE AND MANAGEMENT
ENVS 6700 and 7700 ~ Spring 2015

COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructors:  Dr. Joanna Endter-Wada  Dr. Charles Romesburg
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Office Hours: Thurs., 12:00-1:00 p.m. or by appointment (starting 2/24)
             Daily, 9:00-10:15 a.m. (or when in office or by appointment)

Course Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.
Location:    BNR 360

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to give you a basic foundation in research methodologies, especially as they pertain to understanding the human dimensions of ecosystem science and management. We will explore the fundamentals of good science generally, and focus more specifically on the challenges, techniques, and ethical issues pertaining to conducting research about people’s relationships with the environment. Students will be introduced to considerations in research conceptualization and design, contextualizing research, and choosing appropriate techniques for data gathering, management, and analysis. Various research approaches will be compared, including those generally referred to as “quantitative,” “qualitative,” and “mixed methods.” The overarching objective of this course is to help train you to think creatively and systematically about designing and conducting research and communicating the results.

Stress on Reasoning and Communications Skills. This course involves a variety of communication skills: reading; listening; speaking; and writing. There are two main reasons for these emphases. First, USU aims to strengthen students' communication skills by reinforcing them throughout the university curriculum, because these skills and competencies are important for professionals in all fields today. Second, analytic and communicative clarity are highly interrelated, i.e. clear thinking is easy to articulate while muddled thinking is hard to elucidate. Thus, working on your ability to express ideas clearly is also an avenue for strengthening your ability to think clearly.

Engagement and Participation. This course is designed as a graduate seminar with a high level of engagement and participation from all students expected. Students should complete assigned readings before coming to class and be prepared to be involved in class discussions and activities. In class, students should listen attentively to the professors, guest speakers, and fellow students. Please feel free to ask questions, discuss issues, and debate points of view as opportunities arise to do so.

READINGS (books are available for purchase at the USU Bookstore)

Required Texts:

Additional reading material will be available through Canvass.
COURSE SCHEDULE

This course is divided into two parts. Each part has a separate, detailed guide to topics and readings.

   Taught by Dr. Romesburg

Part 2: Human Dimensions Research - Feb. 24–April 23 (16 sessions)
   Taught by Dr. Endter-Wada

Note: Class will not be held on February 17 (Monday classes meet on Tuesday) or on March 10 and 12 (Spring Break). Final exams are April 27-May 1.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Students will be evaluated based upon their performance on a variety of assignments, including exams, quizzes and other class exercises, writings, class presentations, and completion of IRB Certification.

Drs. Romesburg and Endter-Wada will give and grade assignments for their parts of the class. Part 1 is worth 40% of students’ grades and Part 2 is worth 60% of their grades. Students’ final grades will be determined by consultation between Drs. Endter-Wada and Romesburg.

COURSE POLICIES

Responsibilities of the Instructors: We are generally responsible for facilitating your learning. Our specific responsibilities include: designing the course, being prepared for and helping to facilitate each class session, coordinating class activities and making individual assignments, providing constructive feedback on your work, and evaluating your performance. We are available to help you succeed in this course. We have set office hours, are available on email, and are more than happy to meet with you. Please take advantage of these opportunities to contact us, especially if you have trouble or concerns you would like to discuss.

Responsibilities of the Students: Students are responsible for attending class and completing all assignments. Assigned readings are to be completed before the class session for which they are assigned. This course may involve a variety of individual and group activities and assignments. Students are expected to come prepared in order to be actively engaged in the learning process and to be responsible to classmates who will depend upon one another in group exercises. Students should feel free to ask questions, discuss issues, and debate points of view as opportunities arise to do so. Students' active participation will make the course more interesting and worthwhile for everyone.

Professionalism: Students will be expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner in this course. Such conduct includes exhibiting respect for other members of the class, contributing regularly and productively in class discussions, and being responsible to fellow students in completing group assignments. Students will be required to abide by all codes of conduct and policies pertaining to students at Utah State University and in the College of Natural Resources. Students are responsible for knowing university policies, which can be found in the student catalog. Policies of the College of Natural Resources are available upon request. Please note that plagiarism and other blatantly unprofessional behavior violate these policies and will be cause for failing this course.

Special Classroom Accommodations: This university is required by law to help disabled students participate fully in all programs, activities, and services. Any student with a disability that requires accommodations should contact the instructor to make arrangements for the provision of course materials in alternative formats. Please note disabilities must be documented by the Disability Resource Center.