

FO 3012

INTRODUCTION TO FOREST COMMUNITIES

Instructors:

Dr. Jim Shepard Thompson Hall 105 325-2781	Dr. Scott Roberts Thompson Hall 351 325-3044
Dr. Andy Ezell Thompson Hall 325 325-1688	Dr. David Evans Thompson Hall 353 325-2796
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Lecture Room: a208 Thompson Hall Annex

Prerequisites: PSS 3303 Soils
FO 2112/2111 Dendrology

Objectives: Our objective is to provide students with an introduction to how landscapes and forest communities develop and are characterized and classified. This will include an introduction to the natural features of landscapes and forest communities, and their role in influencing land use. Instructional approaches will include lectures, field observations, and exercises that demonstrate various techniques used in ecology, silviculture, soils, hydrology, and watershed and wildlife management.

Major Topics:

1. Geology and physiography of Mississippi/Alabama
2. Characteristics and identification of forest soils
3. Ecological classification of forest communities
4. Relationships of landforms with soils and vegetation
5. Influence of landscape variation on land use
6. Methods of assessing vegetation structure and composition in forest communities

References: Samuelson, Lisa J. and Hogan, Michael E. 2003. Forest Trees: A Guide to the Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic Regions of the United States. Prentis Hall. 429p.

Course materials will be provided in a 3-hole punched booklet (purchase from MSU bookstore) and from links to files and Web addresses on the course web page.

Expectations of Student Behavior: Much of the work in this course is performed out of doors and within a crew format. In order to operate efficiently and make this course a meaningful learning experience, we expect that students will act responsibly, cooperatively, and with respect for fellow students and course instructors. Any activity deemed disruptive

and not in agreement with these standards of behavior may result in a reduction of course grade or dismissal from the course.

Academic

Misconduct:

Violations of the academic honesty code will be dealt with in the strictest terms. Students are advised to become familiar with the University's academic honesty code.

The Honor Code reads as follows:

“As a Mississippi State University student I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those that do.”

Policies and procedures for handling academic misconduct as outlined under University policies relating to students can be found at Internet Web site address <http://www.msstate.edu/dept/audit/1207.html> and will be followed in this course. Students are responsible for reading all materials (including that contained in the Attachments) within this Web site relating to academic misconduct. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that both the letter and the intent of this code are met in all circumstances. Ignorance of this code will not provide a refuge from the consequences of misconduct.

Course Rules:

1. Attendance is mandatory.
There are 10 class days, so 10 percent of the course grade will be deducted for each day of unexcused absence. Also, you are expected to arrive in class on time and to be on the bus at designated departure times. One percent of the course grade will be deducted for each late appearance.
2. Use of tobacco products is not permitted in the classroom or on the busses.
3. Hardhats will be worn at all times when working in the field. Hats off during indoor classes.
4. Cell phones OFF during lectures and field exercises.

Course

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated based upon daily quizzes, crew lab-exercise reports, field-trip quizzes, and a comprehensive final examination.

1. Daily quizzes will be given at the start of many of the days. Quizzes will be on materials covered during the previous day's lectures and field assignments.
2. Field quizzes will be given (often unannounced) to ensure that students are actively engaged in field activities and understand the materials being presented.
3. Crew lab-exercise reports will be required for some exercises. All members of the crew are required to contribute to the collection of data and preparation of the crew report. Other members of a crew must report to the instructor any lack of participation by a crew member. Failure to do one's fair share of the work will result in a reduction of the individual student's grade for that report.
4. The final exam on Friday June 8 will consist of two parts. A field portion will test the student's knowledge of landscapes, soils and dendrology. A comprehensive written portion will cover all of the concepts and techniques presented during the course.

The final grade in the course will be based on the following weights:

Individual performance:

Daily Quizzes	15 %
Field Quizzes	10 %
Final Examination:	
Dendrology & Soils	10 %
Written	40 %

Crew performance:

Lab-exercise Reports	25 %
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NOTE: If a student's individual performance is less than 70% of the individual performance by the top student in the course, then crew performance will not be used in calculating that individual's final grade. A good crew grade will not be used to offset failure at the individual level.

Course grades will be assigned on the following scale:

90-100 percent	A
80-89 percent	B
70-79 percent	C
60-69 percent	D
< 60 percent	F