

**NR 544E Course Outline, Spring 2015**  
**Conservation Methods: Integrative Field Work\***

Department of Human Dimensions of Natural Resources  
Warner College of Natural Resources  
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Office Hours  
Wednesday 11am-12pm  
and by appointment

\*Note: Syllabus and course schedule subject to change at instructors' discretion

**Schedule**: The class meets Wednesdays 8:00-10:30am in Forestry 217. Course ID#: 20984, Section L01, 3 credits.

## **I. COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this graduate-level course is to provide an overview of research methods used in the field of conservation. While the focus is primarily on *social science* research methods, students will also be exposed to a sampling of basic *ecological* field techniques. In conjunction with the spatial information course (NR 544D), this course will provide an introduction to a wide variety of methods that may be useful for your thesis and future research efforts. No semester-long course can possibly cover in detail the wide variety of methods currently in use to study conservation issues. Instead this course aims to provide an initial introduction to many methods and guide you towards additional resources where more details can be sought.

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- understand the research process; define research problems, questions, and objectives
- conduct literature searches and develop a basic study plan for research activities
- differentiate between qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches to research and understand key considerations and uses of each approach
- identify the target population(s) and develop a sampling plan for data collection
- formulate and employ semi-structured interviews; design and conduct focus groups
- develop and collect data using questionnaires
- conduct and report basic qualitative and quantitative data analysis
- understand ethical concerns in research

## **II. COURSE MATERIALS**

### 1. Required Text:

Newing et al. (2011). *Conducting research in conservation: A social science perspective*. London: Routledge.

This text is available for purchase at the CSU Bookstore; also available through electronic loan from the CSU library.

### 2. Required Articles/Book Chapters:

Additional readings will be assigned for certain topics. These readings will be made available to you through the CLTL web portal or via email prior to the class session in which they will be discussed.

### III. COURSE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

#### Academic Integrity

This course will adhere to CSU's Student Conduct Code and Academic Integrity Policy described in the 2014-2015 General Catalog: <http://www.catalog.colostate.edu>. All students are expected to familiarize themselves with these policies.

#### Student Athletes / Special Needs

If you are a student with university-approved circumstances that require special accommodations, it is your responsibility to let me know your needs at the beginning of the semester. I will then be able to make accommodations to assist you and help you succeed in this class.

#### Attendance and Participation

Prompt attendance of class sessions is a requirement for this course. You are expected to do the readings and come to class prepared for discussion. If you need to miss a class, please let me know in advance. It is your responsibility to communicate with me and/or fellow classmates regarding announcements and course content that were covered during a missed class.

#### Written Assignments

Written assignments completed outside of class must be typed and double-spaced and use American Psychological Association (APA, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition) style, when applicable, for formatting in-text citation of references and reference lists. I encourage you to take advantage of the University's writing center for assistance with written assignments. Details can be found at <http://writing.colostate.edu/>. Also see <http://www.apastyle.org/> and <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/> for more details on APA formatting.

#### Late Assignments, Makeup Work, and Extra Credit

All assignments are due **via email** no later than the beginning of class on the designated date. Late assignments will be de-valued at 5% per day, including weekends, and will be assigned a zero after five days. If at any time you are concerned about your grade in this course, you are encouraged to communicate with me as soon as possible. Do not wait until the end of the semester if you are having problems with the class or assignments. There will be no extra credit offered in this course.

#### IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

Grades will be based on performance on the following:

<u>Grading Summary</u>	<u>Percent of Grade</u>	<u>Total Points</u>
Research problem identification assignment	15%	15
Interview assignment	15%	15
Questionnaire assignment	15%	15
Qualitative data analysis assignment	15%	15
Quantitative data analysis assignment	15%	15
Personal reflections paper	25%	25
	<u>100% Total</u>	<u>100</u>

Due dates for assignments are noted on the course schedule, and assignment guidelines will be distributed and discussed in more detail in class. Many of these assignments will involve working in groups around a local conservation issue of your group's choosing. We will begin the semester by identifying these issues. You will work in groups of approximately 4 people.

Grades will be based on the total points accumulated from requirements listed on the previous page. Instructor will use +/- Grading. Grades will be assigned as follows.

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>	<b>Points</b>
A+	98+	98+
A	94-97	94-97
A-	90-93	90-93
B+	88-89	88-89
B	84-87	84-87
B-	80-83	80-83
C+	78-79	78-79
C	70-77	70-77
D	60-69	60-69
F	Less than 60	Less than 60

## V. COURSE CONTENT AND SCHEDULE

Week	Topics	Readings	Assignments
January 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course introduction</li> </ul>		
January 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of social science research in conservation and the research process</li> <li>Introduction to qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods</li> </ul>	Text: Chapters 1-3	
February 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research problem identification</li> <li>Developing research questions and objectives</li> <li>Literature searches and study plan development</li> </ul>		
February 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defining the target population</li> <li>Sampling</li> </ul>	Text: Chapter 4	<b>Due:</b> research problem identification assignment
February 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews</li> <li>Focus groups</li> </ul>	Text: Chapter 6	
February 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administration techniques</li> <li>Survey item development</li> <li>Reliability and validity</li> <li>Non-response bias</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Text: Chapter 7	
March 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Survey research (continued)</li> <li>Mid-term course evaluation</li> </ul>		<b>Due:</b> interview assignment
<b>March 9-13</b>	<b><i>Synergistic Learning Week</i></b>		
<b>March 16-20</b>	<b><i>Spring Break: No Classes</i></b>		
March 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualitative data analysis</li> </ul>	Text: Chapter 14	<b>Due:</b> questionnaire assignment
April 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecological methods classroom session (David Anderson &amp; Susan Punjabi)</li> </ul>	TBA	
<b>April 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b><i>Ecological methods field trip</i></b> (full day)</li> </ul> <p>-----</p>		
April 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantitative data analysis</li> </ul>	Text: Chapters 15-16	
April 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantitative data analysis (continued)</li> <li>Scientific writing, reporting and presentation of results</li> </ul>	Text: Chapters 17-18	<b>Due:</b> qualitative data analysis assignment
<b>April 20-24</b>	<b><i>Synergistic Learning Week</i></b>		
April 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research ethics</li> <li>New directions in conservation social science research</li> <li>Integrative research: challenges and opportunities</li> </ul>	Text: Chapters 12-13	<b>Due:</b> quantitative data analysis assignment
May 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course review and wrap-up</li> <li>Group exercise/presentations: applying what you've learned to design a research project</li> <li>Final course evaluation</li> </ul>		<b>Due:</b> personal reflections paper
<b>May 11-15</b>	<b><i>Capstone Field Trip</i></b>		