NATURAL RESOURCES (NR)

Degree Offered: M.S., Certificate

This program is offered in Durham.

The Department of Natural Resources and the Environment offers a Master of Science program that provides advanced, research-based study in the ecology, biogeochemistry, economics, policy, and management of vital natural resources, including water, soil, forests, wildlife, and agricultural crops. Students take an interdisciplinary approach to their research and use the tools of the natural and social sciences, including geospatial methods, to make fundamental and significant contributions toward local, regional, and global sustainability.

Students are supported by a highly productive and internationally recognized faculty, outstanding laboratory facilities, and a diversity of accessible terrestrial, marine, and freshwater field sites. Research conducted by faculty and graduate students has resulted in UNH being ranked second of 316 North American institutions in scholarly contributions to the field of ecology.

Possible career trajectories are diverse. Some graduates pursue private sector environmental and social science consulting. Others seek positions in planning, environmental protection, research, or resource management with federal or state agencies (e.g., NOAA, USDA, EPA, NRCS), private industry, or with non-governmental organizations. Graduates from the environmental economics option may also find careers in agribusiness or banking. Graduates may choose to pursue advanced study at the doctoral level.

Students may choose to specify one of six options:

NATURAL RESOURCES: Ecosystem Science

Students in the Ecosystem Science option typically have a strong background in environmental science, earth science, ecology, or related fields. Areas of interest include the ecology, microbiology and biogeochemistry of soils, groundwaters, and surface waters, with an emphasis on how the different components of an ecosystem interact to produce system-level responses to management, global change, and other perturbations. Understanding controls on carbon storage, nutrient transformations, water quality, soil health and greenhouse gas emissions is central to much of the research conducted by students in this option.

Natural Resources: Environmental Conservation and Sustainability

Students in the Environmental Conservation and Sustainability option typically have a BS/BA degree or strong background in environmental and natural resource sciences with a keen interest in combining the natural sciences with the social sciences. Those without this background may be accepted upon completion of some additional fundamental courses. Areas of interest include natural resource policy, conservation biology, sustainability, ecological ethics and values, international environmental affairs, and spatial data analysis (remote sensing and GIS).

Natural Resources: Environmental Economics

Most entering students have a BA/BS in economics or environmental/agricultural economics. Incoming students should have, at a minimum, coursework in intermediate microeconomic theory, econometrics, and calculus. Areas of interest include agricultural economics, community and regional economics, land economics, water economics, and environmental economics.

Natural Resources: Forestry

Students in the Forestry option typically have an undergraduate degree in forestry or natural resource management. These degrees are specifically designed to meet the accreditation standards of a professional society. Those without this background may need to complete some additional coursework as part of their MS program. Areas of interest include forest resource economics and management, biometrics/measurements, forest health, forest ecosystem dynamics, and spatial data analysis (remote sensing and GIS).

Natural Resources: Wildlife and Conservation Biology

The MS option in Wildlife and Conservation Biology is typically pursued by those with a BS in Wildlife, Biology, Zoology, Environmental Studies, or related field. Research often takes an integrated field-laboratory approach to study population ecology and conservation, community and landscape ecology, conservation biology and genetics, and applied wildlife management issues.

Natural Resources and the Environment

The Natural Resources and the Environment option is available to students whose research interests and program of study do not align well with one of the five discipline-specific options.

Admission Requirements

Prior to submitting an application, applicants should contact one or more graduate faculty advisers to discuss programs and funding, and secure a commitment of a faculty member to serve as graduate adviser.

Applicants are expected to have completed either an undergraduate degree in the field in which they plan to specialize or show adequate preparation in the basic support courses of the field. Students with good undergraduate records who lack a background in a particular field may be admitted to a program, provided they are prepared to correct any deficiencies. All entering students must have taken at least one basic statistics course. Applicants have the option to submit current scores (within five years) from the general test of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). GRE scores are not required.

Students entering the forestry option may elect to develop concentrations within any of the above-listed areas. Applicants are expected to have backgrounds in forestry or related biological sciences. Students interested in ecosystem science are required to have adequate preparation in chemistry and mathematics as well as biological or Earth sciences. Students interested in wildlife and conservation biology are expected to have adequate preparation in biological sciences, chemistry, and mathematics. Students interested in environmental conservation and sustainability should have a background appropriate for their area of interest. Since environmental conservation and sustainability covers such a broad area, applicants are always reviewed carefully on an individual basis.

Students interested in environmental economics should have a background in both economics and the environment. Four or more undergraduate courses in economics or environmental economics, including intermediate microeconomics and intermediate macroeconomics, are required as well as calculus and statistics.

A Cooperative Doctoral Program

The Department of Natural Resources and the Environment participates in the Natural Resources and Earth System Science Ph.D. Program (NRESS), an interdepartmental degree offered at UNH. For further details on this program, please visit the NRESS program page.

https://colsa.unh.edu/natural-resources-environment

Programs

- Ecological Genomics (Graduate Certificate)
- Natural Resources and the Environment (M.S.)
- Natural Resources: Ecosystem Science (M.S.)
- Natural Resources: Environmental Conservation and Sustainability (M.S.)
- Natural Resources: Environmental Economics (M.S.)
- Natural Resources: Forestry (M.S.)
- Natural Resources: Wildlife and Conservation Biology (M.S.)

Courses

Natural Resources (NR)

NR #801 - Ecological Sustainability and Values
Credits: 4
Deeper more fundamental philosophical questions, including spiritual values questions, are being asked concerning the ecological/ environmental challenge of our time; its causes and resolution. Aspects of this challenge--environmental education, energy, food, agriculture, and natural resources--analyzed with ethics and values approaches. Students develop ways of responding to problem identification and resolution.
Equivalent(s): EC 802
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 803 - Watershed Water Quality Management
Credits: 4
Principles of land use as they relate to water quality and quantity. Lectures focus on biogeochemical cycles and the watershed approach to land and water resource management. Labs and field trips focus on methods of water sampling and analysis. One year of chemistry is recommended. Prereq: freshwater resources or watershed hydrology, or permission. Special fee. Lab/field trips.
Equivalent(s): WARM 803
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 806 - Soil Ecology
Credits: 4
Examines the ecological relationships between soil microorganisms and their biotic and abiotic environment, with emphasis on the role of soil microorganisms in biogeochemical cycling. Specific objectives are to examine the biodiversity present in soil systems, factors controlling microbial community composition and diversity, and linkages between soil microbial communities, soil physical properties, and soil organic matter and nutrient cycling dynamics. Prereq: Introduction to principles of biology, general chemistry or equivalent, or permission. Lab. Special fee.
Equivalent(s): SOIL 806
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 807 - Environmental Modeling
Credits: 4
Environmental Modeling introduces students to a range of key mathematical and computer modeling concepts and the ways they can be used to address important scientific questions. The course is divided into four topical sections: Population and Community Ecology, Hydrology, Biogeochemistry, and Ecosystems. In each section, modeling concepts and skills are presented together with environmental information to emphasize the linkage between quantitative methods and relevant scientific results. Prereq: MATH 425. (Also listed as EOS 807.)
Equivalent(s): EOS 807
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR #811 - Wetland Ecology and Management
Credits: 4
Analysis of the natural resources of coastal and inland wetlands and environmental problems caused by human use and misuse of these ecosystems. Groups will collect field data to summarize the structure and function of four wetland types within a management context. Special fee. Lab. Prereq: general ecology; watershed water quality management;/ or permission. Special fee. Lab/field trips.
Equivalent(s): FOR 811, FORS 811, WARM 811
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 812 - Mammalogy
Credits: 4
Evolution, ecology, behavior, physiology and diversity of mammals. The focus of the course is on conceptual issues, such as the relation of structure, function, physiology and ecology of species; reproductive physiology and life history strategies; and the evolution of mating systems and social structure. Familiarity of mammalian groups to the family level and identification of local fauna to species will be required. Prereq: BIOL 411 and BIOL 412 or equivalent. Lab. (Not offered every year.) Special fee.
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR #818 - Law of Natural Resources and Environment
Credits: 3
Federal and state environmental statutory and administrative law, its application, strengths and weaknesses, and options for future amendment.
Equivalent(s): EC 818
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 820 - International Environmental Politics and Policies for the 21st Century
Credits: 4
Students examine policies for managing human activities to sustain the health of regional ecosystems and planetary life-support systems. Selected problems of the international commons (oceans, marine resources, atmosphere, migratory species); global and regional carrying capacity (population, resource consumption), internationally shared ecosystems (trans-boundary watersheds, water-bodies, tropical forests); and the relevant international institutions and politics for policy formation, conflict resolution, and implementation. Using a policy-analytic framework, students develop case studies to assess international policies and institutional arrangements to achieve the objectives of Agenda 21--Earth Summit Strategy to Save the Planet. Prereq: permission.
Equivalent(s): EC 820
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 824 - Resolving Environmental Conflicts
Credits: 4
Theories and practices of environmental dispute settlement. Roles of public, non-governmental and governmental organizations. Effectiveness of public participation initiatives in influencing public policy decisions and/or resolving environmental conflicts. Alternative approaches to consensus (policy dialogues, joint problem solving; strategic planning; negotiation, mediation) as well as litigation. Specific cases are critiqued and evaluated; conflict resolution skills are developed. Students observe and/or participate in ongoing local decision processes. Prereq: permission. Lab. Special fee.
Equivalent(s): EC 824
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 829 - Silviculture
Credits: 4
The science and art of establishing, growing, and tending forests to meet multiple objectives. Basics of forest stand dynamics applied to the problems of timber management, wildlife habitat, water quality, and carbon sequestration. Prereq: NR 425 and NR 527 or permission. Special fee.
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 830 - Terrestrial Ecosystems
Credits: 4
Processes controlling the energy, water, and nutrient dynamics of terrestrial ecosystems; concepts of study at the ecosystem level, controls on primary production, transpiration, decomposition, herbivory; links to Earth-system science, acid deposition, agriculture. Prereq: forest ecology and introduction to botany or principles of biology, or permission.
Equivalent(s): EOS 830
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 834 - Tropical Ecology
Credits: 4
This course introduces students to the ecology of different tropical ecosystems, and involves students in analyzing and interpreting ecological field data and remotely sensed data. An important emphasis is to understand patterns and processes across scales - from individual plants to ecosystems and landscapes. The also addresses important global issues in the tropics, including climate change, land use change, diverse ecosystem services, and sustainable resource management.
Equivalent(s): FOR 834
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 840 - Inventory and Monitoring of Ecological Communities
Credits: 4
Provides an introduction to the major concepts associated with monitoring change in ecological communities. Students develop an appreciation for such issues as: identification of appropriate baselines for comparison; use of indicator species; the tools used to inventory common, rare, and secretive species; how trend data are analyzed; and the implications of failing to detect an indicator species. Restricted to senior wildlife majors others by permission. Special fee. Lab.
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 843 - Ecology and Society in a Changing Arctic
Credits: 4
Students will gain an in-depth understanding of the effect of climate change on ecology and people in the Arctic, which is experiencing rapid climate change. As a team, students will tackle a research project and contribute new knowledge in the form of a peer-reviewed publication, policy brief, outreach product, or other technical document. Graduate students are expected to be leaders in this inquiry-based course, particularly in the statistical analysis in R and writing of products.
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 844 - Biogeochemistry
Credits: 4
Examines the influence of biological and physical processes on elemental cycling and geochemical transformations from the molecular to the global scale, involving microorganisms, higher plants and animals and whole ecosystems; factors that regulate element cycles including soils, climate, disturbance and human activities; interactions among the biosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, and atmosphere; transformations of C, N, S, and trace elements. Prereq: one semester biology and two semesters chemistry or permission. (Also offered as EOS 844.)
Equivalent(s): EOS 813, EOS 844
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 845 - Forest Management
Credits: 4
Forest land ownership; management objectives; forest inventory regulation and policy; forest administration; professional responsibilities and opportunities. Restricted to Natural Resources majors. Lab. Special fee.
Equivalent(s): FOR 845
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 849 - Forest Inventory and Modeling
Credits: 4
Applied sampling and statistical techniques for assessing current forest conditions and predicting future growth, yield, and structure. Topics include plot and point sampling, ecological inventory, and evaluation of site quality and stand density. Prereq: MATH 420 and BIOL 528. Special fee.
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 851 - Aquatic Ecosystems
Credits: 4
Energy flow and nutrient cycling in streams, rivers and lakes, with an emphasis on understanding the control of primary productivity, decomposition and community structure by both hydrologic and biotic drivers. Role of aquatic ecosystems in carbon and nitrogen budgets at watershed, regional, and global scales. Impacts of environmental changes such as global climate change and suburbanization on aquatic ecosystems. Lab. Prereq: General Ecology.
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 857 - Remote Sensing of the Environment
Credits: 4
Practical and conceptual presentation of the use of remote sensing and other geospatial technologies for mapping and monitoring the environment. This course begins with the use of aerial photographs (photogrammetry, and photo interpretation) and includes measures of photo scale and area, parallax and stereo viewing, object heights, flight planning, photo geometry, the electromagnetic spectrum, camera systems and vegetation/land cover mapping. The course concludes with an introduction to other geospatial technologies including digital image analysis, global positioning (GPS), and geographic information systems (GIS). Conceptual lectures are augmented with practical homework assignments and hands-on lab exercises. Prereq: algebra. Special fee. Lab.
Equivalent(s): GEOG 757
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 859 - Digital Image Processing for Natural Resources
Credits: 4
Introduction to digital remote sensing, including multispectral scanners (Landsat and SPOT) radar, and thermal imagery. Hands-on image processing including filtering, image display, ratios, classification, registration, and accuracy assessment. GIS as it applies to image processing. Discussion of practical applications. Use of ERDAS image-processing software. Knowledge of PCs required. Prereq: NR 857 or equivalent and permission.
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 860 - Geographic Information Systems in Natural Resources
Credits: 4
This course in geographic information systems (GIS), covers advanced theory, concepts, and applications of GIS for natural resource and related disciplines. Discussion of database structures, data sources, spatial data manipulation/analysis/modeling, data quality and assessment. Students conduct a project of their design exploring aspects of GIS most useful to them. Lecture emphasizes concepts and applications through a text and selected peer-reviewed articles. Lab uses the latest version of ArcGIS software and provides hands-on experience. Prereq: introductory GIS course. Permission required.
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 861 - Environmental Soil Chemistry
Credits: 4
Chemical transformations in soils are the basis for soil fertility and plant productivity in natural and managed ecosystems, and also influence key ecosystem processes including soil organic matter turnover and soil-atmosphere exchange of trace gases. This class will explore soil chemistry processes and transformations related to soil nutrient cycling, plant nutrient acquisition, and other critical environmental services. Prereq: a course in soil science or instructor permission.
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 882 - Forest Health
Credits: 4
Forests cover over 30% of the land surface of the Earth and are incredibly important ecologically, economically, and to the health of the planet. While forests show great capacity to withstand disturbance, these ecosystems are increasingly threatened worldwide by climate change, native and introduced insects and disease, poor management practices, land clearing, drought, fire, and pollution. This course offers an overview of the dominant threats to forests, their causes and consequences, and options for monitoring, management, and mitigation. Special fee.
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 887 - Advanced Topics in Sustainable Energy
Credits: 4
This course will engage students in advanced topics in sustainable energy. Course reviews basic structure of our energy system, energy markets and economics, and the environmental, economic and technological of our energy landscape. Focus will be on electricity and building use with introductions to the transportation system. Students will gain the knowledge to evaluate innovations in technology, policy and financing necessary to implement sustainable energy goals from conservation and efficiency to renewables and energy storage. Prereq: NR 507 or CHE 410 or POLT 444.
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 899 - Master's Thesis
Credits: 1-10
Usually 6 credits, but up to 10 credits when the problem warrants. Cr/F.
Repeat Rule: May be repeated for a maximum of 10 credits.
Grade Mode:

NR #902 - Ecological Ethics and Values
Credits: 4
Increasingly fundamental philosophical questions, including spiritual values questions, are posited concerning the ecological/environmental challenge of our time, its causes, and its resolution. Examination of these questions, put forth with ethics and values approaches. Students work to develop responses to both problem identification and resolution.
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 903 - Approach to Research
Credits: 2
Provides incoming graduate students with an overview of the scientific method, peer review, and various research approaches and methods. Ethics, institutional and individual responsibilities, and effective communication are also addressed in a seminar and discussion format. Cr/F.
Grade Mode:

NR 905 - Grant Writing
Credits: 2
The ability to secure financial support for research and outreach activities is becoming increasingly important. This course is intended for graduate and post-graduate level students who need to write proposals for their graduate work or to gain external funding from government agencies. Students will gain in-depth understanding of the proposal writing process through class discussions, insights shared by UNH faculty, and by writing a research proposal following the entire process.
Equivalent(s): SOIL 905, WARM 905
Grade Mode:

NR 907 - Genomes to Phenomes Seminar
Credits: 1
This seminar-style class examines linkages between genotype, phenotype and fitness in natural populations through readings of the primary literature. Topics covered include organismal adaptation, evolutionary ecology, adaptive capacity, resilience to climate change, environmental genomics, microbiome evolution, and environmental DNA monitoring. Students will gain an appreciation for the role of genomics ecological, evolution, and conservation science.
Repeat Rule: May be repeated for a maximum of 2 credits.
Grade Mode:

NR 908 - Landscape Genetics
Credits: 3
This course provides interdisciplinary training and overview of landscape genetics -- the application of genetic and genomic tools to the study of organismal connectivity, dispersal and gene flow across the landscape. The course caters to graduate students in both basic and applied ecology and ecological genetics/genomics. Through a combination of online lectures distributed across multiple participating institutions and in-class seminar-style format, students learn from international experts and discuss papers with local peers.
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 909 - Analysis of Ecological Communities and Complex Data
Credits: 4
This course introduces you to a suite of tools appropriate for analyzing and interpreting multivariate data arising from agroecological (and other ecological) research. In this course we cover a variety of multivariate analyses, including clustering, ordination (principle components analysis, nonmetric multidimensional scaling, correspondence analysis), group comparisons (multi-response permutation procedures, PerMANOVA, indicator species analysis, discriminant analysis, mantel test), and other hypothesis-driven techniques, including structural equation modeling.
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR #910 - Forest Stand Dynamics
Credits: 4
Discussion and presentation on forest dynamics to include soil-site quality evaluation, individual tree growth, stand growth and yield, stand and forest management, and related resource politics. (Not offered every year.)
Equivalent(s): FOR 910
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR #912 - Sampling Techniques
Credits: 2-4
Techniques of sampling finite populations in environmental sciences; choice of sampling unit and frame, estimation of sample size, confidence limits, and comparisons of sample designs. Prereq: Applied statistics or equivalent. (Not offered every year.)
Equivalent(s): NR 812
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 947 - Ecosystem Science: Theory, Practice, and Management Applications for Sustainability
Credits: 4
This course is designed for graduate students to explore in detail the fundamental principles and practical application of ecosystem science. Emphasis will be placed on understanding historical context as well as the most recent peer-reviewed literature. Writing assignments will emphasize local, regional, and international applications of ecosystem science to address environmental sustainability.
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 965 - Community Ecology
Credits: 4
This course investigates how community properties -- species richness, and abundance distribution -- are influenced by evolutionary history, landscape phenomena such as dispersal and migration, and local factors such as the physical environment, disturbance, competition, predation, and positive interactions. Mechanistic models of community dynamics, including succession, are discussed. The influence of species diversity on ecosystem function is discussed, and all aspects of the course are related to conservation science.
Equivalent(s): NR 865
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 993 - Natural and Environmental Resources Seminar
Credits: 1 or 2
Presentation and discussion of recent research, literature, and policy problems in the natural and social sciences influencing resource use. Cr/F.
Grade Mode:

NR 995 - Investigations
Credits: 1-4
Investigations in Natural Resources may include topics in environmental conservation, forestry, soil science, water resources, and wildlife management. Permission required.
Grade Mode: Letter Grade

NR 996 - Natural Resource Education
Credits: 2
Responsibilities include set-up, teaching, and grading of one lab section per week or equivalent lecture experience. Meets the teaching requirement for M.S. degree students. Cr/F.
Grade Mode:

NR 998 - Directed Research
Credits: 1-4
Student designs and conducts original research that culminates in a paper of publishable quality. Alternative to NR 899 for those choosing non-thesis degree option. Cr/F. IA (continuous grading).
Repeat Rule: May be repeated for a maximum of 4 credits.
Grade Mode:

Faculty

Please see https://colsa.unh.edu/natural-resources-environment/people for faculty.