

Course Change Request

New Course Proposal

Date Submitted: 12/03/19 10:47 am

Viewing: **CONS 495 : Capstone in Conservation**

Strategies

Last edit: 12/03/19 10:47 am

Changes proposed by: atriple2

In Workflow

1. **CONS Director**
2. **LA Associate Dean**
3. **SC Associate Dean**
4. UN Academic Affairs
Dean
5. Assoc Provost-
Undergraduate
6. Registrar-Courses
7. Banner

Approval Path

1. 12/03/19 10:51 am
Cody Edwards
(cedward7):
Approved for CONS
Director
2. 12/19/19 4:40 pm
Jill Bowen
(jbowen4):
Approved for LA
Associate Dean

Are you completing this form on someone else's behalf?

Yes

Requestor:

Name	Extension	Email
Anneke DeLuycker	540-635-0463	adeluyck@gmu.edu

Effective Term: Fall 2021

Subject Code: CONS - Conservation Studies

Course Number: 495

Bundled Courses:

Is this course replacing another course? No

Equivalent Courses:

Catalog Title: Capstone in Conservation Strategies

Banner Title: Capstone in Conservation Strat

Will section titles vary by semester? No

Credits: 4

Schedule Type: Lecture

Hours of Lecture or Seminar per week: 4

Repeatable: May be only taken once for credit, limited to 3 attempts (N3) **Max Allowable Credits:** 4

Default Grade Mode: Undergraduate Regular

Recommended Prerequisite(s):
An approved upper-division course, preferably with a conservation focus.

Recommended Corequisite(s):
N/A

Required Prerequisite(s) / Corequisite(s) (Updates only):
Students must have completed at least 85 credits, or permission of instructor

Registrar's Office Use Only - Required Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s):

And/Or	(Course/Test Code	Min Grade/Score	Academic Level)	Concurrency?

Registration Restrictions (Updates only):

Registrar's Office Use Only - Registration Restrictions:

- Field(s) of Study:**
- Class(es):**
- Level(s):**
- Degree(s):**
- School(s):**

Catalog Description:
Students work in teams to develop a conservation plan concerning a current, challenging conservation issue with local relevance or global reach. Students use an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach to examine the topic, incorporate science-based research and evidence, and develop practical solutions for some of the world’s most pressing conservation challenges. Students will engage with various conservation practitioners to help direct project goals and develop communication plans for appropriate audiences.

Justification:

Provides students with direct experience in developing and designing conservation-related projects, with the goal of mitigating a threat or reducing negative effects of an issue that has local relevance or global reach. Students will use their knowledge concerning conservation theory, methods and application, and will gain practical, interdisciplinary training in project development, management training, communication skills, teamwork interaction, group consensus building, and stakeholder engagement.

Does this course cover material which crosses into another department? No

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand and analyze complex, multi-faceted conservation issues
- Work in teams to design a comprehensive conservation plan, using scientific and social approaches
- Conceptualize novel solutions to challenging, global conservation problems
- Develop communication materials that highlight applications of conservation plans
- Evaluate stakeholder engagement and identify project goals, resources, and future implementation
- Provide direction for decision-makers and the public in making well-informed decisions and choices based on the best available information

Attach Syllabus

[CONS 495_Capstone in Conservation Strategies.pdf](#)

Additional Attachments

Additional Comments:

Reviewer Comments

CONS 495 – Capstone in Conservation Strategies

4 credits

This course is designated as a Mason Core Capstone course

Instructor:

Office:

Email:

Office Hours:

Description

Each semester, faculty will present students with a current, challenging conservation topic that has local relevance or global reach. Topics may include, for example, industrial agriculture, watershed pollution, fisheries management, climate change, wildlife trade, charcoal harvesting, plastics waste, or sustainable hunting. Students work in teams to develop an integrated, comprehensive conservation project, with the goal of mitigating this threat or reducing its negative effects. Students will select conservation target(s) to focus on, and define a geographic boundary in which the project will be concentrated. Students must incorporate a multi-faceted examination of the topic, by using scientific, social, economic, political, and cultural lenses. The project goals should have action-centered, policy, legislative, outreach campaigns, advocacy, and/or community engagement-centered approaches. The proposed methods will include the use of experimental design principles to develop practical solutions for conservation challenges. Students will also include a detailed communication plan, identifying stakeholders, and produce a communication product (a tangible deliverable). Students will use established techniques in conservation practice, such as adaptive management, systematic conservation planning, and endangered species global assessments.

Students will have the opportunity to engage with individuals of organizations conducting relevant action-centered projects, science research, advocacy, policy, and/or outreach, e.g. Conservation X Labs, IUCN, Rare, Global Wildlife Conservation, Conservation International, Defenders of Wildlife, Jane Goodall Institute, and International Rhino Foundation. Students will learn about successes and challenges from these organizations conducting projects worldwide and engage with individuals directly in developing their conservation projects.

Finally, students will engage in a weekly journal club, to discuss biodiversity conservation issues, challenges, and solutions, with a focus on pertinent readings concerning the assigned topic. Students will learn skills they can apply to their professional careers and will present a synthesis of their work and associated conservation issues, challenges, and solutions as an oral presentation at the end of the semester.

Learning objectives

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Understand and analyze complex, multi-faceted conservation issues
 - Work in teams to design a comprehensive conservation plan, using scientific and social approaches
 - Conceptualize novel solutions to challenging, global conservation problems
 - Develop communication materials that highlight applications of conservation plans
 - Evaluate stakeholder engagement and identify project goals, resources, and future implementation
 - Provide direction for decision-makers and the public in making well-informed decisions and choices based on the best available information
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Prerequisites

This course is a designated **Mason Core Capstone** experience course, and thus should be taken after student has obtained at least 85 credits. Recommended pre-requisites include an approved upper-level division course, preferably with a conservation focus. See Mason Core Capstone descriptions in the catalog for more information: <https://catalog.gmu.edu/mason-core/#Capstone-or-Synthesis>

Course Materials

BlackBoard:

Many resources, including assigned readings from the primary literature, for the course will be accessible on BlackBoard 9.1, via the MyMason portal (<http://mymason.gmu.edu>) using the browser of your choice. Enter the username and password from your GMU email account and then click on the “Courses” tab at the top, right side of the page. Select the combined course option.

Recommended Textbook:

Groves, CR and Game, ET. **Conservation Planning: Informed Decisions for a Healthier Planet**, 1st ed. 2015. ISBN-10: 1936221519

Assignments

Weekly Review Summaries (30%)

Students will write an analysis and critique of the assigned Journal Club reading each week, which are drawn from the primary literature. The summary should include a description of the following information: Essential concepts in the paper, results of the study/ major findings, your own thoughts about the paper such as: What are the big picture implications of the study? Were the methods appropriate for testing the stated hypothesis? What could be done to improve the study?

Journal Club Participation (20%)

Students are expected to actively participate and engage in weekly Journal Club discussions.

Communication Plan and Product (20%)

Students will submit a formal communication plan, identifying relevant stakeholders and conservation marketing techniques, and produce a product for a particular audience. The communication product should reflect effective communication strategies (e.g. article, report, poster, brochure, newsletter, blog, podcast, or editorial).

Final Oral Presentation (30%)

Students will prepare a group presentation (40-min) concerning their proposed conservation plan. Current conservation practitioners will be invited to the talks.

Grading

Grades for individual assignments and overall in the course will be assigned on the following scale:

A+	97-100%
A	93-96.9%
A-	90-92.9%
B+	87-89.9%
B	83-86.9%
B-	80-82.9%

C+	77-79.9%
C	73-76.9%
C-	70-72.9%
D	60-69.9%
F	<60%

Classroom Policies and Procedures

Class Absences

Attendance contributes to your participation grade. Any absence from classes or exams must be pre-approved by a faculty member and must fit the criteria for a university-sanctioned absence (e.g. religious holiday, university-sponsored activities, verified illness, death in the family). Please consult faculty if you have any questions.

Late Policy

You are responsible for completing assignments on time. Assignments submitted late will lose 10% for each day they are past due, including Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays up to 5 days, after which the maximum you can earn for an assignment is 50%. Due dates are clearly indicated on Blackboard. Assignments may only be made up if failure to attend class and/or complete required assignments was for a prior excused absence or emergency. Full or partial credit for missed in-class assignments, activities and field trips may only be made up based on prior notification of an excused absence or an emergency, as agreed upon with the faculty.

Laptops

You are welcome to bring a laptop to class and use it for class-related purposes (e.g. taking notes). During class, please refrain from using your laptop for purposes not related to class (e.g. email, IM, surfing the Internet).

Phones

Please keep your phone shut down and out of sight during class.

Paperless Classroom

We will use the Blackboard online course management system to minimize paper use. Our aim is to adopt policies that will balance academic needs with resource conservation concerns.

University Policies

The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty and staff conduct in university affairs. Additional information about university policies can be found at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>. Students are responsible for being aware of university policies, especially those related to plagiarism and academic integrity.

Academic Integrity

GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process (<https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/>). Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. The work that you turn in must be your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas in your own words. If you cite another person's ideas, thoughts, or publications, you must provide citations following the guidelines given in class. Plagiarism is lifting someone else's ideas or words and presenting them as your own without proper attribution of the source. This includes all sources, including those found on the Internet. It also includes turning in previous work for multiple assignments. Paraphrased material must also be cited. We take the principle of academic integrity very seriously and violations are treated gravely. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

Mason Email Accounts and Student Privacy

Students must use their Mason email accounts to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information.

Office of Disability Services

If you have a documented learning disability or other condition that may affect academic performance, and you need academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through ODS <http://ods.gmu.edu>. Student disability information is entirely confidential and cannot be disclosed to anyone, including faculty.

Other Useful Campus Resources

- Writing Center: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200 or Prince William Campus (703) 993-8451; <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>
- University Libraries, “Ask a Librarian”, <http://library.gmu.edu/ask>
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): (703) 993-2380; <http://caps.gmu.edu>

Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Interpersonal Violence

The Smithsonian-Mason Semester is committed to providing a learning, living, and working environment that is free from discrimination and free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence. We encourage students who believe they have been sexually harassed, assaulted, or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support. For specifics of Mason’s process, resources, and options available, see: <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/sexual-harassment-policy/>. As faculty members, we are required to report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per university policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact the Student Support and Advocacy Center (703-380-1434), Counseling and Psychological Services (703-993-2380), Student Health Services (shs.gmu.edu) or Mason’s Title IX Coordinator (703-993-8730; cde@gmu.edu).

Our Commitment to Diversity

We are an intentionally inclusive community, and promote and maintain an equitable and just learning environment. We welcome and value individuals and their differences including race, economic status, gender expression and identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion or irreligion, age and disability.

- We value our diverse student body and desire to increase the diversity of our faculty and staff.
 - We commit to supporting students, faculty and staff who have been the victims of bias and discrimination.
 - We promote continuous learning and improvement to create an environment that values diverse points of view and life experiences.
 - We believe that faculty, staff and students play a role in creating an environment that engages diverse points of view.
 - We believe that by fostering their willingness to hear and learn from a variety of sources and viewpoints, our students will gain competence in communication, critical thinking and global understanding, with an awareness of biases and how those affect interactions with others.
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Weekly Activities and Assignments Due

Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments Due
Week 1	Global species distributions, endemism, and conservation threats	Weekly peer-reviewed papers from the primary literature will be assigned.
Week 2	Conservation issues, threats, and threatened species	Specific readings TBD
Week 3	Economic, social, and political drivers of threats in the region	Specific readings TBD
Week 4	Developing conservation goals and establishing targets and attributes	Specific readings TBD
Week 5	Databases for assessing threats, conservation implementation, threatened species	Specific readings TBD
Week 6	Framing and solving conservation planning problems and identifying uncertainty and risks	Specific readings TBD
Week 7	Methods and tools to solve conservation issues	Specific readings TBD
Week 8	Economic conservation strategies for threats	Specific readings TBD
Week 9	Biological conservation strategies for threats	Specific readings TBD
Week 10	Building capacity for conservation implementation	Specific readings TBD
Week 11	Action and communication strategies for pertinent audiences and stakeholders	Specific readings TBD
Week 12	Monitoring and measuring conservation implementation for success	Specific readings TBD
Week 13	Final Presentations of communication plans and product	Communication plan and product due
Week 14	Final Presentations of conservation projects	Final oral presentations due