ENR 6000, Research in Environment and Natural Resources, Syllabus, Autumn 2015

Instructors: Dr. Alia M. Dietsch, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Dietsch.29@osu.edu  
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Time: See course schedule below

Location: See course schedule below

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Goal: To introduce new Environment and Natural Resources graduate students to graduate education and help students begin a successful graduate research program. As such, we will overview available university and school resources and requirements as well as assist with the development of professional skills needed for thesis and research preparation.

Objective: Each student, in consultation with her or his advisor, will develop a problem statement and literature review. ENR 6000 is designed to facilitate this process, but the impetus is on you to develop the ideas that will become your thesis.

Textbook: No textbook required. Drs. Dietsch and Lower will post resources (e.g., journal articles, book chapters) on Carmen (https://carmen.osu.edu/) and/or BuckeyeBox (https://box.osu.edu).

Course Requirements: The course is graded satisfactory/unsatisfactory (S/U). Participation is expected at all class meetings, and the literature review is due on the date specified in the schedule. While excellence in assignment completion may not be visible in the final grade, it will be evident in the research product of the student’s graduate program.

Course Schedule:

1. Tuesday, September 8 (231A Kottman Hall from 5:00-6:15 pm):
   a. Profs. Alia Dietsch & Brian Lower – Introductions, and discussion on syllabus, course expectations, and tips on writing a literature review.
   b. Prof. Jessica Page (Veterinary Medicine Librarian) – Discuss web-based literature searches and library resources, as well as how to read and understand primary research literature.

2. Monday, October 26 – First draft of Literature Review (.doc or .docx file) is to be uploaded to BuckeyeBox (https://box.osu.edu) no later than 11:59 pm on October 26. Directions will be provided by the instructors.

3. Tuesday, October 27 (245 Kottman Hall from 5:00-7:00pm) – Complete reviews of TWO different manuscripts. You will be assigned two manuscripts to review in class. Directions will be provided in class.

4. Tuesday, December 1 – Final draft of Literature Review is due. We will NOT meet for class. Email your final literature review in PDF format via email to your advisor by 11:59 pm on December 1, 2015. Make sure to cc Lower.30@osu.edu and Dietsch.29@osu.edu on the Email.

Class Assignment: Thesis Literature Review (due December 1) – This should be a review of pertinent literature in your area of research. Your review should be constructed around your problem statement. The literature review is a presentation of the body of knowledge relevant to your research problem. In this review, you recognize the contributions of important authors to the body of knowledge. You also present the theory(ies) that defines the research area and results of past studies that support or do not support these theories. Further, you point out gaps or deficiencies in the information and how the research you will undertake will help to correct these problems. Although there is no minimum length, thorough
literature reviews can be (and often are) greater than 10 pages long, single-spaced and include more than 40 references. For this course, we expect a literature review of 6-10 pages, single-spaced, with at least 25 references. The final product of this effort will be developed in collaboration with and given to your advisor. Example Literature Reviews from previous graduate students will be provided in class.

Format for literature review - Because this assignment is intended to be relevant and useful to your thesis, you will work with your advisor to identify the most appropriate format and necessary content. That said, we expect that your literature review will contain an introduction that:

a. Provides the context (relevance) of your study to natural resource management;

b. Briefly identifies important “knowns” in your area of research (this is not meant to be a comprehensive review, but rather a distillation of the most important information in just a few sentences--use this section to establish the current state of knowledge and set the scene for presenting what is not known);

c. Identifies the “unknown” that will be the subject of your research (i.e., the gap in the knowledge base that you will address);

d. Briefly justifies why it is important to address this lack of knowledge (in this section you are framing the problem to be addressed);

e. Explicitly states your research question(s) and/or hypotheses. This question(s) should reflect what you aim to answer or accomplish with your research project.

This introduction will then be followed by separate sections with the literature review – broken into thematic areas when necessary. Use the following heading structure when organizing your paper:

- 1st level heading: Bold face, centered
- 2nd level heading: Bold face, left-justified
- 3rd level heading: Italicized, left-justified, followed by a period, text follows immediately.

Example:

Level One

Level Two

Level three. Insert text…

Your literature review should also conclude with a “significance” section, where you will describe how your results/findings will contribute to natural resource management. What will be possible to do (or to do better) after you’ve done/published your work that was not possible before?