

## **LAND OF THE LONG WHITE CLOUD: ECOSYSTEMS OF NEW ZEALAND**

Course: Undergraduate: FES 499; Graduate: FES 599 Special Topics in Forestry

Credits: 4 undergraduate/ 2 graduate

Offered: Pre-fall 2025

Travel Dates: September 09 – 21, 2025

Course Dates: (Fall Z5) September 10 – September 21, 2025

### **Course Instructors:**

Dr. Ashley D'Antonio, Forest Ecosystems and Society Department

Co-Lead: Dr. Jacob Bukoski, Forest Ecosystems and Society Department

### **Course Description**

This course explores the complex ecological, social, and management dimensions of ecology, conservation, and protected area management through an immersive experience in New Zealand. Over 10 days, students will be part of an intensive investigation of conservation and natural resource management in a wide range of New Zealand parks and protected areas. This will include natural New Zealand forests and marine areas, protected areas in a range of settings from the volcanic landscapes of the North Island to the urban center of Christchurch to the Southern Alps in the South Island. Students will meet with New Zealand scientists and practitioners working on aspects of ecology, resource conservation, and protected area management.

Students will be exposed to multiple perspectives, requiring them to listen and observe carefully, think critically, and reflect deeply on the complex web of issues facing New Zealand ecosystems. Through this immersive learning experience, students will be able to critically analyze conservation, ecotourism, and protected area management challenges in their own home countries.

### **Itinerary**

The course will be conducted primarily in two locations: 1) Rotorua and its surroundings on the North Island, and 2) Christchurch and the field station at Cass on the South Island, owned and managed by the University of Canterbury. After receiving an overview of New Zealand ecosystems, conservation and protected areas in and around Rotorua, we will visit nearby Maori-managed protected areas. We will then travel to the South Island for more focused research into urban-proximate protected areas and then onto forest ecosystems and protected areas surrounding a field station located west of Christchurch in low-elevation mountains near the Southern Alps foothills. We will visit high mountain passes like Arthur's Pass National Park and coastal systems on

both the North and South Island. Be aware we may experience a range of conditions, and it's likely to be wet and cold at various times as September is the end of the winter in New Zealand.

Oregon State University students will participate in activities including forest tours, trail hiking, boat tours and kayaking, and group presentations. The tentative itinerary is listed below. Course parameters are subject to change if needed.

- Day - 0 (Tuesday, Sept 09): Depart Portland International (or home airport) and in Transit to NZ.
- Day 1 (Wednesday, Sept 10): Arrive Auckland, travel to Raglan Surf Break. Overnight in Hamilton, evening dinner.
- Day 2 (Thursday, Sept 11): Visit Hamilton Gardens and nearby Hobbinton. Overnight in Rotorua.
- Day 3 (Friday, Sept 12): Learn about forest and protected area management including Maori-managed protected areas near Rotorua. Overnight in Rotorua.
- Day 4 (Saturday, Sept 13): Visit Waimangu Geothermal Park & Glowworm Kayak Tour. Overnight in Rotorua.
- Day 5 (Sunday, Sept 14): Visit Tongariro National Park. Overnight in Rotorua.
- Day 6 (Monday, Sep. 15): Free morning. Flight to Christchurch. Tour Botanical Gardens near hotel. Overnight in Christchurch.
- Day 7 (Tuesday, Sept 16): Visit the University of Canterbury and get lectures on South Island ecology, biosecurity, and protected area management. In the afternoon, visit Willowbank Wildlife Reserve, free time to explore park. Overnight in Christchurch.
- Day 7 (Wednesday, Sept 17): Visit Bottle Lake Forest Park and then Walking Tour of Christchurch. In the afternoon, get groceries. Overnight in Christchurch.
- Day 8 (Thursday, Sept 18): Drive to Cass Field Station, stop at Kura Tawhiti Conservation Area. Overnight at Cass field station.
- Day 9 (Friday, Sept 19): Explore Arthur's Pass, hike about. Overnight at Cass Field station.

Day 10 (Saturday, Sept 20): Drive from Cass to Lyttelton to learn about ecotourism and explore town on the coast of extinct volcano, hike. Evening Dinner Celebration of the Land of the Long White Cloud. Overnight in Christchurch.

Day 11 (Sunday, Sept 21): Students travel to PDX (or home airport), arrive same day!

### **Weekly Engagement in the Fall Quarter**

This class is a non-traditional course that adheres to the Office of the Registrar's Fall term Z5 extension course dates. Throughout the first half of fall term, we want you to maintain your engagement with New Zealand (NZ) by reflecting on the contrasts between the NZ environment and culture and what you experience in your daily life back in Oregon. This is part of the Experiential Learning Cycle. Examples could include trivial daily activities like being a pedestrian or driving on the opposite side of the road or more profound reflections on how your experience in NZ affected your outlook on life.

- Week 0: Pre-fall travel to NZ September 10 – 21 (see itinerary above)
- Week 1: Reflection on NZ experience (Canvas); Work with group on project
- Week 2: Reflection on NZ experience (Canvas); Work with group on project
- Week 3: Reflection on NZ experience (Canvas); Work with group on project
- Week 4: Reflection on NZ experience (Canvas); Work with group on project
- Week 5: Group project presentation (hybrid Corvallis/zoom) - to be scheduled with final cohort

### **Catalogue Description**

With the explicit goal of enhancing global learning, this field-based course exposes students to the challenges and opportunities of forest ecology, conservation, and parks and protected area management in a part of the world that has many parallels with the Pacific Northwest. Students will learn from hands-on field research about managing New Zealand ecosystems for various uses, from timber production to wildlife habitat to outdoor recreation to carbon sequestration. The global context of forest management, parks and protected area management, and conservation will be emphasized to prepare students to critically analyze similar issues throughout the world.

## **Student Learning Goals/Expected Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate key ecology concepts as applied to forest management, conservation, and protected area management.
2. Describe how landforms influence ecosystems.
3. Identify and articulate conservation priorities for island nations.
4. Analyze and articulate interconnections between local and global ecological, social, political, and economic trends affecting parks and protected area management.

## **Prerequisites**

To register for this course, students must:

1. Have achieved at least sophomore standing, and a 2.75 GPA or permission of instructor.
2. Submit a complete application through the OSU GO system, which includes a personal essay, unofficial transcript and recommendation.

## **Student Learning Assessment**

Each student will prepare a course portfolio documenting their learning experience and outcomes. Portfolios will include a combination of the following:

1. Personal learning objectives and self-assessment of learning
2. Field/trip journal, including descriptions of interesting discoveries while in New Zealand.
3. Class critiques of student participation
4. Graded final project, consisting of a reflection on the spectrum of park and protected area management observed in New Zealand.
5. Student and faculty assessment of student participation in and contribution to class activities

**Evaluation of student performance:** Grading A-F. Students will be assessed on class participation, in-class presentation, and journal report.

**Learning resources:** there will be no textbook for this course; relevant readings and other materials (e.g., popular media, news articles, videos) will be provided in a Box folder.

## Other Policies and Statements

- **Academic Calendar**

All students are subject to the registration and refund deadlines as stated in the Academic Calendar: <https://registrar.oregonstate.edu/osu-academic-calendar>

- **Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities**

Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by Disability Access Services (DAS). If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval please contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098 or at <http://ds.oregonstate.edu>. DAS notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations.

- **Student Conduct Expectations link:** <https://beav.es/codeofconduct>

(URL must be shown)

- **Student Bill of Rights**

OSU has twelve established student rights. They include due process in all university disciplinary processes, an equal opportunity to learn, and grading in accordance with the course syllabus: <https://asosu.oregonstate.edu/advocacy/rights>

- **Reach Out for Success**

University students encounter setbacks from time to time. If you encounter difficulties and need assistance, it's important to reach out. Consider discussing the situation with an instructor or academic advisor. Learn about resources that assist with wellness and academic success at [oregonstate.edu/ReachOut](https://oregonstate.edu/ReachOut). If you are in immediate crisis, please contact the Crisis Text Line by texting OREGON to 741-741 or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)