



Ecampus SYLLABUS

Course Name: Introduction to Sustainable Cemetery Management

Course Number: 499

Credits: 2

Instructor name: Cynthia Beal

Instructor email: cynthia.beal@oregonstate.edu

Syllabus effective for term: WT2015

Course Description

SOIL 499 - **Introduction to Sustainable Cemetery Management** is a 2-unit online course designed to introduce **students, policy makers, municipal cemetery grounds managers, landscapers, cemetery volunteers, and researchers** to the functions, management, and sustainable operation topic areas of cemeteries, with an emphasis on transitioning existing cemetery landscapes to environmentally sound practices. Professionals with experience in the field may find it a useful review, providing exposure to unfamiliar concepts along the way. There is no pre-requisite for this course for the general public; University students seeking credit must have Junior standing or above.

Communication

Please post all course-related questions in the General Discussion Forum so that the whole class may benefit from our conversation. Please email your instructor for matters of a personal nature. I will reply to course-related questions and email within 24-48 hours. I will strive to return your assignments and grades for course activities to you within five days of the due date.

Course Credits

This course combines approximately 60 hours of instruction, online activities, and assignments for 2 credits.

Technical Assistance

If you experience computer difficulties, need help downloading a browser or plug-in, assistance logging into the course, or if you experience any errors or problems while in your online course, contact the OSU Help Desk for assistance. You can call (541) 737-3474, email osuhelpdesk@oregonstate.edu or visit the [OSU Computer Helpdesk](#) online.

Learning Resources

Textbooks – There is no textbook for this course; all materials are delivered online

Technical resources -- Online education is heavily internet-dependent. Regular access to a good internet connection with enough bandwidth for video is presumed. A back-up internet connection is suggested so that posting deadlines can always be met.

Additionally, for this course the student should have the ability to create a Microsoft Word document, fill out an online form, post to an online forum, and use a search engine like Google. Absent these skills, the student should be prepared to acquire them before selecting this class or seek tutorial assistance from outside the Course, as there is no instruction provided in their use beyond the Blackboard tutorials available.

This course is offered through Oregon State University Extended Campus. For more information, contact:
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Blackboard — This course is delivered via Blackboard, OSU's online learning community, where you will interact with your classmates and myself. Within the course Blackboard site you can access the learning materials, tutorials, and syllabus; discuss issues; submit assignments; take quizzes; email other students and the instructor; participate in online activities; and display your projects. To preview how an online course works, visit the [Ecampus Course Demo](#). For technical assistance, please visit [Ecampus Technical Help](#)

Measurable Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this introductory course, the student should be familiar with a wide range of end-of-life terminology and have a greater facility with concepts that enable them to:

- A. Demonstrate familiarity with modern End of Life concepts, consumer issues, and common activities, along with their relationship to funerals, disposition and post-disposition care of the cemetery landscape and relate this information to personal experience *to understand the modern EOL process and gain a cultural context for burial and disposition technologies.*
- B. Demonstrate exposure to common cemetery business operations, products, and product management terminology, as well as long-term maintenance considerations, and connect them to some of the financial/societal/environmental impacts of cemeteries *to acquire insight on cemetery practices and expand awareness of options that address cemetery challenges.*
- C. Identify natural resource, soil health, and eco-system services concepts, as well as emerging fiscal and potential pollution risks, related to landscape and resource management concepts, tools, issues and alternative solutions that could be applied to cemeteries *to address potential cemetery and environmental impacts, expand awareness of solution alternatives, understand what to conserve and why, and build awareness to decrease hazard or long-term risk*
- D. Identify and discuss "Living Cemetery Style" features and strategies that can generate income and improve the Triple Bottom Line while enhancing habitat, reducing inputs and resource use, and minimizing pollution potential of EOL items and activities *to support wildlife and improve customer appeal, fostering the transition to sustainability.*
- E. Identify, access and assess the usefulness of online government, educational and operational resources related to sustainable landscape management, maintenance and preservation, soil health, habitat creation, cemetery BMPs, and legal/operational constraints relevant to cemeteries useful to cemetery operators, volunteers, and policy makers who are shifting to more sustainable practices *to share knowledge and continue lifelong learning.*

Evaluation of Student Performance

Your classroom "attendance and participation" in this course is measured by successfully fulfilling the guidelines and meeting the posting deadlines for all assignments and tests. Attendance is measured by posting in the discussion forums and elsewhere as required in the assignments, and by interacting with fellow students per instructions during the course of the week.

Grading is as follows (1000+ point basis)

- 250pts total Discussion posts - 10 total
- 250pts total Activity Assignments – 5 total
- 100pts total Open Book Quizzes - weekly
- 100pts total 10-Minute Journal - Personal reflections by unit
- 200pts total Unit Test - 4 total
- 100pts total Final Exam

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Grading Scale

An A in this course is earned if a student earns 900-1000 points; 800-899 would be a B; and so on...

Course Content

The goal of sustainable cemetery management is to manage a cemetery landscape so that it fosters habitat, reduces toxics use, maintains assets, conserves resources, minimizes costs, and maximizes community value over the centuries of its required operation while performing the utilitarian and aesthetic functions of a cemetery.

This *introductory overview* introduces the student to the range of activities a cemetery encompasses and impacts, while laying a foundation for future course work about the long-term management and sustainable operation of cemeteries, or for research related to cemetery affect on communities and the environment. The course exposes the student to the challenges today's cemetery operators and policy makers face as they operate under increasing economic, social, environmental, and regulatory pressures with a minimum of organized support and guidance.

Course materials introduce the student to concepts and terminology specific to cemetery operation, products and their maintenance, soil health and sustainable landscape management, habitat creation and diversification, resource use, administration, and the improvement of eco-system services. Structured activities and assignments personalize funeral and disposition concepts, and connect the student with a variety of information and educational resources related to sustainable cemetery operation. Students are informed of further educational opportunities at OSU and elsewhere to get more in-depth information as desired.

Topics introduced in this introductory course include:

- history and terminology about end-of-life (EOL) concepts, products, activities and practices
- natural resource overview
- enhancing and diversifying habitat in the cemetery landscape
- historic preservation, resource use and toxic/inputs reduction in sustainable cemetery landcare
- soil management and the pollution potential of cemeteries
- practices that facilitate sustainable operation and/or improve business performance and risk management

The course also includes an exploration of recommended classes and workshops available through OSU to continue education in the field. *This course is the first of several planned for the Sustainable Cemetery Management curriculum at OSU. It is a pre-requisite for any future cemetery-related coursework through E-Campus at OSU.*

Course content by Unit:

I. Cemetery Fundamentals; Life is a Dead End – Weeks 1-2

Module 1: The Natural End Play – Organizing the End Of Life (EOL)

Module 2: The Final Disposition – Historical context and terminology

II. Managing Assets and Risks–Weeks 3-4

Module 3: Cemetery operational overview

Module 4: The Last Stuff – Products and preservation

III. Stewarding natural resources- Weeks 5-7

Module 5: Natural resources and ecosystem services overview

Module 6: Soil, Water and Graves

Module 7: Sustainable Cemetery Landscapes – Grounds management and turf overview

IV. The Cemetery as Habitat - Weeks 8-9

Module 8: Habitat Basics – Enhance and Diversify

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Module 9: the Living Cemetery Style and the UK Pioneers

V. Engaging with the Future - Tools for transition

Module 10: Courses and Resources - Next steps

Active Learning Assignments:

To supplement learning from readings and other module materials, several assignments reinforce and expand upon the course material:

- Weekly discussion forum - twice weekly postings on a topic
- Personal Natural Funeral Plan (draft and report; to “take with you” when done)
- Family Funeral Tradition (report and discussion)
- SCM Resource Identification Activity (3 parts): students work over a 5-6 week period to research, evaluate and share a geographically oriented list of links to online tools and resources for specific topics useful to sustainable cemetery management in their physical area- *ensures the student leaves the course with the know-how to find useful online information resources that can be applied to related personal, professional or volunteer work where they are based.*

Assessments & Evaluations:

- Weekly Quizlet - “open book” flashcard review – *ensures student masters core terminology*
- “10 Minute Journal” - Unit-based responses to several “going deeper” questions; one end-of-course report - *allows student to engage in higher-level thinking about material covered*
- Unit Tests - *timed and graded tests on unit materials covered in quizzes, assignments and core content; assesses student progress throughout the course; provides a study aid for the final exam*
- Final Exam - *timed and graded “open book” test; measures student achievement of course outcomes.*

Course Policies

Discussion Participation

Students are expected to participate in all graded discussions. While there is great flexibility in online courses, this is not a self-paced course. You will need to participate in our discussions on at least two different days each week, with your first post due no later than Thursday evening, and your second and third posts due by the assigned dates.

Exams

There are no make-up exams for this course. Exams are NOT proctored, and are timed and “open book”

Incompletes

Incomplete (I) grades will be granted only in emergency cases (usually only for a death in the family, major illness or injury, or birth of your child), and if the student has turned in 80% of the points possible (in other words, usually everything but the final paper). If you are having any difficulty that might prevent you completing the coursework, please don't wait until the end of the term; let me know right away.

Guidelines for a Productive and Effective Online Classroom

Students are expected to conduct themselves in the course (e.g., on discussion boards, email) in compliance with the university's regulations regarding civility.

Civility is an essential ingredient for academic discourse. All communications for this course should be conducted constructively, civilly, and respectfully. Differences in beliefs, opinions, and approaches are to be expected. In all you say and do for this course, be professional. Please bring any communications you believe to be in violation of this class policy to the attention of your instructor.

Active interaction with peers and your instructor is essential to success in this online course, paying particular attention to the following:

- Unless indicated otherwise, please complete the readings and view other instructional materials for each week before participating in the discussion board.
- Read your posts carefully before submitting them.
- Be respectful of others and their opinions, valuing diversity in backgrounds, abilities, and experiences.
- Challenging the ideas held by others is an integral aspect of critical thinking and the academic process. Please word your responses carefully, and recognize that others are expected to challenge your ideas. A positive atmosphere of healthy debate is encouraged.

Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities

Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and [Disability Access Services \(DAS\)](#) with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098.

Accessibility of Course Materials

All materials used in this course are accessible online. If you require accommodations please contact [Disability Access Services \(DAS\)](#).

Additionally, Blackboard, the learning management system through which this course is offered, provides a [vendor statement](#) certifying how the platform is accessible to students with disabilities.

Expectations for Student Conduct

Student conduct is governed by the university's policies, as explained in the [Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards](#).

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to comply with all regulations pertaining to academic honesty. For further information, visit [Avoiding Academic Dishonesty](#), or contact the office of Student Conduct and Mediation at 541-737-3656.

OAR 576-015-0020 (2) Academic or Scholarly Dishonesty:

a) Academic or Scholarly Dishonesty is defined as an act of deception in which a Student seeks to claim credit for the work or effort of another person, or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic work or research, either through the Student's own efforts or the efforts of another.

b) It includes:

(i) CHEATING - use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information or study aids, or an act of deceit by which a Student attempts to misrepresent mastery of academic effort or information. This includes but is not limited to unauthorized copying or collaboration on a test or assignment, using prohibited materials and texts, any misuse of an electronic device, or using any deceptive means to gain academic credit.

(ii) FABRICATION - falsification or invention of any information including but not limited to falsifying research, inventing or exaggerating data, or listing incorrect or fictitious references.

(iii) ASSISTING - helping another commit an act of academic dishonesty. This includes but is not limited to paying or bribing someone to acquire a test or assignment, changing someone's grades or academic records, taking a test/doing an assignment for someone else by any means,

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including misuse of an electronic device. It is a violation of Oregon state law to create and offer to sell part or all of an educational assignment to another person (ORS 165.114).

(iv) TAMPERING - altering or interfering with evaluation instruments or documents.

(v) PLAGIARISM - representing the words or ideas of another person or presenting someone else's words, ideas, artistry or data as one's own, or using one's own previously submitted work. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to copying another person's work (including unpublished material) without appropriate referencing, presenting someone else's opinions and theories as one's own, or working jointly on a project and then submitting it as one's own.

c) Academic Dishonesty cases are handled initially by the academic units, following the process outlined in the University's Academic Dishonesty Report Form, and will also be referred to SCCS for action under these rules.

Conduct in this Online Classroom

Students are expected to conduct themselves in the course (e.g., on discussion boards, email postings) in compliance with the [university's regulations regarding civility](#).

SafeAssign Plagiarism Prevention

Your instructor may ask you to submit one or more of your writings to Blackboard's SafeAssign plagiarism prevention service. Your assignment content will be checked for potential plagiarism against Internet sources, academic journal articles, and the papers of other OSU students, for common or borrowed content. SafeAssign generates a report that highlights any potentially unoriginal text in your paper. The report may be submitted directly to your instructor or your instructor may elect to have you submit initial drafts through SafeAssign and you will receive the report allowing you the opportunity to make adjustments and ensure that all source material has been properly cited. Papers you submit through SafeAssign for this or any class will be added to the OSU SafeAssign database and may be checked against other OSU paper submissions. You will retain all rights to your written work. For further information, visit [Academic Integrity for Students: SafeAssign – What is it?](#) **[If you will be using the SafeAssign tool in your course this syllabus statement is required. If you do not plan on using it, please delete this section.]**

Tutoring

[NetTutor](#) is a leading provider of online tutoring and learner support services fully staffed by experienced, trained and monitored tutors. Students connect to live tutors from any computer that has Internet access. NetTutor provides a virtual whiteboard that allows tutors and students to work on problems in a real time environment. They also have an online writing lab where tutors critique and return essays within 24 to 48 hours. Access NetTutor from within your Blackboard class by clicking on the Tools button in your course menu.

OSU Student Evaluation of Teaching

Course evaluation results are extremely important and are used to help me improve this course and the learning experience of future students. Results from the 19 multiple choice questions are tabulated anonymously and go directly to instructors and department heads. Student comments on the open-ended questions are compiled and confidentially forwarded to each instructor, per OSU procedures. The online Student Evaluation of Teaching form will be available toward the end of each term, and you will be sent instructions via ONID by the Office of Academic Programs, Assessment, and Accreditation. You will log in to "Student Online Services" to respond to the online questionnaire. The results on the form are anonymous and are not tabulated until after grades are posted.