



SOIL 199 Introduction to Sustainable Cemetery Management

NOTE to prospective students: This syllabus is intended to provide students who are considering taking this course an idea of what they will be learning. A more detailed syllabus will be available on the course Blackboard site for enrolled students and may be more current than this sample syllabus.

Course Name: Introduction to Sustainable Cemetery Management

Course Number: 199

Credits: 2

Instructor name: Cynthia Beal

Instructor email: cynthia.beal@oregonstate.edu

Course Description

SOIL 199 - 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.

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.

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 the 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

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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 – Online Course Attendance

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 wikis 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**

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 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 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

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: small group teams work over a 5-6 week period to research, evaluate and share a geographically oriented list of online tools and resources for specific topics useful to sustainable cemetery management - *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.*

Assessments & Evaluations:

- Weekly Quizlet - "open book" flashcard review— *ensures student masters core terminology*
- "10 Minute Journal" - 4 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 terminology and concept outcomes.*

Learning Resources

Blackboard — The 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, Blackboard and otherwise, see <http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/services/technical-help.htm>.

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 navigate a spreadsheet (Excel, OpenOffice, etc. -- no math formulas required!), 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.

ECAMPUS ORIENTATION:

<http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/orientation/>

COMPUTER CHECK:

<http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/forms/browserchec>

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 Wednesday evening, and your second and third posts due by the end of each week.

Makeup Exams

There are no make-up exams for this course.

Exam Time Limits

Some exams in this class are timed; if you exceed the time limit on an exam, you will be assessed a penalty of 10% for every five minute interval beyond the time limit.

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.

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.

Expectations for Student Conduct

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

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, 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.

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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](#).

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.