



DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

BIO422 Nature conservation, management and communication, 15 credits

Naturvård, skötsel och kommunikation, 15 högskolepoäng
Second Cycle

Confirmation

This course syllabus was confirmed by Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences on 2024-03-12 to be valid from 2024-03-12, spring semester of 2024.

Field of education: Science 100%

Department: Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences

Position in the educational system

The course is an advanced level specialization course in biology. It serves as the introductory course for the profile with a focus on Conservation Biology and prepares for further studies within the subject, and is included in the elective range for other profile areas within the master's program in biology. The course can also be part of the master's programs in Environmental Science with a scientific orientation, and can be taken as a standalone course.

The course can be part of the following programme: 1) Biology, Master's Programme (N2BIO)

Main field of studies

Biology

Specialization

A1N, Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Entry requirements

Access to the course requires knowledge equivalent to:

Option 1: Bachelor's degree (180 credits) in biology, environmental science or marine sciences, which includes the equivalent of at least 60 credits in biology, of which at least 15 credits at advanced level; English B/English 6 or equivalent. Students with equivalent education may be granted access to the programme after examination.

Option 2: Approved courses of at least 90 credits within the first two years of one of the following programmes at the University of Gothenburg: Biology, Bachelor's Programme, Environmental Science, Bachelor's Programme, Marine Science, Bachelor's Programme.

For all options, at least one approved relevant advanced course (at least 15 credits) in biology is also required.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of the course the student will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- account for the key threats facing natural ecosystems
- describe basic principles for managing natural ecosystems including ecological and political processes
- explore and discuss conservation strategies, focusing on practical applications such as restoration, sustainable use, and protected areas
- explain central concepts, principles, and pedagogical models in science communication, and relate them to social factors that govern human interactions with nature

Competence and skills

- propose appropriate management for important biotopes and ecosystems, and explain the potential effects of alternatives on relevant ecosystems and biotopes
- explain how to evaluate whether conservation goals have been achieved, and effects of alternative forms of management
- demonstrate skill in verbally explaining complex contexts in an organized and engaging manner, and in adapting the message to different recipients

Judgement and approach

- identify and consider aspects other than biological diversity in conservation management, including the manager's own role, and potential political aspects of conflicts between stakeholders
- argue for and against different conservation management alternatives

The course is sustainability-focused, which means that at least one of the learning

outcomes clearly shows that the course content meets at least one of the University of Gothenburg's confirmed sustainability criteria. The content also constitutes the course's main focus.

Course content

The course provides in-depth knowledge of the practice of biological conservation management.

It begins by highlighting the key threats facing biodiversity and natural systems, and describes the main strategies that managers and authorities can deploy to counter these threats. It also considers the many and often conflicting interests that must be considered by those managing sensitive ecosystems. Students will be encouraged to consider, evaluate, and debate the merits of alternative actions that reflect real decision making in the context of natural conservation management.

Because these debates cross disciplinary boundaries, the course includes explicit instruction on effective communication and didactics for varied professional and lay audiences, and their relevance for reducing conflicts and promoting the sustainable management of ecosystems.

Form of teaching

The course consists of lectures, literature seminars, field trips and project work. The course is completed with a project work in groups with written and oral presentations.

Language of instruction: English

The main teaching language will be English, and examined components of the course will be in English. However, some of the optional site-visits and presentations by local and national conservation managers may be provided in Swedish.

Assessment

The examination has two main elements:

Theory: a written exam that covers the theoretical parts of the course (7.5 hp) and

Conservation communication: a written report plus guiding/presentation on the practical elements (7.5 hp).

If a student who has twice received a failing grade for the same examination component wishes to change examiner ahead of the next examination session, such a request should be made to the department in writing and should be approved by the department unless there are special reasons to the contrary (Chapter 6 Section 22 of the Higher Education Ordinance). If a student has received a recommendation from the University of Gothenburg for study support for students with disabilities, the examiner may, where it is compatible with the learning outcomes of the course and provided that no

unreasonable resources are required, decide to allow the student to sit an adjusted exam or alternative form of assessment. In the event that a course has ceased or undergone major changes, students are to be guaranteed at least three examination sessions (including the ordinary examination session) over a period of at least one year, but no more than two years after the course has ceased/been changed. The same applies to internships and professional placements (VFU), although this is restricted to just one additional examination session.

Grades

The grading scale comprises: Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G) and Fail (U).

The course is given one of the grades Passed (VG), Passed (G) and Failed (U). In order to get a pass (G) on the course as a whole, you must have passed (60%) on each of the oral and written examination tasks. In order to get Well Passed (VG) it is required that at least 75% of the examination tasks have been assessed with the grade VG.

Criteria for assessment of the examination tasks are communicated to the students during the course.

Course evaluation

After completion of the course, a written and/or oral course evaluation is carried out. A compilation of the course evaluation is reported to the study office where it is available as a public document. The course evaluation is also distributed to all teachers who participated in the course and must be taken into account when planning the next course session. A summary of the course evaluation and an explanation of any changes that have been made are presented for the next course during the introduction.

Additional information

The course may include excursions and a stay at field stations or conservation agencies as part of the teaching (according to schedule). Costs for travel in connection with these stages, as well as costs for food and lodging, are paid by the student.