University of Victoria

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ER390 Selected Project
Course Syllabus

Course Welcome

The University of Victoria acknowledges with respect the ləkʷəŋ peoples on whose traditional territory the University stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. These projects will be carried out on many territories, so take time to reflect on whose traditional territory you live and work on. I live on the unceded Coast Salish Territories of the SENĆOTEN-speaking peoples that include the BOḰEĆEN (Pauquachin First Nation), SȾÁ,UTW̱ (Tsawout First Nation), W̱JOȽEȽP (Tsartlip First Nation) and W̱SÍḴEM (Tseycum First Nation).

Your ER390 project is one of the key components of your Restoration of Natural Systems Diploma. It is an independently led, hands-on restoration project that you will conduct (generally) in close coordination with a community partner over a maximum of three terms. Each ER390 project is uniquely tailored to the needs of the student and partner, and this syllabus is only a broad guide rather than prescriptive document.

Course Intent

The final project brings together the knowledge and skills you acquired through the program and applies these to a real restoration situation in your area of specialization. It should reinforce and grow what you have learned. The project has three main goals:

1. To demonstrate a positive contribution by you to ecological restoration.
2. To give you a final opportunity to develop a desired professional skill and make professional connections.
3. To provide a written report that provides a record of your work from which future students and the public can learn.

Before you are able to register for your ER390, you are required to have a project proposal that is approved by the RNS Academic director. Once your project is approved, you can register and carry out the project over approximately 100 hours. Thus, the steps of the ER390 process are as follows:

1. Determine a project idea – please see **Project Selection** below for more information.
2. Contact the RNS Academic Director to discuss the idea (Nancy Shackelford: nshack@uvic.ca).
3. Write and finalize a two-page proposal for approval by the Director – please see **Proposal Format** for more details, and review the writing resource that you will receive with this syllabus.
4. ***Register for your ER390*** – be aware that registration becomes available only after your proposal is approved, so there is work to do before you get formally started. Note that students may work on their approved project prior to formal registration.
5. Complete the project work over 100 hours, spread over up to three terms.
6. Submit a final report – please see **Final Report** for more details.
7. Present your work to your community partner – please see **Presentation** for more details.

Project Selection

There are several ways of selecting a project. One way is to contact the Director, as community partners sometimes come to the RNS with project requests that may be suitable to your interests. Another way is to find a project independently. This can be done, for example, through your employer or an organization with

whom you already volunteer and support. If you have no organization in mind, search your local area for locations, ecosystems, or the kind of work that interests you. Your project can (and hopefully will) be used to build a professional network, so think strategically. If you are stuck, please contact the Director for help and guidance!

The project should have a leadership component, a "hands-on" component, and should support your development as a restoration practitioner and professional. These broad requirements are designed to give you flexibility in deciding what kind of project you want to complete and with whom.

Proposal Format

The proposal will come together naturally after you have found your project idea. The intent is to capture and communicate the project goals and objectives, the proposed methods, and the timelines. It will highlight the feasibility of your idea, and make sure that the project meets your learning targets, the partner needs, and the course requirements. It is also a check to ensure that it can be completed in the three-term timeline. To date, we have no set format because projects are so varied. However, it is likely to need:

- A title
- A background / introduction section (PLEASE cite background literature, including at least a few references found in the scientific literature)
- A location, and map if applicable
- Project partners and contacts within the organization
- Clearly stated goals and objectives
  - GOALS are the overarching purpose(s) of the project
  - OBJECTIVES are actionable targets that support the goal(s)
- Methods outlined with a basic timeline
- Proposed deliverables
- If $$ (from anyone, of any kind) is involved, a basic budget

Project duration

During your project, you will be supervised by the RNS Director. This supervision can be as hands-on or hands-off as you like. The Director is there to help brainstorm, troubleshoot, discuss project progress, liaise with the community partner, and to provide feedback on project outputs. You can largely navigate these tasks on your own if you wish, but this is a prime opportunity to lean on RNS resources. As you finalize your proposal, please chat with the Director about the role you envision for them in your project.

You will be asked to join Slack – a messaging service where you can have instant contact with the Director. It is a place to ask questions, share results, and check in if you are doing solo field work.

Because you have up to three terms to complete, you will stay registered in ER390 for the duration of your work. You will need to register and pay only once, and will receive "In progress" until you finish.

Assessment

Assessment will be based on a Final Report. The presentation to the community partner is required, but will count as "completed" or not. If you do not complete the presentation, you have not fulfilled the course requirements. Please speak with your instructor for more details, and to discuss options if presenting to your community partner may be challenging.

Final Report

Your report should be approximately 5000 words long, plus references and any figures, tables, drawings, photographs and appendices. It will be published as a technical report of Restoration of Natural Systems and made available as a PDF to the public. Reports are due either April 15, August 15 or December 15, depending on the semester in which they are submitted. The report should be submitted as a word document via email to the Director (nshack@uvic.ca). The marking rubric can be found at the end of this document. Some projects will not fit that exact format, so make sure to check in as you start writing.

Though not required, a round of feedback from the Director is suggested. In order for that to occur, plan on submitting your drafted report two weeks before the due date, so by April 1, August 1, or December 1.

Presentation

You are required to present your work once it is complete. Ideally, this would be to your community partner organization. Identify a potential group or occasion and an approximate date when this might happen. Discuss with the Director how, when, and to whom you plan to present your project to the community. In some instances, other arrangements may need to be made. The Director can help!

Journal Publication

The Restoration of Natural Systems Program would like to publish your 390 paper in the *Ecorestoration: RNS Technical Series* online journal. The journal provides a venue for publishing your report and acts as a searchable archive of past papers that we can make available to new students and to community partners. In conducting your project, you may have collaborated with community groups, governments and/or environmental consultants who may already be involved with the site in some capacity. Thus, your project represents a valuable community and scientific resource which we would like to make available.

To publish your paper in the online journal you have three options:

1. You can submit your paper for final grading and have it uploaded, as is, directly to the journal.
2. You can submit your paper for final grading and feedback, and then submit a second revised version for uploading to the journal.
3. You can decline to publish your paper and simply submit the abstract for uploading to the journal.

In all cases we require you to sign a copyright permission contract that will be sent at the completion of your project. Please get in touch with the Director to finalize your publication plans once you have submitted your report for grading.

Course Contacts

All course contact information is provided here. Please read this section carefully and refer to it throughout the course. At any time during the course, if you would like additional information, are having problems with course content or are unsure of what has been assigned, please contact the Academic Director. If you have any concerns that the Director cannot address, please reach out to either the Program Director or the Director of the School of Environmental Studies.

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RNS 390 Report Grading Rubric

Aspect	Report section	Comments	Mark
Content (75)	Abstract/Summary (5): *present *appropriate length *appropriate content		/5
	Intro (8) and Study Area (7): *purpose/objectives given *nature and scope of topic *pertinent references given *sufficient background *study area described *site map with coordinates *history, land-use status		/8 /7
	Methods (25): *field methods-appropriate *analytical methods correct *described sufficiently well		/25
	Results /Disc/Concl (30): *data summarized properly *findings complete *results supported by data *discussion relevant *restoration suggestions *critical analysis *interpretations *effective use of tables, figures *pertinent references used		/30
Writing (15)	*spelling, grammar correct *sentences complete *paragraphs well written/clarity *conciseness *logically organized		/15

Format (10)	*references cited correctly *tables formatted properly *figures presented properly *paginated *scientific names used *metric units used *front material (cover page; table of contents; *etc.*) *overall lay-out		/10
Total (100)			/100