

FORESTRY 203- FIELD DENDROLOGY COURSE SYLLABUS FALL 2006

INSTRUCTORS

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COURSE WEB-SITE

ANGEL: <https://cms.psu.edu/frameIndex.htm>

MEETING TIME AND PLACE

SECTION 001: Tue 8:00-12:05, Thur 8:00-11:00

SECTION 002: Tue 1:25-5:30, Thur 1:25-4:25

We will meet in the courtyard outside the Forest Resources Building and depart from there. Students must be on time since we depart for our field destination promptly. No one is permitted to drive separately except by pre-arrangement.

On December 12, we will conduct class indoors to instruct in the use of dichotomous keys.

OBJECTIVES

- To introduce students to many of the common woody plant species

encountered in Pennsylvania (and the region) and the taxonomic traits used in their identification.

- To teach students the diagnostic skills useful for woody plant identification, including the use of dichotomous keys.
- To familiarize students with resources for identification and continued study of woody plants in Pennsylvania and the region.

FORMAT

During each class, 0-13 species of woody plants will be introduced to students. Information regarding technical identification characteristics, botanical classification, biological and ecological traits, and economic utilization will be provided. Most introductions will occur in the field; a few taxa will be introduced to students via keying exercises at the end of the semester (December 12).

STUDENT EVALUATION

With the exception of the first meeting, students will be asked during each class to identify and provide the correct name for species encountered at random in the field. These “pop” quizzes will include all species introduced to date. Such repetitive quizzing is intended to ensure that students have a good familiarity with all species introduced during this course. The course is structured such that more quizzes are given during the second half of the semester; this is intended to facilitate gradual learning and increased comfort with botanical nomenclature and species recognition before the majority of grade points will be awarded.

Typically, there will be time for 10-35 specimen quizzes but the range given per meeting may be considerably greater depending upon the time available. For each quiz specimen, students might earn up to 2 points for correct identification to genus (1/2 point), specific epithet (1/2 point), botanical family (1/2 point) and a common name (1/2 point). To receive full credit, spelling must be correct; slightly mis-spelled words will result in one-half credit. Students can expect between 500-700 field quizzes (worth approximately 1,000-1,400 points) over the course of the semester.

An indoors final examination will be given during finals week. This final will consist of 100 points and *will be optional for students who miss 0-1 classes. It will be mandatory for those who miss 2+ classes.* If all students in the section have a perfect attendance record, then the final will be cancelled.

All quizzes given during the final class (Dec 14) will be for extra-credit. This will serve as the "class curve."

Final letter grades will be arrived at by dividing the total number of points earned by the student by the total number of possible points available to that student. Letter grades will be assigned using the following percent scale:

A = 93-100%	A- = 90-92.9%	
B+ = 88-89.9%	B = 82-87.9%	B- = 80-81.9%
C+ = 78-79.9%	C = 70-77.9%	
D = 60-69.9%		
F = 59.9% and below		

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Due to the rigorous pace of the course, and because there will be little opportunity to make-up missed introductions, students are encouraged and expected to be present at every class meeting. The following rewards and penalties will apply with regard to attendance:

- 0 absences = option to drop quiz score from one class and final exam optional (or take final and drop score if not satisfied).
- 1 absence = quiz of missed day dropped from final grade calculation; final exam optional.
- 2 absences = quizzes of missed days dropped from final grade calculation; final exam required.
- 3+ absences = all quiz points for absent days included in final score calculation; final exam required.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The informal nature of the field excursions and the potential for student intermingling means that there are often instances where the inclination towards various forms of dishonesty may be great. Such dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty is a serious violation of ethical conduct and University policy. For further information about the Academic Integrity Policy at Penn State, please see: <http://www.psu.edu/ufs/policies/>.

While the demands of this course may at times seem over-whelming, the information and skills we seek to instill in students in this course are highly valued in the natural resource professions. It is therefore of no

benefit to cheat since the material taught during this course is extremely practical and will likely be called upon throughout one's professional career---no matter what the major.

Any student suspected of dishonest behavior during a class will receive a warning. Subsequent infractions will result in a zero being recorded for the quiz grade for that day. A pattern of dishonesty or questionable behavior will result in the instructors taking action to recommend formal dismissal from the course. In order to reduce opportunities for dishonest behavior, the following precautionary measures will be asked of students while in the field:

- Nothing will be kept on clipboards except for the quiz answer sheet(s). If students choose to take notes, then 3 x 5 note-cards should be used and these should be put away during each quiz specimen.
- There should be no talking when one is taking a quiz. After giving the instructor an answer card, then a student may talk quietly with others that are also done. There should be no discussion of the specimen until after every group member has finished.
- Students should maintain some space between each other during quizzes. Those who "cluster together" will be warned about their behaviors, with continued infractions resulting in a zero for the quiz that day.

TEXTS

▪ **Required:**

Rhoads, A. and Block, T. 2004. *The Trees of Pennsylvania*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

FOR 203 course packet. 2006. Containing excerpts from:

Fralish, J.S. and Franklin, S.B. 2002. *Taxonomy and Ecology of Woody Plants in North American Forests (Excluding Mexico and Subtropical Florida)*. John Wiley and Sons [**on course reserve at the library**].

▪ **Optional:**

Rhoads, A. and Block, T. 2000. *The Plants of Pennsylvania*. University of Pennsylvania Press. [**on course reserve at the library**].

Fergus, C. 2002. *Trees of Pennsylvania and the Northeast*. Stackpole Books. [on course reserve at the library].

ADDITIONAL COURSE SUPPLIES

- Required: clipboard, one clothing item w/hunter-orange coloration
- Optional: pocket knife, hand lens, rain gear, hiking boots, warm clothes

SPECIAL NEEDS

Please alert your instructor to any special concerns or considerations that he/she should know of. This includes any learning disabilities, handicaps or allergies that might interfere with your safety or performance in this course. Such information will remain strictly confidential, and special needs will be accommodated as best as possible.

FIVE TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- 1 - Always know where you are in the landscape. Two-thirds of correct identification is the result of knowing what you are likely to encounter. The occurrence of trees and other vegetation is often non-random.
- 2 - Always look on the ground and in the vicinity for evidence. Fallen cones, fruits, and other structures are invaluable when dealing with large specimens. Similarly, except in cultivation, trees and other woody plants rarely occur in isolation so look around to see what is in the area.
- 3 - Use your nose. Many trees and plants possess aromatic parts that can be useful in making a positive identification. Keep in mind that poison-ivy is introduced in this course!
- 4 - Go with your gut feeling. It is often the case that what first comes to mind is the correct choice. Don't overly deliberate; if it proves to be wrong, this will instructive in itself.
- 5 - Test yourself as much as possible. It is too easy these days to read a book or surf the net in order to learn identification characteristics. These are no replacement for in-the-field hands-on learning. Take the time to ask yourself "what is this?" on your way to class or while you are out-of-doors.