



## Introduction to Ecology Research at UW-Madison

AOS/Geog/Zoo 953; 1 credit

Ankur Desai, [desai@aos.wisc.edu](mailto:desai@aos.wisc.edu), 608-218-4208



**Meetings:** Monday 12:00-2:00 pm, AOSS Room 1039

**Target audience:** This seminar is designed primarily for incoming PhD students who are adjusting to graduate life at UW. Incoming M.S. students and second-year PhD students will also be considered as space permits.

---

This seminar course will introduce new graduate students to the diversity of ecologists across Wisconsin Ecology departments. Desired outcomes of the seminar include the following:

- 1) a strong cohort bond among new graduate students across departmental boundaries,
- 2) awareness of the breadth and depth of ecological research at UW,
- 3) dialogue between new and senior graduate students,
- 4) strategic thinking and sense of ownership regarding professional development.

We will make the most of our in-class meetings, with minimal outside workload. The first 50 minutes of Monday will follow the 'faculty-on-parade' model; one professor will discuss her/his conceptual interests, scientific approach, and research results. The talk will be followed by 25 minutes of student-led questions. Faculty presenters will be selected to represent the full range of subdisciplines, departments, and personal backgrounds within Wisconsin Ecology. I will act as moderator for these.

Prior to each meeting, you will be assigned one paper from the faculty presenter's research and be expected to prepare discussion questions. The remaining 45 minutes (or an alternate time during the week if the class reaches consensus) will be discussion of this paper, likely with a senior graduate student from that lab. No faculty will be present. Discussion of the paper will be led by two of the new graduate students, with the senior graduate student helping to explain the work and offering a personal perspective on the research process from a student viewpoint. Students also will be encouraged to discuss other aspects of life as a graduate student. Occasionally presentations will be replaced with more professional development focused topics.

The atmosphere will be casual, with priority placed on interaction among new students and with the visiting faculty and senior graduate students. Ecological research will be broadly construed, including evolutionary, conservation, and social science perspectives.

---

**Grading policy:** Grading will be on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis. A 'Satisfactory' grade will be awarded to any student who attends at least 60% of the course meetings and co-leads one discussion session. While active participation will be encouraged in all course meetings, it will not be considered in the grading. The intent of the course is to emphasize student agency in refining your own interests and interacting with the faculty and student community of ecologists at UW-Madison.



## Introduction to Ecology Research at UW-Madison

AOS/Geog/Zoo 953; 1 credit

Ankur Desai, desai@aos.wisc.edu, 608-218-4208



**Meetings:** Monday 12:00-2:00 pm, AOSS Room 1039

### Tentative schedule:

9/8/2014	Ankur Desai	Course introduction, Time management, care and maintenance of your advisor
9/15/2014	Anna Pidgeon	Impacts to avian habitat quality by anthropogenic factors
9/22/2014	Pete McIntyre	Linking aquatic organisms to ecosystems
9/29/2014	Jake Vander Zanden	Invasive species in aquatic systems
10/6/2014	Ankur Desai	Why biogeochemistry is mostly physics
10/13/2014	Trina McMahon	Current topics in microbial ecology
10/20/2014	Johanne Brunet	Gene flow and insect pollinators
10/27/2014	Joy Zedler	Highlights in adaptive restoration
11/3/2014	Jack Williams	Species responses to past climate change
11/10/2014	Benjamin Zuckerberg	Ecological responses to climate change
11/17/2014	Holly Gibbs	Approaches to reduce deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon
11/24/2014	Sean Schoville	Using molecular methods in ecological research
12/1/2014	Christine Ribic	Wildlife conservation in agricultural landscapes
12/8/2014	Tony Goldberg	Evolution of infectious disease, course feedback, evaluations