SERVICE LEARNING COURSE DESIGNATION FORM (5/15)

Please attach / submit additional documents as needed to fully complete each section of the form.

I. SERVICE LEARNING COURSE

Dept/Program  Ecological Restoration/College of Forestry  Course Number  NRSM495

Course Title (Course title should end with the following designation: /SvcLrn)  Number of credits 3-6
Ecological Restoration Capstone

Type of Request:  [ ] New  [ ] One-time Only  [ ] Renew  [ ] Change  [ ] Remove

Rationale:

Course has been highly successful and has delivered SERV learning objectives.

II. ENDORSEMENT/APPROVALS

+ Instructor:  Cara Nelson  
  Phone / Email:
  Signature  [Signature]  Date 10/28/15

Program Chair:  Cara Nelson  
Dean:  Wayne Freimund
  Signature  [Signature]  Date 10/28/15
  [Acting Dean]  W. Freimund  Date 10/29/15

*Form must be completed by the instructor who will be teaching the course. If the instructor of the course changes before the next review, the new instructor must be provided with a copy of the form prior to teaching the course.

III. UM SERVICE LEARNING DEFINITION

Service Learning is a method of teaching and learning in which students, faculty and community partners work together to enhance student learning by applying academic knowledge in a community-based setting. Student work addresses the needs of the community, as identified through collaboration with community or tribal partners, while meeting instructional objectives through faculty-structured service work and critical reflection meant to prepare students to be civically responsible members of the community. At its best, service learning enhances and deepens students' understanding of an academic discipline by facilitating the integration of theory and practice, while providing them with experience that develops life skills and engages them in critical reflection about individual, institutional, and social ethics.

IV. SERVICE LEARNING COURSE CRITERIA

The University of Montana has established the following criteria for service learning designated courses. In order to receive the service learning course designation, the proposed course must clearly exemplify all of the following criteria:

- Students in the course will provide a needed service to individuals, organizations, schools, or other not-for-profit or tax-exempt entities in the community.
- The service experience is directly related to the subject matter of the course.
- Knowledge from the discipline informs the service experiences with which the students are to be involved.
- Activities in the classroom will provide opportunities for students to actively reflect upon what they have learned through the service experience and how these experiences relate to the subject matter of the course. Reflection should be imbedded as course assignments, and in-class time should be scheduled throughout the semester to do reflection — both should be clearly on the syllabus. Reflection should incorporate discussion/assignments that help students understand the importance of meeting community needs through service and civic engagement in a democratic society.
The course offers a method to assess the learning derived from the service. Credit will be given for the learning and its relation to the course, not for the service alone.

Student service should address community-identified needs and represent reciprocal partnerships between the campus (class) and community partner organization(s). Community partner(s) should have the opportunity to provide advice and feedback in class on the value and impact of the service performed by the students.

Training (by the service agency) and preparation (by the course instructor) ensure that students are well-prepared and perform service activities in a professional manner in which vulnerable populations are not harmed.

Service options ensure that no student is required to participate in a service placement that creates a religious, political, or moral conflict for the student.

In a 3-credit service learning course, students should be required to perform a minimum of 15 hours of community service per semester (i.e. 5 hours of service per academic credit.) Service hours may include hours spent in training, preparation, and direct contact with clients.

If the proposed course is an internship course, the syllabus should clearly indicate not only the learning objectives that are to be achieved through the service, but also the connection between this course and curriculum from other courses in the discipline. There should be a clear connection of the interrelatedness between the service learning internship and previous coursework the student has taken to prepare them for their service work.

V. CONFIRMATION OF SERVICE LEARNING COURSE CRITERIA

Explain how this course meets each of the following criteria.

1. Need for service: Describe the community-identified need and the nature of the service experience students will be involved in.

The goal of this service learning course is for students to gain real-world experience in the practice of ecological restoration and/or the science of restoration ecology. Students will design and implement aspects of a restoration, monitoring, or research plan as a service learning project for a community partner (private entity, nonprofit group, management agency or other sponsor). The scope of work for the practicum must be developed in collaboration with a potential sponsor (ideally this will be done as the final project for NRSM 344, see above) and can include any aspect of restoration work or restoration-relevant research.

2. Relation to course content: Describe how the service experience is related to the subject matter of the course. How do students apply their classroom learning in the service experience?

Students in this course apply what they have learned in their academic courses in the restoration program and specifically implement the plan developed in NRSM344 Ecological Restoration Capstone.

3. Reflection: What opportunities are provided in the classroom for students to reflect upon what they have learned through their service experience? How is service placed within the broader context of civic engagement and service to others? Reflection assignments and activities should be clearly noted as such in the syllabus and should occur throughout the semester, not just at the end.

Students will reflect on the service learning experience during each class session. In addition, they will individually submit a 4-6 page final report that includes an overview of time, effort and project accomplishments, a self-evaluation of their practicum performance, and reflections on their service learning experience. This report counts for 10% of the student’s grade.
4. **Assessment:** What method(s) are used to assess the learning derived from the service experience? How often do they occur in the semester?

Student learning is assessed at two points during the semester. Students, the course instructor, and the community partner meeting mid-semester to discuss project progress and learning outcomes. Students are also required to turn in a self-reflection on their learning experience at the end of the semester. See the previous section on reflection for how this impacts students' grades.

5. **Reciprocity:** How do community partner(s) provide advice and feedback on the nature and value and impact of the service performed by the students?

Community partners provide feedback in several ways:
1. At the end of each academic year, project sponsors are sent a survey asking for their opinion on the relationship they had with students, the value of the project to their organization, and suggestions for improving the Capstone.

2. Community partners help develop a grading rubric for student work, and they provide both a grade and written feedback for work done by the students during the semester.

6. **Training:** What training and preparation will be provided to students, and by whom, to assure students are prepared to perform their service activities in a professional manner in which vulnerable populations are not harmed?

1. Students receive training from instructors in an earlier course (NRSM 344) on how to interact with their community partner and the public in a professional manner. They often receive additional training from their community partner on how to interact with the public when they are in the field or leading a volunteer event.

2. Depending on the project, students receive additional training from community sponsors at the beginning of the course on how to conduct their service activities in a responsible way.

3. The course instructor and/or the Field Learning Coordinator provide in-field service learning training to students as part of the course.

7. **Service options:** What service options exist to ensure that no student is required to participate in a service placement that creates a religious, political, or moral conflict?

Students are given the option of participating in multiple projects. They select the project they are interested in working on, and instructors would be open to letting students change project if a conflict relating to religious, political, or moral issues arose. If there was a reason why none of the projects were acceptable to students for these reasons, instructors would work with students to identify an acceptable alternative.
8. Number of service hours required: How many hours of service per semester are students required to perform? Provide detailed description of the service activities to be performed.

Students need to perform a minimum of 135 hours of service per semester. The specific activities vary by project, but students:

1. Organize and lead a volunteer or community event for either the public or UM students.
2. Perform hands-on work for their projects (this is the bulk of the work).
3. Write final reports detailing findings or results based on criteria provided by community partners.

VI. COMMUNITY PARTNER INFORMATION

Provide information on the organization(s) that will provide service placements for students in this course.

Name of Agency/Organization  See attached list.

Contact Person  Phone/ Email

Name of Agency/Organization  See attached list.

Contact Person  Phone/ Email

Name of Agency/Organization  See attached list.

Contact Person  Phone/ Email

VII. ASSESSING SERVICE LEARNING AT UM

Service learning and community engagement are important aspects of UM's strategic plan. The Office for Civic Engagement at UM collects data about service learning to track student and faculty engagement and assess its impacts. To streamline data collection, analysis, and reporting, professors of service learning designated courses are highly encouraged to commit to having their students complete the university's pre/post-test service learning questionnaire.

Faculty are also highly encouraged to fill out the online Service Learning Faculty Survey at the end of the semester they teach service learning courses.

☑️ I will commit to having my students complete UM’s online service learning pre/post-test
☑️ I will commit to filling out UM’s online faculty service learning survey.

VIII. SYLLABUS

PLEASE SUBMIT SYLLABUS IN A SEPARATE FILE.
The syllabus should clearly indicate that this is a service learning course and it should include the UM Service Learning Definition as text within the syllabus (please see definition above). The syllabus should also demonstrate how the above criteria are satisfied. For assistance see preparing a service learning course syllabus or Andrea Vernon, Director of the Office for Civic Engagement.

VII. ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION

Submit approved original, and electronic file to the Faculty Senate Office, UH 221. A PDF of the original signed form is acceptable.
### NRSM 495 – SERVICE LEARNING PROPOSAL

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<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
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