

Fall 2016

BIOL 258--Small-scale Land Conservation

John A. Baker

Clark University, jbaker@clarku.edu

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Biology 258/358
Fall, 2016

Date	Activity	Assignments
Aug 30 T	Initial Class Meeting	Expectations, Grading
Sep 2 F	Discussion	Assigned papers on Moodle
Sep 6 T	Discussion	Assigned papers on Moodle
Sep 9 F	Student Group Presentations	Assigned Properties
Sep 13 T	Discussion	Questions by Dr. Baker
Sep 16 F	Field visit #1	Gross Farm CR
Sep 20 T	Discussion	
Sep 23 F	Field visit #2	St. Mary's Monastery CR
Sep 27 T	Discussion	
Sep 30 F	Field visit #3	Gould Woodlot CR
Oct 4 T	Discussion	
Oct 7 F	Field visit #4	King Farm CR
Oct 11 T	Fall break	
Oct 14 F	Field visit #5	Day CR—Brown's Pond
Oct 18 T	Monitoring Planning	
Oct 21 F	Field visit #6	Landworks Farm CR
Oct 25 T	Discussion & Planning	
Oct 28 F	Monitoring, 3 sites	
Nov 1 T	Discussion & Planning	Comparative paper due
Nov 4 F	Monitoring, 3 sites	
Nov 8 T	Discussion	
Nov 11 F	Field visit #7	TBD
Nov 15 T	Discussion	
Nov 18 F	TBD	Draft Monitoring Report Due
Nov 22 T	TBD	
Nov 25 F	Thanksgiving Break	
Nov 29 T	No class	Final Monitoring Report Due
Dec 2 F	No class	

Grading. Your grade will be determined based on three course components:

- participation in discussions (you must make it evident that you have read all assigned material and made a good-faith effort to understand it) **20%**
- Your individual comparative paper (take-home) **20%**
- Your group's Final Monitoring Report **60%**

Purpose.

The purpose of the course is to provide you with in-depth experience into a type of legal agreement known as a conservation easement (in Massachusetts, called a conservation restriction). Using a combination of readings, discussions, and field visits, you will get to know six very different such restrictions in the Town of Petersham, Massachusetts. You will learn why these specific conservation restrictions were put in place, how the legally guiding document

pertaining to them (the baseline) was developed, and how to properly conduct the (legally required) annual monitoring. Throughout the course you will interact with local conservation specialists who deal with these types of properties for a living.

The most important end product of the course will be a CR monitoring report, written by you in teams of three. This report is legally required annually by the state. It will be presented to the Town of Petersham's Conservation Commission (the entity that holds the CR's for the Town). It will be reviewed by that Commission, and submitted to the Town's Board of Selectmen, which is the Town's governing body. They, in turn, will submit the report to the State's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Thus...you should take this report seriously, as your names will be on it as authors.

Expectations.

- This is senior/graduate-level course, so you are expected to approach the readings, field visits, and writing at that level. I also assume that each of you in the course is interested in the field of conservation, land planning, etc.; as such, I expect each of you to show a particularly high level of interest and participation, as the course should be of direct relevance to your careers.
- Not everyone needs to be equally vocal in discussions; however, you must give me evidence that you have read all required documents, and made a good-faith effort to understand them. The course requires regular attendance, especially for the Friday field visits. Missing more than one without an outstanding reason will negatively affect your grade in the course.
- The individual paper you will write must be your own work—during class discussions you should be able to get all necessary information to write a nearly perfect paper, and you may talk among yourselves as much as you wish... *except that during the week before the paper is due you may not consult with anyone in the course about the paper.*
- During the latter part of the course, you will participate in the required annual monitoring for one of our six focal properties. The monitoring will be done in groups of 3 students, working on properties assigned by me. All members of a group will be asked to verify that each person contributed meaningfully to the monitoring report.
- You should all be aware of Clark's policy on academic honesty and student/professor behavior. If not, read it online at the university web site. I will accord each and every one of you a high level of respect, and I require that you show the same respect to everyone in the class. At the end of the semester, I hope that I will, through the course, have earned your respect as well. If at any time you have any problems with the course, of any kind, please contact me to resolve the issue.
- During the field visits, you will interact with a number of Massachusetts conservationists. You should conduct yourself in a manner that would bring credit to you personally, to the class, and to Clark University.
- The "standard" Clark guidelines suggest that a one-credit course should require approximately 180 hours of work overall (both in class, and outside of class), which works out to about 15 hours per week. This is a guideline...individual students may spend more or less than this amount of time. You commit the time you need to bring credit to your work. What I can tell you is that if you don't put enough time in on the course, that will be quite evident to me.