
SOIL 500 - GRADUATE SEMINAR

TERM 1 & 2 – Sept 2021 to Apr 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

COURSE INFORMATION

Course Title	Course Code Number	Credit Value
Graduate Seminar	SOIL 500	3 (P/F)

PREREQUISITES

none

CONTACTS

Instructor	Contact Details	Office Location	Office Hours
Instructor	Sandra Brown sandra.brown@ubc.ca	McMl 229	Friday immediately following seminar or by appointment

COURSE INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

I am an Assistant Professor of Teaching in the Applied Biology & Soil Science programs in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems at UBC Vancouver campus. I am a geographer, with expertise in soil and water resources, and a specific focus on international development. My research interests include characterization of human impacts on soil and water resources. You can find out more at <http://www.landfood.ubc.ca/person/sandra-brown/> or follow me on twitter [@SandraBrownSoil](https://twitter.com/SandraBrownSoil)

WHY A GRADUATE SEMINAR?

Effective science communication is an important skills for future practitioners, researchers and academics. While conference presentations are great, often in the setting of a parallel session you are presenting to researchers in your specific area of interest. In SOIL 500, our audience is diverse, including students, postdocs and faculty specializing in soil quality, biometeorology, land-water interactions, and plant-soil-atmosphere systems. Upper level undergraduate students with an interest in soil science also attend many of our seminars. Presenting to a general science audience, while maintaining academic rigour in your data presentation and analysis is key – and is one goal of our graduate seminar series. Through the year, we also aim to provide you with an overview of the research activities within the Soil Science Graduate program at UBC, and relevant related topics from the region and beyond.

COURSE STRUCTURE – SEMINAR

Year/Term: Winter 2021-2022, Term 1 & 2

Course Schedule: Fridays 3:00 - 4:30 p.m. Vancouver time – hybrid (mix of in-person and zoom livestreaming)

In 2021/22 this course will be taught in-person with a livestream option for students who are off-campus. Some seminars with guest speakers will be via zoom (see presentation schedule in Canvas for details).

Course format: weekly seminars by students, faculty and guest speakers. Seminars are open to the public, and advertised within the faculty and to members of Pacific Regional Soil Science Society.

Students enrolled in SOIL 500 are required to complete 2 seminars over the course of their degree (not necessarily in the same academic year), to regularly participate in the weekly seminars, and to prepare written critiques of 2 seminars per year. Students introduce guest speakers (and student seminars) each week and moderate the question period.

Student seminars are based on their research results, typically 1 seminar mid-way through their program (preliminary results) and 1 seminar near the end of their thesis research (final results). Alternatively, the 1st seminar could be on student's experience prior to enrolling into the graduate program, assuming that the experience in question is related to soil science.

Seminars are typically 30 minutes followed by 15 minutes for questions, and are geared toward a "general" science audience. Seminar sign-up and scheduling will be coordinated with the instructor via UBC's Course Management System and/or email.

The graduate seminar is an important component of graduate training and SOIL500 is a required course by the Soil Science Graduate Program. All graduate students in Soil Science Graduate Program are expected to regularly attend SOIL 500 seminars since this provides them with opportunities to become informed about a variety of topics in soil science, many of which are not addressed in other course work.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of SOIL 500 successful students will be able to:

1. Discuss the range of research activities in Soil Science at UBC and within the region
2. Present research methods, analyses, data and interpretations to a diverse audience
3. Communicating findings and views clearly and concisely
4. Respond to audience questions
5. Constructively evaluate their own presentation as well as presentation of others
6. Ask relevant, thoughtful questions
7. Chair seminar sessions

2021 SEMINAR SCHEDULE

The seminar schedule will be posted in canvas and on the course Wiki. Weekly announcements will be sent out via email and posted to LFS today. Please be sure you are receiving announcements for this course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

For each degree (M.Sc. and Ph.D.) requirements for completion are:

- A minimum of two 30 to 45 minute seminars, followed by 10 to 15 minutes for questions
- Regular seminar attendance and participation (minimum 80%)
- Chairing a minimum of 2 seminar sessions
- Weekly meetings with the seminar instructor and other students registered in the course to discuss and evaluate presentation / communication style(s)
- 2 written critiques of seminars per year
- Participation in dry runs prior to class with other students is strongly encouraged

COURSE EVALUATION

Grading: Pass/Fail, based on completion of all the course requirements (seminar presentations, critiques and attendance).

Prior to each seminar, students will submit a short bio and abstract which will be used for advertising. Please note that your abstract should be written for a general science audience; acronyms and jargon need to be avoided (or you will be asked to re-write you abstract). A template for your webinar announcement will be provided, and the completed information should be uploaded to Canvas 7 to 10 days prior to your seminar.

Following each seminar presentation, students enrolled in SOIL 500 meet with the course instructor to provide feedback on the presentation. Student presenters are asked to reflect on their own presentations, considering what worked, what did not work, what improvements could be made, and whether their goals were met. Each student is required to prepare a written critique (500 words) of two seminars per year in which they are registered, the critique is based on the students' evaluation of the seminar as outlined in the *Guidance for Presentations* below, and a [peer-to-peer feedback form](#) is provided on the course wiki. This critique is assessed by the Instructor and discussed with the registered students.

HOW TO GET HELP

Any questions:

- 1) check the course syllabus and wiki, and/or
- 2) email the course instructor directly.

GUIDANCE FOR PRESENTATIONS

Content:

1. Content was presented in a clear and concise manner.
2. Purpose or objective for presentation was clearly articulated.
3. Explains theory and potentially complex material clearly (e.g., no jargon or jargon is explained).
4. There was sufficient detail for an out-of-field observer to follow the presentation.
5. The purpose or objective as stated, was achieved.

Structure:

1. The presentation started in a manner that captured the audience's interest and was relevant to the body of the presentation.
2. The points were presented in a logical manner.
3. The presentation closed in a manner that linked to the purpose (e.g., summary of main points, suggestions for future research/directions, thought-provoking comments/questions where do we go from here?).
4. The presentation was of an appropriate length (kept within allotted time).

Delivery:

1. The student's presentation kept the audience interested and engaged.
2. Audio-visual aides were used in a manner that supported the presentation.
3. Speech: projected well (everyone could hear), presenter did not speak too quickly.
4. Presenter was well organized.
5. Handled questions well (paraphrased back to the questioner if required, demonstrated critical thinking if answer is not immediately obvious, clearly separates knowledge from speculation, shows confidence in ability to answer questions).

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access, including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions.

Details of the policies and how to access support are available on the [UBC Senate website](#).

COVID RELATED CONSIDERATIONS

IF you are not feeling well, you are encouraged to self-isolate. IF you are going to miss in-person classes, a livestream option may be arranged. Please inform Sandra via email if you are going to miss class.

Covid Safety:

Provincial Health Orders and UBC policy now mandate masks in all indoor public spaces on campus. These spaces include classrooms, residence halls, libraries, and common areas. Mask wearing protects you as well as others in your environment. Students who wish to request an exemption to the indoor mask mandate must do so based on one of the grounds for exemption detailed in the [PHO Order on Face Coverings \(COVID-19\)](#). Such requests must be made through the Center for Accessibility (Vancouver campus). After review, students that are approved for this accommodation will be provided with a letter of accommodation to share with faculty members teaching courses in which they are registered. In the intervening time, these students are welcome in the class.

If you have not yet had a chance to get vaccinated against Covid-19, vaccines are available to you, free and on campus. The higher the rate of vaccination in our community overall, the lower the chance of spreading this virus. Please note that proof of vaccination is not required for [educational activities](#) such as attending classes.

Let's do everything we can as a community to stop the spread of this virus.

Academic Concession:

*If you or one of your family members has the **COVID-19** virus, please contact Student Services immediately, so that we can explore concessions (if needed) that will not impact your grades negatively.*

COPYRIGHT

All materials of this course (course handouts, lecture slides, assessments, course readings, etc.) are the intellectual property of the Course Instructor or licensed to be used in this course by the copyright owner. Redistribution of these materials by any means without permission of the copyright holder(s) constitutes a breach of copyright and may lead to academic discipline.

I do not permit students to record my classes without prior approval.

Version: September 7, 2021