

# **NRE 701 – MASTER’S PROJECT PLANNING SEMINAR**

**Seminar: Mondays, 5:00 – 7:00 pm, 1040 Dana**  
**Breakout Rooms: 1064, 1046, 1024 and 2024 Dana**  
**Course webpage: [www.snre.umich.edu/nre701](http://www.snre.umich.edu/nre701)**

## **Instructors**

Raymond De Young	2034b Dana	763-3129	<a href="mailto:rdeyoung@umich.edu">rdeyoung@umich.edu</a>
Seth Epstein	2034a Dana	647-6159	<a href="mailto:saepstei@umich.edu">saepstei@umich.edu</a>

## **Course Webpage**

The course webpage at [www.snre.umich.edu/nre701](http://www.snre.umich.edu/nre701) serves as a resource throughout the term. Once final research teams form they are advised to set up their own UM.worktools site and email group name as explained on the course webpage.

## **Objectives**

Master's Projects are a result of SNRE's awareness that most work being done in natural resource and environmental fields involves interdisciplinary, team-based problem solving. Preparing students to work in such settings is one of the School's goals.

The Master's Project is an interdisciplinary team project in which students work closely with a faculty advisor to analyze and propose solutions to a current environmental problem. Each project requires both individual and team-based analysis and reporting. Projects provide an integrative team-focused experience that matches those found in environmental careers. The project results in a jointly authored document about a salient environmental issue.

This course, the Master's Project Planning Seminar (NRE 701-888) helps students select from among several topics in a database of ideas, organize a research team, develop a proposal, and discuss issues related to working with an external client.

The first half of the course is designed to develop an initial interest into a formal proposal. The second half of the term is devoted to beginning the research tasks and culminates in a workplan for the following year and a presentation of the work-to-date to the SNRE community.

## **Requirements**

The primary requirement for this course is for students to become active and thoughtful participants in a Master's Project team. The course provides the structure, support and tools necessary for students to choose and plan for a successful Master's Project, but the primary responsibility for fulfilling this requirement belongs to you; neither Donna, Ray nor Seth will create or manage the project teams. Therefore, each individual and team must explore, both in and outside of class, potential projects, clients, team members, etc.

## **Communication**

Please use the class e-mail address ([snre-mastersprojects@umich.edu](mailto:snre-mastersprojects@umich.edu)) to inform others and keep yourself informed about group meetings, writing plans and other developments. The instructors are also available to provide assistance or to point you toward assistance.

## Assignments

Further information on the assignments will be provided on the course webpage as the course progresses. Grades will be assigned by the course instructors. Letter grades will be based on class/team participation and the assignments scheduled and listed below.

<u>GROUP</u>	<u>DELIVERABLE</u>	<u>LENGTH</u>	<u>DUE</u>	<u>GRADE</u>
<i>Individual</i>	Active participation	---	throughout term	10%
<i>Individual</i>	Critiques past projects *	---	January 12	5%
Initial group	Topic Brief **	1-2 paragraphs	January 23 ***	10%
Initial group	Topic Brief presentation	3 minutes	January 26	--
Interim group	Prospectus **	2 pages	February 6 ***	10%
Interim group	Prospectus presentation	5 minutes	February 9	--
<i>Individual</i>	Commitment to topic ****	Email	February 11	--
Final team	Meeting & writing plan	1-2 pages	February 16	5%
Final team	Proposal **	10-15 pages	March 8	25%
<i>Individual</i>	Proposal review	2 pages + form	March 22	5%
Research team	Workplan **	5-10 pages	April 12	15%
Research team	Presentation **	15 minutes	April 12, 19-23	15%

\* Notes on critique of past project, shared in class.

\*\* Posted on the course website.

\*\*\* Topic briefs and prospectuses emailed to entire cohort by Friday evening for reading before Monday's class.

\*\*\*\* Commitment to a specific research topic based on individual review of prospectuses.

Assignment 1 - Past project critique

Assignment 2 - Topic brief text and presentation

Assignment 3 - Prospectus text and presentation

Assignment 4 - Commitment to one research topic

Assignment 5 - Proposal meeting and writing plan

Assignment 6 - Proposal

Assignment 7 - Proposal review

Assignment 8 - Workplan

Assignment 9 - Presentation

## Schedule of Session

<u>Date</u>	<u>Session/Topic</u>	<b>Blue</b> = Instructor-led material. <b>Red</b> = Student-led material. <b>Green</b> = Major due date or event.
December 3	<b>Overview</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Overview of the Master's Project Planning Seminar</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>ASSIGNMENT 1</b> - Critique of past Master's projects due January 12</li> </ul>	
January 12	<b>Introduction</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Seminar schedule, deliverables and deadlines</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Idea database - Source of ideas for developing proposal</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Project management - Role of project stakeholders</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>ASSIGNMENT 2</b> - Topic Briefs are due January 23 (emailed to entire cohort) with presentation on January 26. See handout for details of process.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>BREAK OUT SESSIONS</b> - Share critiques of past projects</li> </ul>	
January 19	<b>MLK Day</b> (no class session)	
January 23	<b>Topic briefs due via email.</b> Send to entire cohort.	

January 26 **Explore Potential Topics**

- Project management - Abstract and prospectus writing
- Project management – Imagining final products – Beyond the “black book”
- **ASSIGNMENT 3** - Prospectuses are due February 6 (emailed to entire cohort) with presentation on February 9. See handout for process.
  
- Presentation and review of Topic Briefs by initial groups
  - o Short presentation (3 minutes)
  - o Topic Briefs displayed on walls and reviewed by individuals
  - o Individuals sign topic form indicating interest level

January 28 – **Assignment to interim groups are posted by instructors.**

February 2 **Group Dynamics**

- Group Process Skills (presentation by Dr. Bruce Gibb)
  - o Framework of team subsystem
  - o Formation of team norms
  - o Roles of team members
- **ASSIGNMENT 4** - Commitment to one topic due via email by February 11.
  
- **BREAK OUT SESSIONS**
  - o Instructor-Interim group meetings
  - o Develop plans for meetings about and writing prospectus

February 6 – **Prospectuses due via email.** Send to entire cohort.

February 9 **Prospectuses**

- Project management
  - o Client-Team and Advisor-Team management
  - o Elements of a research proposal
- **ASSIGNMENT 5** - Meeting and writing plan due February 16. See handout.
- **ASSIGNMENT 6** – Proposal due March 8. See handout for coversheet, format and other details.
  
- Presentation of Prospectuses
  - o Short presentation (3-5 minutes)
  - o Prospectuses displayed on walls and reviewed by individuals

February 11 – Commitment to a single topic based on review of prospectuses.

February 12 – Final research teams are posted by instructors.

February 16 **[Meeting and writing plan due in class]**

- **BREAK OUT SESSIONS**
  - o Instructor-Final team meetings to review meeting and writing plan

February 23 **Winter Recess**