

**Spring 2012 MES Elective, Fire Science and Society**  
**Richard Bigley & Sarah Hamman**

**Course Description:**

***Fire Science and Society*** is a 4 credit MES program elective offered Spring 2012. Fire plays the role of ecosystem engineer in forests and grasslands throughout the world. This role has changed over the past hundred years, however, with increasing human populations, sprawling development into fire-prone areas, and altered perceptions of this vital ecological process. With fire suppression and exclusion, we are seeing dramatic changes in the structure and functioning of fire-influenced ecosystems and the role of fire in natural resources management and policy.

There are significant ecological, social and political implications of these changes, ranging from the listing of fire-adapted endangered species to more rigorous air quality regulations to altered pressures and priorities for the timber industry. Adapting policies in the anticipation to climate change has become a major priority. It is becoming more important for citizens to understand both the benefits and the risks associated with fire as it is increasingly impacting people in their daily lives. This course will introduce students to the language, the ecology and the politics surrounding wildland fire and increase your effectiveness with opportunities that involve fire science, application and management.

There will be a small course fee estimated at \$100 to cover a 3 day field trip to the Wenatchee area. There is one text to purchase: *Living with Fire: Fire ecology and policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, 2008 by Sara E. Jensen and Guy R. McPherson