

Fire Science and Society

Course Description: Fire Science and Society is a 4 credit MES program elective offered Fall 2013. Fire has 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.

Instructors: Sarah Hamman and Richard Bigley Class fees: There will be one text to purchase and a \$115 class fee to cover a 3 day field trip Oct 11-13, 2013