RESEARCH PROGRESS REPORT

NRSC 644 (GRADUATE SEMINAR 2) MSC RESEARCH PROGRESS REPORT
NRSC 753 (GRADUATE SEMINAR 6) PHD RESEARCH PROGRESS REPORT
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCE SCIENCES, MCGILL UNIVERSITY

Semester:	**Fall 2023**
Time:	Thursdays, 10:05 am – 11:25 am
Places:	Zoom, R3-048, B1-015, CINE Boardroom
Coordinator:	Brian Driscoll (MS3-038; brian.driscoll@mcgill.ca)

Course description:

This course offers Department of Natural Resource Sciences MSc (second or third semester) and PhD (fourth or fifth semester, following completion of NRSC 752) students the opportunity to further develop skills **related** to oral presentation and get feedback on their research projects. Therefore, **students are encouraged to present preliminary data and even confusing results.**

Learning objectives:
1. Further develop presentation skills through presentation of a poster and seminar and observation of seminars presented by other students.
2. Develop evaluation skills and the use of constructive criticism via peer evaluation of the seminars.

Evaluation (all elements required for course credit)**:**
A. Abstract: 10%
B. Oral Presentation: 50%
C. Poster: 40%, due by November 16, 2023. (Zoom session: November 23, 2023; In-person session December 14, 2023)

A. Abstract:

A maximum 110-word Abstract (plus 80-word bio) must be submitted on myCourses no later than one week before your scheduled presentation. The abstract should include introduction, hypotheses and objectives (or, problem and objectives), and proposed methodologies. **The abstract must be formatted** using the **Abstract_template_NRS.potx** template for PowerPoint available on myCourses (see example below). Once you create your abstract submit it to myCourses in **pptx format**. Try to keep your abstract file from getting too big (1-2 MB should be big enough), via watching the size (resolution) of images imbedded in it. Late submissions will be subject to late penalty of 10% per day (weekends included).

B. Oral Presentation:

The oral presentation should include an introduction to your research topic, your hypotheses and objectives; or, problem and objectives, your results, a discussion of the results and conclusions.   Careful explanation of methodologies used will enhance others' understanding of the results. Discussion of the results should include suggested additional experiments needed to complete the objectives. Presentations are expected to be **20 minutes** in length and will be followed by a five-minute question period, for a total of **25 minutes** (maximum).

Please use a 4x3 layout (16x9 is default in PowerPoint but not recommended) and include slide numbers.

The following tips are more useful for in-person than Zoom presentations but are worth thinking about regardless of the mode of delivery. When presenting, move away from the podium and interact with the audience, especially via eye contact. Try to use the entire width of the presentation area to interact with the whole class and interact with the presentation screen, not your computer screen: when you need to read from a slide, read it from the presentation screen not the computer. I do not recommend the use of on-screen presenter notes: they can anchor you to the podium and computer screen.

To explain figures (define axes, etc), point to items on the screen with your hand or a laser pointer, whether an actual laser pointer in your hand or the Zoom laser pointer tool. Do not use the computer cursor using the mouse – it is not easy to see, especially on a bigger screen in a classroom. Laser pointers are less useful on small screens in small rooms – if you can reach, use your hand to point things out.

Go over your presentation with your supervisor – indeed, run anything you do for this class (abstract, seminar, written proposal, poster) by your supervisor, and your peers i.e., never submit a first draft, never submit unreviewed work. Oral presentation grades will be calculated from the average grades provided by the professors in attendance.

C. Poster:

You will also present you progress in the form of a poster at the end of the semester. Posters are not printed but instead are projected onto white screens in the Active Learning classroom **MSB-016** and presented remotely via **Zoom**. The Zoom session (a bit like a 3MT session) will take place on November 23, 2023. The in-person session will take place in **MSB-106** on December 14, 2023 if it is possible for us to have an in-person session. *Normally this would have been December 7, 2023 but the room was not available that day*. I have also booked MSB-016 for the day before the in-person session (December 13, 2023: from 8:35 am to 5:25 pm) so that presenters may go down to the room and practice connecting their computers and use the system. The in-person session would <u>not</u> be required for students who prefer to do this course partially or completely remotely.

Format: use a regular PowerPoint format (on-screen show 4:3). Examples of some posters will be posted on myCourses. All students in NRSC 644 and NRSC 753 are asked to evaluate each other's posters using the form (**644-753_Poster_evaluation_form.docx**) available on myCourses. I may use some of this year's posters as examples (never as an example of what not to do, but as alternatives for various poster elements) for future students. Please let me know if you object to me providing your poster as an example.

Grades will be calculated from the average of marks provided by professors who have provided a mark. I normally form a jury of professors to grade posters, and they will take into account the oral explanation of the poster in the Zoom session as well as elements of the poster itself via examination of the supplied poster file.

Please **submit final versions** of your posters (as presented) as **pptx files** to myCourses by <mark>November 16, 2023</mark>. Poster file size can be kept in check via the "Compress pictures" function in PowerPoint, which trims off cropped areas. I can more easily resize files from pptx format than from pdf and maintain resolution, if you submit a pdf that is a massive file, I may not be able to compress it, and if you submit a pdf file that is highly compressed, it may not have sufficient resolution for grading.

Use of QR codes on posters

Most posters that display references cram them into a corner in tiny font. Is this any better than not citing any references at all? A nice solution is the QR code. A reference list can be placed on a web page and the web address can be converted to a QR code which can be placed on the poster and thus it can be accessed via a smart phone. You can also encode links to your contact information, your cv, or anything else. Using a desktop or a laptop, perhaps the easiest way is to use the free QR code generator, available via the web page (https://www.qr-code-generator.com) encoded in the below QR code:

Another way to convert a web page is to use a smart phone. Go to the web page of interest using Google Chrome on your phone. Select the share function and choose QR code, and email the QR code to yourself. There is a handy video on YouTube which is what I used to test this method out, available via the web page (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRn4gfyP_z0&t=9s) encoded in the below QR code:

Zooming in and out of poster files

When presenting a poster electronically, either via Zoom or on a large screen as in MSB-016, sometimes posters look best in PowerPoint, but sometimes another file format (pdf or jpg) might look better. In PowerPoint you can use the Export… function to save your pptx files in these other formats. My observation is that you can get higher resolution exports in pdf form, but it depends on the source pptx file.

To Zoom in and out of your presentation on your PC, use the scroll wheel of a mouse while holding Ctrl. You may be able to focus the zoom point using the cursor before you begin to zoom in.

With an iMac, in PowerPoint in Slide Show view, zoom in and out by holding Control and moving two fingers forward and backward on the track surface of your mouse. This will also zoom the entire screen of the computer when not in Slide Show view. If your poster is in jpg or pdf form, you can open in Preview and do the same. Acrobat can be used for pdf files. Use whichever format or

program works best for you. You may be able to focus the zoom point using the cursor before you begin to zoom in.

With a MacBook you can zoom in and out by holding Control and moving two fingers forward and backward on the track surface of your track pad, but this does not work in PowerPoint Slide Show view. With a pdf in Preview, zoom in and out using the pinch motion with thumb and forefinger on trackpad. This works in regular and slideshow views. This also works with pdfs in Acrobat in normal and Full Screen modes.

The following is some general advice I wrote in response to some questions – some of it is irrelevant for remote presentation:

You are encouraged to try out your poster on a projector in any classroom that is not being used (easier once classes are over). You might be able to access MSB-016 to test out those projectors (and the connections and controls) which are not as bright as some of the newer ones in the classrooms: the size is similar to the projectors/screens in the smaller classrooms.

There is no need for paragraphs as people don't tend to read dense posters. Methods can be cited unless it is the method itself that is an exciting development. Most people judge whether they wish to spend time with a poster in a couple of seconds – dense writing tends to dissuade general interest although it might be necessary at a very specialized meeting. References can be presented via a link or a QR code (i.e., to a sharable link).

Look at the example posters provided on myCourses and talk to any of those people who are still around. Those posters all have strengths and weaknesses. Some posters are very dense with text, and the supervisors often love this, but it is less impactful to non-experts: it is a fine balance. No posters were included as bad examples – I included some because they had an interesting design or colour scheme. Some of these posters are the first ones these students have prepared done, so you can see all levels of experience. It is a process, and you may change your style over the years or for different purposes.

*Posters should be **stand-alone**. You may choose to leave out things that you might prefer to add when you are talking to people visiting your poster, or as details to people in your area who might appreciate them and would ask, but the poster must be understandable to a reader looking at it when you are not present to add explanations. Minimalistic posters can be beautiful and work well but they are a challenge to produce and be stand-alone. If you want to try something like that, this is the time as the stakes aren't as high as they would be for an important conference.*

Please don't feel too much pressure – do something that feels like it is right for you, give it a try, get some feedback, and learn from the experience (including from the posters of other students). The poster session is also a fun competition: the winner receives a prize, which is just a letter from me, but it's official and can go on your cv if you want.

Seminar attendance, evaluation and schedule:

Students are expected to attend and evaluate the seminar presentations of their peers. A seminar evaluation form (**Seminar_evaluation_form_F2023.docx**) is to be completed for each presentation attended and submitted on myCourses within 24 hours. When submitting your evaluations, please submit a separate one for each talk and name the file such that the filename begins with the speaker's surname (it can also include your surname, second). Please submit as a docx file (do not submit a pdf!). For example, if I just saw a seminar by Joe Duplantier, I would name my file as "**duplantier_driscoll.docx**" before submitting it to myCourses.

Oral presentation grades will be calculated from the average grades provided by the professors in attendance. It is very important that there are at least two professors at each seminar to provide grades (one must be your supervisor). Your **supervisor** must ensure that a second grader be present.

Confirm that the seminar slot from the preliminary schedule also works for your supervisor and then please send an email to me confirming this, along with the Zoom link (if not doing an in-person seminar).

Presentations via Zoom

Presenters will have the option to present via Zoom or in person. Zoom seminars for any particular session should be done in groups under one Zoom link: it is necessary to coordinate with the other students in your session. The suggested dates and times can be changed in consultation with your supervisor(s) and the course coordinator. We cannot have a large number of the seminars with conflicting times in the last couple of weeks of semester.

The course coordinator cannot attend all seminars and thus cannot host all Zoom sessions. You may set up your own Zoom link, but **it is recommend that the Zoom session be set up by professor**, as there are advantages to using the Pro Zoom licence (including unlimited meeting length). Please include your Zoom link on your Abstract, along with the other required information. I will distribute the Abstracts and updated seminar schedule on a weekly basis via email to all registered students and all NRS profs.

Schedule link:

https://www.mcgill.ca/nrs/graduate-students/seminar/graduate-seminar-schedule

Department of Natural Resource Sciences

Day, Date| Time

Zoom link

Title of Seminar

Presenter

Position, Affiliation

ABSTRACT: MAX 110 WORDS @ 11 pts. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit. Donec consectetuer, sapien et scelerisque mattis, ante ante venenatis nibh, ac scelerisque urna dolor id purus. Suspendisse potenti. Sed tristique tellus vitae lacus. In mi enim, dictum sed, mollis sed, accumsan feugiat, justo. Praesent sollicitudin mi congue enim. Ut porta, augue ut volutpat semper, nunc nisl malesuada nisl, eu aliquet mauris lorem in turpis. Mauris malesuada. Curabitur bibendum. Maecenas vel tellus facilisis lacus euismod pharetra. Quisque cursus massa ut erat. Sed fermentum. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. In consectetuer sagittis mauris. Pellentesque sit amet nibh vitae velit ornare sodales. Aliquam libero ligula, porttitor.

Insert

illustrative picture

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Presenter photo

Insert and information about person, eg PhD candidate, etc

BIO: MAX 80 WORDS @ 9 pts. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetuer adipiscing elit. Donec consectetuer, sapien et scelerisque mattis, ante ante venenatis nibh, ac scelerisque urna dolor id purus. Suspendisse potenti. Sed tristique tellus vitae lacus. In mi enim, dictum sed, mollis sed, accumsan feugiat, justo. Praesent sollicitudin mi congue enim. Ut porta, augue ut volutpat semper, nunc nisl malesuada nisl, eu aliquet mauris lorem in turpis. Mauris malesuada. Curabitur bibendum. Maecenas vel tellus facilisis lacus euismod pharetra. Quisque cursus massa ut erat. Sed fermentum.

INSERT CONTACT INFORMATION

McGill
MACDONALD CAMPUS

Statements required by McGill policy to be included in the course outline

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures" (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ **for more information).**

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

Accommodations for missed assessments during the term:
a. "Sickness/illness during the term:
   Students currently in the province of Quebec seeking the support of a Local Wellness Advisor (LWA) can now secure an intake appointment by filling out the appropriate webform at http://mcgill.ca/lwa.
   If you need to seek accommodation for in-course assignments, for medical or other health emergencies, please send medical documentation along with the filled out form for medical accommodation (https://www.mcgill.ca/macdonald/studentinfo/undergrads/forms) by email to the Macdonald Campus Student Affairs Office (saoadvisor.macdonald@mcgill.ca). When approved, the professor(s) will be notified by email to accommodate the student.
b. Non-medical:
   It is at the discretion of the instructor to arrange accommodation for students who have missed in-term exams or due dates for non-medical reasons (e.g. travel constraints, slept in, etc.). Complicated cases can be directed to SAO.
c. Religious:
   The Policy for the Accommodation of Religious Holy Days (https://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/files/secretariat/religious_holy_days_policy_on_accomodation_of.pdf) applies to these situations. "Students are not to be penalized if they cannot write examinations or be otherwise evaluated on their religious holy days where such activities conflict with their religious observances." A student seeking accommodation must contact the instructor at least 14 days in advance so that arrangements can be made.

"© Instructor generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures."