

Q. Academic Programs Online Instruction

NREM Courses Offered online

NREM/AGRON 120 XW, Introduction to Renewable Resources. This course has been offered since at least 2013, both spring and fall semesters. It is taught in conjunction with a live-audience class of over 200 students, which is also taught each semester. Recorded lectures from the live sessions are used for the online section. The instructors are Dr. Rick Hall and Dr. James Pritchard. Each semester the online section enrolls between 40 and 100 students, who are mostly ISU students living in Ames.

NREM/AGRON 120 XW was offered for the first time during a summer semester (Summer 2015), instructed by Dr. Lidia Skrynnikova.

NREM 270 XW, Foundations in Natural Resource Policy & History. This course first went online in Fall 2014, enrolling 43 students. It is co-instructed by Dr. Lidia Skrynnikova and Dr. James Pritchard. Dr. Skrynnikova takes the lead on the technological aspects of the instructional program, and facilitates student participation in online discussions. Dr. Pritchard records lectures, organizes assignments and provides other essential functions. This partnership is a good example of utilizing cooperative departmental expertise to transform an existing course for distance education.

The course concepts and materials were originally created by Dr. Pritchard, and thanks to the web-savvy expertise of Dr. Skrynnikova, this class made the transition into the online format in good style as an effective educational experience. Dr. Skrynnikova has developed an online presence and proficiency by offering Environmental Issues in Russia (**RUS 375xw**, 35 students in F14) and Influential Environmental Thinkers in Russia & the U.S. (**RUS 370xw**, 61 students in S15, with an increasing enrollment for S16). Dr. Skrynnikova reports that enrollment fills quickly, with only a bit of on-campus advertising.

A Ecl 486, Aquatic Ecology. This course was offered online in Fall 2015. The instructor was Dr. John Downing, of EEOB (the Ecology, Evolution, and Organismal Biology Department). The course enrolled 31 on-campus students, and 12 online. Unfortunately, Dr. Downing is moving to the University of Minnesota-Duluth. There is potential for the next instructor to offer an online section.

B. Future Directions in Offering Online Courses

1. The appointment of additional faculty would facilitate the expansion of online instruction, using some combination of current and new faculty & instructors.
2. The main challenge in online instruction is the large time input requirements, substantially more than anticipated in the early days of online course development.
3. Team teaching looks promising for the development of online courses in NREM. An instructor who is web-savvy can be a great help (indeed, a critical resource) for creating a high quality and functional course, based on a faculty member's existing course.
4. The courses mentioned above could continue to be offered online, and faculty might be incentivized to bring additional courses into the mix.