Ecosystems and Human Well Being

NB1612 English course information

GENERAL

Official source section General

Official title	Ecosystems and Human Well-being
Course code	NB1612
Study area	Natural Sciences
Credits	5 EC
Indicative price	From EUR 410

Course schedule

This course has a fixed start date. Consult the annual timetable to see when the course begins.

Course content

This course examines the relationship between people and ecosystems. It addresses two main questions: why are ecosystems important to human well-being, and how do people affect the way ecosystems function? The course uses the conceptual framework developed for the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, or MA. This assessment reviewed the condition of ecosystems worldwide, expected developments, and options for more sustainable ecosystem management. Its final report provides the main thread of the course. Recent assessments and a textbook add ecological knowledge and information about the relationship between ecosystems and social systems.

You develop the knowledge, understanding, and skills needed to analyse and address environmental problems associated with ecosystem degradation. Study tasks consider the value of ecosystems for human well-being, changes in ecosystems over recent decades, and ways to reverse the continuing trend of degradation. To complete the course, you conduct an ecosystem assessment of a case-study area using a collection of sources.

Learning objectives

After completing the course, you will understand:

- how ecosystems function
- the current condition of ecosystems worldwide
- options for sustainable ecosystem management

You will also be able to:

- analyse interactions between people and ecosystems using the conceptual framework for ecosystem assessment
- independently conduct a basic ecosystem assessment

SIGNING UP

Official source section Signing Up

Registration information

The course starts on 8 February 2027. OU recommends registering by Sunday 24 January 2027 so that course materials and access to the online learning environment arrive on time and, where applicable, you can be assigned to a study group. OU cannot guarantee this for registrations submitted after 24 January. Registration remains open through 7 February 2027. The course is offered once per academic year.

Prior knowledge

The course builds on the basic ecological knowledge taught in the first-year courses Earth People and Environment 1 and 2 and Environmental Sciences and Sustainable Development. Prior knowledge of evolutionary processes and physiology at first-year bachelor level is also expected. You need sufficient reading knowledge of English to study the English-language course and source materials.

GUIDANCE

Official source section Guidance

Guidance format

This course has a fixed start date. The course page in the online learning environment provides standard guidance and allows you to ask the lecturer questions about the subject matter. The lecturer organises a guided study programme in quarter 3, from February until mid-April, for all registered students. You may also study the course flexibly and independently. At least once each year, a guidance session is held during a themed study day.

Teaching staff

Dr Ir Joop de Kraker and Dr Dennis Uit de Weerd.

EXAM

Official source section Exam

Assessment method

Assignment.

Assessment dates

By arrangement.

MORE INFO

Official source section More Info

Course materials

The course materials consist of a textbook and a workbook containing exercises in the online learning environment.

Online learning environment

OU recommends beginning each course on its course page in the online learning environment. This page contains the latest course information and a forum where students can ask questions and read answers.