

NR 5634 Urban Ecology
Offered: Fall Semester

INSTRUCTOR: David P. Robertson, Ph.D., davidrobertson@vt.edu

REQUIRED TEXT: All reading materials are provided by the instructor.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Our planet is increasingly urban. More than 50% of the world's people now live in urban areas and an estimated two-thirds of the world's population will be urban by 2030. In many regions, the rate of urbanization is declining; however, individual cities, metropolitan regions, and urban areas continue to grow (in number, extent, and population). In this context, urban ecology is an important aspect of ecological science, environmental governance, and sustainable development. These people are motivated by a desire to create healthy human ecosystems and livable communities in which to live, work, and play. This semester, we will study some of these people, projects, and places. The purpose of this course is to gain a better understand of the emerging theory and practice of urban ecology and sustainable urban development. Key questions: What is an urban ecosystem? Are cities sustainable environments? What are our major urban environmental challenges? What are people in local communities and global society doing to ensure that urban and urbanizing landscapes are healthy and desirable places now and in the future? *Critical and creative thinking are required!*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

Grades will be computed on the following basis:

Class discussion – 40%
Assignments – 60%