

Course Catalogue

AGROECOLOGY - GRADUATE LEVEL

2026 - 2027 Academic Year



University of Vermont
**INSTITUTE FOR
AGROECOLOGY**



University of Vermont
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Department of Agriculture, Landscape,
and Environment

Agroforestry

Growing resilient futures through the integration of trees, livestock, and field crops



Agroforestry is a field of knowledge that has been practiced for millennia by Indigenous farmers. At its most basic it represents the integrated management of trees, with agricultural crops, to obtain a diversity of social, economic and ecological benefits. In the 1970s, it emerged as an academic field of knowledge, drawing interest from scientists and practitioners across the globe. Most recently, interest has grown in agroforestry as an alternative land use option to confront climate change. This course presents a conceptual and practical overview of the field of agroforestry. Examples are drawn from both temperate and tropical regions. We will also engage with farmers and researchers managing agroforestry systems across New England.



Instructor:
Ernesto Méndez
*Co-Director, Institute
for Agroecology*

Course Days and Times
SUMMER 2026 SEMESTER:
June 29 - July 23

*Jeffords 234, TWTh 9am-
12:45pm*

ALE
5990

CRN 61924

FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION



Transformative Agroecology

Shifting practices and paradigms for food system transformation



Agroecology is multifaceted - connecting political, socio-cultural, productive, and environmental threads together in an integrated approach to food and farming systems. This introductory course covers the evolution of agroecology from its origins to the present, including the myriad ways it is both understood and practiced. Course participants will explore conceptual and practical content from around the globe, and collectively engage in critical inquiry, reflect on their own place and power within agri-food systems, and assess agroecology's potential for moving us closer to full transformation of our current food systems.



Instructor:
Martha Caswell,
*Institute for
Agroecology*

Course Days and Times
FALL 2026 SEMESTER:
August 31 - December 11

Jeffords 232 or online
Thursdays, 12pm-2pm ET

ALE
6110

CRN 94004

"I love being able to work with peers and learn from them because so much of agroecology is building with and from people horizontally. I feel like we really put that into practice well." - Former Student

FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION



Participatory Action Research & Transdisciplinary Agroecology

Putting research to work for food systems transformation



Participatory, transdisciplinary and action research have become widely recognized as vital approaches for agroecology and food sovereignty. These approaches require a careful and intentional cultivation of a researcher's commitments, skill and competencies. Students will learn how participatory action research can deepen our collective understanding of complex issues and support social transformations for social justice and sustainability. We will use participatory learning methods to form a learning community to engage in theory, build skills, learn new methods and cultivate a critical self-awareness as a researcher.



Instructor:
Colin Anderson,
Co-Director, Institute
for Agroecology

Course Days and Times
FALL 2026 SEMESTER:
August 31 - December 11

Jeffords 234 or online
Tuesdays, 12pm-2pm ET

ALE
6130

CRN 94005

"If you have an opportunity to take this course, take it! It is less of a 'methods' course in the traditional sense, but will provide an invaluable foundation and sense of self that few, if any, courses provide."- Former Student

FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION



Planetary Health & Agroecology

Transformative Agroecology for Planetary Health



This course explores the intersection of transformative agroecology and planetary health, focusing on how sustainable food systems, equity, and justice interact with global challenges, health disparities, and territorial socio-ecological disturbances. Through a transdisciplinary and pluralistic lens, students will investigate innovative approaches to understanding the World-System and discover alternatives to overcome systemic barriers impacting the health, nutrition, and well-being of both people and non-human nature across various scales.



Instructor:
**Carlos Andres
Gallegos Riofrío,**
*Institute for
Agroecology*

Course Days and Times
FALL 2026 SEMESTER:
August 31 - December 11

Jeffords 234
Mondays, 2pm-5pm ET

ALE
5990

CRN 94683

FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION



Ecological Foundations of Agroecology

Cultivating ecologically resilient agricultural and food systems



This course presents an introduction to the ecological foundations of agroecology. We draw from the agroecological foundation of *diálogo de saberes* (dialogue of knowledges) to engage with the knowledge of nature, Indigenous and practical agroecological knowledge and western science. The course is organized to cover ecological processes across three broad social-ecological scales (agroecosystem, landscape, global). Staying true with agroecology's transdisciplinary approach, we also discuss social and political issues that interact with ecological dynamics at each of these different scales.



Instructor:
Ernesto Méndez,
*Co-Director, Institute
for Agroecology*

Course Days and Times
SPRING 2027 SEMESTER:
January 18 - May 14

Location and times TBD

ALE
6120

FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION



Agroecology, Food Sovereignty & Social Movements

Lessons from Struggles to Liberate the Land and Abolish Food Empires



Why do some food systems transform, while others do not? Organizing with agroecology and food sovereignty to challenge entrenched power structures and build justice into our food systems requires fluid planning and collective decision-making, effective farming and food distribution techniques, strategic and conjectural alliances, resource mobilization, historical knowledge, narrative and discursive skills, a political and ecological vision for educating society, and a commitment and deep belief in people's capacity to transform themselves as they transform the world.



Instructor:
Nils McCune,
*Institute for
Agroecology*

Course Days and Times
SPRING 2027 SEMESTER:
January 18 - May 14

Location and times TBD

ALE
6140

FULL COURSE DESCRIPTION

