



Universities in Helsinki, Finland



HELSINKI SUMMER SCHOOL spells high quality academics combined with a wide range of cultural and social activities. Our multidisciplinary courses, all taught in English, aim at stimulating thought and intellectual development in an open and diverse environment. A city known for its design, technology and vibrant cultural life, Helsinki is sure to be the experience of a lifetime.



## HELSINKI SUMMER SCHOOL

August 9 to 25

# 2011

Thinking Allowed



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Organizer



UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

**ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT OF URBAN GREEN SPACE**  
**5 ECTS**

# ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT OF URBAN GREEN SPACE

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Urban green space is vital for the inhabitants of urban areas, because it provides such benefits as recreational and educational opportunities, aesthetic experiences – not to mention human health benefits. These unsealed, permeable areas are also essential for the provision of other, life supporting ecosystem services, such as the maintenance of the hydrological and biogeochemical cycles as well as regulation of climate and air quality.

The biodiversity of urban green spaces is essential for the provision of ecosystem services. Moreover, habitats and species in urban green space can have significant conservation values, as rare and endangered species are often encountered in urban green space, particularly in countries such as Finland. Remnant habitats that have become encapsulated within urban regions are recognized as particularly valuable for biodiversity.

In order to sustain biodiversity and maintain the provision of ecosystem services in urban areas, it is vital to conserve habitats of adequate size and ecological quality. The problem of fragmentation needs to be addressed by the provision of movement possibilities for various taxa, by maintaining sufficient connectivity between habitat patches and supporting functional ecological networks. To accomplish the conservation of biological diversity and ecosystem services, it is necessary to incorporate ecological information into land-use planning as well as into green space planning and management.

On the Ecology and Management of Urban Green Space course students are introduced to the theory and practice of the ecology and management of green space in cities and urban regions. Urban sustainability, ecosystem services approach and social-ecological linkages in green space planning are addressed and examples of

“building a green city” will be discussed. During the excursions, the issues of ecology and environmental technology linked to urban green space and water elements will be on focus. In addition, the role of green space in improving the ecological function of urban areas will be concentrated on.

The course is led by Dr. Vesa Yli-Pelkonen, who is involved in teaching and research on urban ecology at the Department of Environmental Sciences, the University of Helsinki. The course includes presentations by the researchers of the Urban Ecology Research Group and from other relevant universities and institutions.

This course is intended for students who have completed two to four years of study in relevant disciplines as well as for MSc students and professionals in the field of urban planning and management.

Prior to the course, students are expected to read two relevant research articles (provided before the course begins) and write a short analytic essay based on them. Participating students will also be asked to provide a short description of their own academic background, to explain their

interest in this course, and to indicate their expectations regarding this course. These assignments must be completed and submitted one week before the start.



UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

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University of Helsinki  
Department of Environmental Sciences and the  
Master's Degree Programme in Multidisciplinary  
Studies on Urban Environmental Issues