Instructors

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About this Course

Description
This course will study Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) or drones. UAS have provided us with new ways to map, monitor, and measure our changing landscape. UAS are relatively inexpensive, easy to operate, and can deploy rapidly. Advances in digital image processing allow one to go from flying a drone to working with accurate maps and 3D models in a matter of hours. These factors make UAS ideal for many applications in which speed, accuracy, resolution, cost, and timeliness are key factors.

The University of Vermont is pleased to offer a rigorous, two-week course on drone technology, providing participants with an immersive introduction to drones, ranging from certification to data analytics. Technologies participants will be exposed to include: drone platforms, drone sensors, flight planning software, image processing software, desktop Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and web mapping. Students will work closely with members of the University of Vermont UAS Team, one of the most experienced drone groups in the United States.

Topics of Study

- **Organizational Considerations**: Policies, procedures, capabilities and limitations, cost-benefit analysis, training, and information technology.
- **Regulations**: Certification, airspace classes, waivers, and risk assessment.
- **Platforms**: Multi-rotor and fixed-wing.
• **Sensors:** True color, multispectral, thermal, and LiDAR.
• **Flight Planning:** Risk assessment, flight planning software, flight logging software, mission checklists, and pre-flight checklists, mapping missions, point-of-interest missions, and inspection missions.
• **Data Processing:** Photogrammetric processing using Pix4D.
• **Data Analysis:** Visualization, image interpretation, volume calculations, spectral analysis, thermography.
• **Dissemination:** Web applications

**Prerequisites**

There are no formal prerequisites for this course. Participants should be comfortable using desktop computers.

**Format**

This two-week course is conducted virtually. There will be a one-hour live session held each day (a time that suits participants will be selected), which will also be recorded. Participants will work through a series of self-paced modules in which they employ drone technology to assist with a particular problem. The module themes range from developing a 3D model of a rock slope, to calculating the volume of wood chips used for biomass energy production, to mapping invasive species. The instructional staff will assist students through the use of online discussion forums and virtual meetings.

**Technology**

Participants will need access to a computer (Windows, Mac, or Chromebook) with a broadband internet connection (5 Mbps upload/download minimum). The only software required is a free virtual machine thin client and thus participants will need to be able to install this software on their computer. All participants will be provided access to a virtual desktop running the software used in the course, which consists of flight planning, photogrammetry, and GIS applications. Accounts will also be provided for web-based mapping.

**Components**

This course consists of seven modules: 1) introduction, 2) flight planning, 3) flight operations, 4) data processing, 5) analytics, 6) data sharing, and 7) considerations. The first module will introduce students to the capabilities and limitations of using UAS and an overview of UAS platforms and sensors. Module 2 will focus on flight planning including: regulations, airspace, safety checklists, personnel, equipment, and flight planning for photogrammetry. The third module will consist of flight operations. This will include launching and landing fixed-wing UAS and operating multi-rotor UAS for mapping, 3D modeling, virtual reality, and oblique video and image capture. Module 4 will focus on UAS data processing for photogrammetry geospatial products. This will include flight data processing, generating orthorectified imagery, 3D point clouds, and 3D mesh. Module 5 will involve basic analysis of UAS data such as 2D mapping, 3D point cloud analysis, terrain analysis, and volume estimation. Module 6 will teach students how to share UAS data involving online web maps, 3D models, and virtual reality. The final module will go over other UAS considerations such as various case studies, IT backbone, required personnel for a successful UAS program, and organizational challenges.
Course Materials

E-Learning Platform
This course will use UVM’s Blackboard environment.

Textbook
There is no textbook requirement for this course.

Schedule
The course will run from January 13th through January 26th. Formal class days will be weekdays with instructional support available over the weekend.

Policies

Our Common Ground
The University of Vermont is an educationally purposeful community seeking to prepare students to live in a diverse and changing world. We who work, live, study, teach, do research, conduct business, or participate in the University of Vermont are members of this community. As members, we believe in the transforming power of education and agree to help create and foster an environment where we can discover and reach our true potential.

We aspire to be a community that values:

RESPECT. We respect each other. We listen to each other, encourage each other and care about each other. We are strengthened by our diverse perspectives.

INTEGRITY. We value fairness, straightforward conduct, adherence to the facts, and sincerity. We acknowledge when things have not turned out the way we had hoped. As stewards of the University of Vermont, we are honest and ethical in all responsibilities entrusted to us.

INNOVATION. We want to be at the forefront of change and believe that the best way to lead is to learn from our successes and mistakes and continue to grow. We are forward-looking and break new ground in addressing important community and societal needs.

OPENNESS. We encourage the open exchange of information and ideas from all quarters of the community. We believe that through collaboration and participation, each of us has an important role in determining the direction and well-being of our community.

JUSTICE. As a just community, we unite against all forms of injustice, including, but not limited to, racism. We reject bigotry, oppression, degradation, and harassment, and we challenge injustice toward any member of our community.

RESPONSIBILITY. We are personally and collectively responsible for our words and deeds. We stand together to uphold our common ground.
Instructor roles & Responsibilities
Your instructor will oversee all aspects of the course. You should expect your instructor and teaching assistants to be knowledgeable, professional, approachable, and take an interest in your performance in this course.

Student Roles & Responsibilities
Student should be guided by UVM’s “Our Common Ground” principals throughout this course. Students requiring any accommodations for this course should notify the instructors at the start of class.