



**University
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Science

of

MAXWELL PITTMAN

BA (University of California, Berkeley, 2016)

**“Nature Soundscapes and Cognitive Performance in an Office
Environment”**

Department of Psychology

Thursday, April 11, 2019
12:00 P.M.
Cornett Building
Room A228

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Robert Gifford, Department of Psychology, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Graham Brown, Department of Psychology, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Martha McMahon, Department of Sociology, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Alexandra Branzan Albu, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

Abstract

Research suggests that interacting with nature has positive psychological, physiological, and cognitive benefits. Views to nature, interacting with nature, and other visual nature stimuli have been widely studied. Receiving less attention, however, is nature soundscapes, and the limited research that has been published has mixed findings. In the present study, the researcher assessed whether nature soundscapes influenced performance on cognitive and affective assessments. Participants completed the Flanker task, the Stroop task, a Visual Search task, and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, while exposed to either nature sounds alone, nature sounds with outdoor views, or neither stimulus. The results revealed no statistically significant differences in performance in any of the three conditions, on either the cognitive and affective assessments. These findings indicate that the relation between nature sounds and cognition is more complex than originally presumed, and potential future directions are discussed.