

CLASS SYLLABUS

BIOL 5300 ECOLOGY Spring 2011

CLASS TIME: Lecture: MWF 10:00-10:50 a.m.
Lab: Section A: R – 9:30 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Colleen McDonough
OFFICE HOURS: M 11:00-12:00, T 10 – 11 a.m. or by appt.
OFFICE: 2086 Bailey Science Center
PHONE: 333-5759 (main office), 333-5764 (my office)
EMAIL: cmcdonou@valdosta.edu

TEXT: “Ecology”, 6th Edition, by Charles J. Krebs

COURSE OBJECTIVES: The objectives of the course are to

- examine biological principles at the organismal, population, community, and ecosystem levels of organization.
 - cover evolutionary and physiological processes that affect abundance and distribution of organisms
 - examine intraspecific and interspecific relationships such as competition and predation.
 - properties of communities and ecosystems such as energy flow and nutrient cycles.
- Throughout the course
- quantitative models are used to identify important variables and
 - principles of conservation are incorporated throughout

Standards

VSU General Education Outcomes on webpage:

(<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/VSUGeneralEducationOutcomes.shtml>) This course meets outcomes 3., 4., 5. and 7.

Department of Biology Educational Outcomes: acquiring breadth of knowledge in organismal biology and evolution and ecology, a knowledge base to develop research questions, and the ability to properly analyze and resolve research questions through use of scientific method.

PREREQUISITES: Admission into the Biology Master’s Program or consent of instructor

ATTENDANCE POLICY: You must attend all the laboratories of this course or not receive points from those labs. If you miss lab, it is equivalent to missing an entire week of class. You may be able to make up labs in other sections with permission. Labs are held Thursday and Friday only, so you need to take care. If sick, you need a doctors excuse and see me as soon as possible after the missed lab. **IF HAVE PROBLEMS ON THURSDAY, TALK TO ME ON FRIDAY. IF PROBLEMS ON FRIDAY, TALK TO ME ON MONDAY. DO NOT WAIT TO TALK TO ME IN LABORATORY ABOUT MISSING LAB CLASS THE PAST WEEK.**

I have no strict attendance policy for lecture. If you miss, you need to get the notes from someone who attended class (excluding myself). Everyone knows (including me) someone else’s notes are a poor substitute for sitting in class yourself. They will not be equivalent to hearing and writing the material yourself. Periodically, I will take attendance although it will not be counted against you if you do not attend lecture.

GRADING POLICY: Your grade will be based on a total of 600 points; 400 will come from lecture tests, 100 from lab assignments, 50 from a formal lab report, 50 from a term paper or equivalent (see below).

Course grade: Your course grade will be based on your total number of points from lecture, lab and the lab report. Grades will be distributed according to the following percentages:

A - 90%, B - 80%, C - 70%, D - 60%, F < 60%

Lecture tests: There will be 3 lecture tests and a final. I will average your 3 HIGHEST scores, get a percentage and multiply by 400. Example – if you have an 80% after 3 tests and do not take the final, your lecture score will be 320 ($400 \times .80 = 320$). If you are happy with your lecture score after the 3 tests, you do not have to take the final. If you do worse on the final than the regular tests, the final test grade will not count. Students who have missed a grade for any reason must take the final. **STUDENTS WHO BOMB A TEST AND THEN HAVE TO MISS ANOTHER TEST FOR WHATEVER REASON WILL NOT BE ABLE TO TAKE A MAKE-UP TEST.** If you study hard for every test, this circumstance will not come up. The exams and the final will have an essay format. Questions will be based on information given during lecture and laboratory and reading material. Any questions, problems or complaints about grading must be made within one week of receiving an assignment/test back. No grade changes will be made after that time.

Laboratory: Lab attendance is required. Roll will be taken within 5 minutes of the start of lab and any unexcused absences will be recorded and you will not receive credit for that laboratory exercise. You need to be on time especially for field labs when we will leave immediately at the start of lab. Not finding parking is not an acceptable excuse. Suitable field clothes are required for off-campus field labs and some labs we do around campus.

Acceptable clothes include pants (no shorts), socks, and closed shoes (no sandals). You may wish to bring a hat, insect repellent, and water. Individuals not wearing appropriate field clothes will not be allowed on the field trips and will not receive credit for that laboratory exercise. Some weeks during the semester I may lecture during part of the lab. Any material covered in lab at any time should be studied for the lecture tests. You will be either having written assignments or quizzes to assess your understanding of the laboratories conducted. These assessment tools will count for the 100 points of the lab portion of the course.

Lab Report: A comprehensive formal lab report will be worth 50 points. A general handout explaining what information is required for a formal laboratory report will be given out during lab.

Term Paper: This course will require a comprehensive review paper on the ecological topic of your choice. This paper cannot be the same topic you have used in other courses. If you choose, you may substitute the following for a review paper – 1) an ecological research project to be conducted during this semester or 2) develop and execute a comprehensive 3 hour lab for undergraduates on an ecological topic. All papers and projects must be approved in advance.

Late Assignment Policy: For every day an assignment is late, points equaling one full grade will be subtracted from the points received. For example, if a lab report is late one day, I will grade it and then subtract 5.0 points (10% of 50) from the total. Two days late will have 10 points subtracted, etc.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students requiring classroom accommodations or modifications to testing, such as more time, need to be documented with the Access Office for Students with Disabilities. These students should discuss needs with me at the beginning of the semester. Students not registered must contact the Access Office, Farber Hall, Phone; 245-2498. Website: <http://www.valdosta.edu/access/>

FEDERAL PRIVACY ACT: It is illegal to release personal information about an individual to others. Therefore, I cannot give out your grades to anyone but yourself. I cannot give them out over phone or through email unless with written permission.

CLASS BEHAVIOR: Any student engaging in disruptive behavior will be asked to leave lecture or lab. They will forfeit the chance to hand in the work resulting from that laboratory.

CELL PHONE USE: Cell phones must be turned OFF during class and lab. If there is an emergency you may leave the class and answer the phone. Because exiting and entering the classroom may be disruptive, if it becomes a problem it will not be allowed. **TEXTING IS DISRUPTIVE TO ME.** How shall we handle this problem?

PLAGARISM AND OTHER FORMS OF STEALING: Adhere to the policy listed on the Biology Department's website (<http://www.valdosta.edu/biology/>). See list of items under "FOR STUDENTS"). Take note of the following sentence within that document,

"Therefore, it is extremely important that any written work submitted represents a student's personal synthesis displayed in sentences completely constructed by the student."

If caught cheating a student will be given a zero for the assignment or test and be reported to the dean of students. If caught a second time, they will fail the course. Note the paragraph stating that plagiarism will not be tolerated and the serious consequences. This is an issue of honesty and ethics. If you are so time stressed that you can't individually do the work required in this course, consider withdrawing rather than face the repercussions and failing the course.

If you use someone else's work to write up yours, then you are plagiarizing. **If you allow someone to write up your work, then you are plagiarizing and cheating and also will be punished.** If you rewrite another person's work, then you are plagiarizing even though it is not word for word. **IT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO WRITE UP LAB REPORTS OR ASSIGNMENTS TOGETHER BECAUSE YOU ARE LAB PARTNERS. YOU ARE PLAGIARIZING. THIS GOES FOR GRAPHS AND TABLES AS WELL AS FOR TEXT. Being someone's lab partner is not an excuse for similarity in style.**

You may discuss the laboratories with your partners or others but you may not write together. Go home or to the library and write up your assignments on your own. **Do not let others look at your assignments.** Do not let others pressure you into showing them your assignments before class when due. Put them on my desk when entering the

classroom. If I write on your paper that your work is too close in content to Joe-Blow's work, then consider this a warning and the next time it happens both papers/assignments will get a zero. If a student copies from another student's test or uses extra "test aids" during a test, he/she has cheated. If a student allows someone to copy from his/her test, he/she has cheated and will be punished. If a student paraphrases another author's work without citing the source, then you are plagiarizing (i.e., stealing).

Everyone has an individual writing style. It is almost like a fingerprint. Therefore, it is very easy to pick out similarities in writing and thus, potential plagiarism. This is the same for graphic depictions of data and tables. I will not tolerate the communal sharing of work. This goes for work done in previous semesters. I have copies of previous work and will compare your work with past student's work.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Martin Luther King Day: January 17 – **NO CLASS**

Mid-Term: March 3th Thursday, Last day to drop with a Withdrawal Pass

Spring Break: March 14 – 18th, **NO CLASS**

Final Exam: – May 6th, FRIDAY- 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

WEEKLY LECTURE SCHEDULE - Tentative

Dates-Week of	Topics	Chapters
Jan 10	Introduction, evolutionary ecology	1, 2
Jan 17	evolutionary ecology, physiological ecology	2, 3, 4
Jan 24	factors affecting distribution	5, 6, 7
Jan 31	populations and catching up	9,
Feb 7	demographics, growth	10, 11
Feb 14	species interactions, competition	12
Feb 21	predation, parasitism	13, 15
Feb 28	population regulation, conservation	16, 17, 19
Mar 7	catch up lecturing	
Mar 14	Spring Break	
Mar 21	community ecology	20
Mar 28	Succession, biodiversity	21, 22
April 4	trophic levels	23
April 11	Disturbance, ecosystems	24, 25
April 18	Production	26
April 25	Nutrient cycling	27

TESTS

Test 1: February 14th

Test 2: March 25th

Test 3: May 2nd

Final: Friday May 6th, 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

LABORATORY SCHEDULE- Due to the unpredictability of living things, this list always changes.

Date

Jan 13-14	Lab meeting, start statistics and graphics – on campus
Jan 20-21	Statistics and Graphics – finish – on campus
Jan 27-28	Natural selection/Genetic Drift simulation
Feb 3-4	Population Density and Distribution ** Field Lab
Feb 10-11	Finish and Set –up Population Growth
Feb 17-18	Habitat Utilization ** Field Lab
Feb 24-25	Finish Habitat Utilization
Mar 3-4	Phenotypic Plasticity Lab
Mar 10-11	Life History Strategies, survivorship curves
Mar 14-18	SPRING BREAK – NO LAB
Mar 24-25	Population growth – set up earlier
Mar 31-Apr 1	Intermediate Disturbance Lab ** Field Lab
April 7-8	Finish up
April 14-15	Measuring Succession **Field Lab
April 21-22	Finish up
April 28-29	Lecture catch up

A formal lab report will be due on one of the laboratories performed. There will be a handout given to explain what is required.