

SYLLABUS FOR ZOOLOGY 3403 PRINCIPLES OF ECOLOGY --SPRING 2003

Welcome to Zoology 3403. This course is designed to introduce you to the theoretical and practical aspects of ecology--the science of the distribution and abundance of organisms and their interactions with the biotic and abiotic environment. My chief goal is to teach you to think like an ecologist.

Facts about the course:

Lecturer: Dr. Mike Kaspari

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Phone--325-3371, **Email**-- mkaspari@ou.edu

Office Hours M/Th (2-5 PM) or by appointment

Lecture: MW 11:30-12:20, Nielsen Auditorium 102

Lab: M, W, or F 1:30-4:20, 262 Richards Hall¹

Required Reading

- 1) *The Essentials of Ecology* 2nd edition by Townsend, Begon and Harper
- 2) Handouts and readings are available online via Blackboard. You will need Adobe Acrobat reader (available for free download on the CourseNet site) to access these materials. Readings for the following week and lab assignments will be posted by Thursday at 6:00PM. Lecture notes will be posted by 5:00PM Sunday and Tuesday (for the following day's lecture). Note these lecture notes are meant to *supplement* the lecture, not substitute for it—the lectures will contain information not in the downloadable notes.

Grading

Grading is on the standard curve (i.e., earn 90% of the possible 250 points, and you earn an A, 80% or more=B, 70% or more=C, 60% or more=D, less than 60%=F). A variety of methods will be used to teach you ecology and evaluate your progress.

Evaluation Method	Points	Notes
Midterm 1 (50 points)	50	Takes place the first 25 minutes of class
Midterm 2 (100 points)	100	cumulative, with a prep lab the week before
Final Exam (100 points)	100	cumulative
In Class Assignments (5 points)	50	12 graded, lowest two grades dropped
Lab Quizzes (5 points)	65	First 5 minutes of lab
Lab Reports (10 points)	130	Allocated by your team
5 super special bonus points	5	
	500	

Exams (250 points)—There will be three exams, two midterms and a final. The exams are cumulative. The first midterm, worth 50 points, will occupy the first 25 minutes of class on February 17th. The second midterm, worth 100 points, will take the entire class period, and is scheduled for 12 March (the Wednesday before Spring Break). The Final Exam is 9 May, and is also worth 100 points. Exams will consist of short-answer and essays questions. If you feel that an answer has been incorrectly graded, you may state your reasoning in the margin and return the exam to me within 1 week of taking the exam. I will reconsider the mark, and return it to you in a week's time.

¹ Any student with a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his other abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible. We can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure your full participation and facilitate your education.

In-Class Assignments (50 points)--You are expected to complete all assigned readings before coming to lecture or lab. In most class periods I will give a short reading quiz and/or an in-class writing assignment. Twelve will be graded. Each is worth 5 points. I will drop your two lowest scores.

Lab (195 points)--The labs are an integral part of the course. Topics mesh with the lecture and lab results will be found on the lecture exams. Labs will begin with a short quiz (5 points) over the assigned reading and lab (65 points total). About 1/4 of your grade (130 points) will come from team-based learning. The points earned by your group via a weekly report will be distributed amongst the group with the help of peer evaluation (more on group-based scoring in your lab section). Since all your lab work is done with your team, you *cannot* switch labs.

Attendance

Attendance is expected. Missing a lecture risks missing material; missing a lab does the same and places an extra burden on your team.

Missed Assignments

In general, there will be no opportunity for students to make up missed exams or assignments. Missed exams, assignments, and quizzes will receive a grade of 0. The exception to this policy will be for students who miss the exam or assignment due to a suitable and documented reason. Suitable reasons might include a confining illness or injury, or a death in the immediate family, and appropriate documentation might include a letter from a physician. Determination of whether an excuse is suitable is at the discretion of the instructor. Students missing exams must report their reason to the instructor *on the day of the exam* or a grade of 0 will be recorded.

About Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct includes plagiarism and cheating on assignments and exams. Such misconduct is wrong in and of itself. It is also grossly unfair to your fellow students who play by the rules. As a result, the University of Oklahoma takes academic misconduct seriously. Teachers are *required* to bring any evidence of academic misconduct to the Dean, who then convenes a board of inquiry composed of faculty and students. This board interviews both the teacher and the student. A typical result is a notation made on the student's permanent record (i.e., any job or school that requires an official transcript will see this black mark) along with a penalty. In short, it is not worth the risk. For further information, see your student handbook.

This course requires that you check your OU email and use Blackboard

I will regularly email students in the course with reading assignments, links to lecture notes, and other important material, such as class cancellations. Please check your email daily for this important information. If you use a different Internet Service Provider for email, you need to notify OU or I will not be able to reach you. Luckily, this is easy to do.

1. Go to www.ou.edu/helpdesk
2. Click "Your OUNet Account".
3. Click on "Change to Post Office that Handles my E-mail" and follow the simple instructions

Blackboard (ou.blackboard.com) is a secure web portal that provides access to course material and announcements. It requires your OUNetID and OUNet password. The OUNetID is the first four letters of your last name plus the last four numbers of your Social Security Number (e.g., KASP1234). If a user's last name contains less than four letters, all the letters are used in the OUNetID - the OUNetID is simply shorter. If you don't know your password, contact the Technology Information Center (TIC) at 325-INFO (325-4636). You can also go to the TIC in person. It is located on the second floor of the Engineering Lab building. The Engineering Lab is located on the southeast corner of Asp and Felgar (across from the student union). The TIC is open from 8AM until midnight, Monday through Friday

Class Outline

Week	Lecture	Lab	Notes
Jan 13, 15	Introduction Conditions	Patterns of Insect Abundance and Diversity	
Jan 20, 22	No Class Resources	No Lab	MLK Holiday
Jan 27, 29	The Niche Natural Selection	Global change	
Feb 3, 5	Life History I Life History II	Lichen ecology	Outdoor lab
Feb 10, 12	Population Growth I Population Growth II	Human demography	
Feb 17, 19	Midterm I and Landscape Ecology Population Interactions	Population Estimation	Outdoor lab
Feb 24, 26	Competition Mutualism	Population Dynamics	
March 3, 5	Predation Parasitism	Midterm II Prep	
March 10, 12	Disease MidTerm II	Habitat selection	Campus/Park
March 17, 19	Spring Break		
March 24, 26	Introduction to communities Biodiversity	Biodiversity of Protists I	Outdoor lab
March 31, April 2	Guest lecture Species and speciation	Species Area Curves	Outdoor lab
April 7, 9	Species Area Curves Island Biogeography/Succession	Biodiversity of Protists II	
April 14, 16	Regional Diversity Energy	Trophic Biology I	Outdoor lab
April 21, 23	Trophic Structure Nutrient Cycles	Trophic Biology II	
April 28, 30	Invasive Species TBA	Fire Ants!	Campus
May 9	FINAL EXAM (1:30-3:30)		

Outdoor labs mean just that. Come wearing appropriate clothes (this means “no” to sandals, “yes” to long pants, long-sleeve shirts, hats, and raingear). One location we will frequent is “Oliver’s Woods”. It lies in the flood plain of the Canadian River. Be prepared for some soggy walks. If you cannot recognize ticks, poison ivy, or poisonous snakes, ask your TA.