

BSC 1103 – Environmental Biology Summer 2009

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Office Hours: You may call or email me any time with questions and concerns. If you would like to “schedule” a meeting with me via phone or on-line I will be happy to do that.

Course Overview: This is a general education course for non-science majors. It provides students with a basic understanding of environmental biology and evolutionary ecology. In this course we will examine how the environment impacts our lives and how we in turn impact the environment. We will also consider the interaction of animal and plant species with the environment. The course may include such topics as: pollution, acid rain, global warming, exotic species introduction, overpopulation, wildlife conservation, etc.

Required Text: The required textbook is *Essential Environment: The Science Behind the Stories*, third edition (2009) by Jay Withgott and Scott Brennan. Please either purchase the text from the bookstore or plan to purchase access to the publisher’s website for the book (\$30). There is an ebook available. The ebook also provides access to the book website. In addition to the textbook, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* (2008) by Barbara Kingsolver is also required.

General Education and course objectives: This course fulfills 3 credits of the Group 4 (Natural Sciences) general education requirement. It is designed to provide you with a foundation in basic environmental biology as well as improve your skills in critical thinking, problem solving, analysis and communication. These skills, along with an understanding of biological principles, will help you make informed decisions like: Is it important to conserve species and habitats? Is global warming really a problem?

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to submit original work unless I state otherwise. There has been some confusion among my students in the past about what original work is and whether it is acceptable to work together on assignments. You are permitted to “work together” in the sense that you may discuss ideas. For example, you may ask a classmate, “Do you think it is necessary to age match all of the subjects in this experiment?” This question then may lead to a discussion of what is and is not a good experimental design. HOWEVER, when it comes time for you to actually write up your assignment, it is time for you to synthesize everything you have talked about and read, and come up with your own interpretation. It is NOT acceptable for one of you to sit down at the computer and type up the assignment for both of you. If I receive substantially similar assignments, both students will receive a zero for the assignment. Substantially similar assignments include assignments in which the same idiosyncratic words or phrases are used and assignments in which many ideas appear in the same order.

When you use information from a book or *any other* source, including internet sources, that source MUST be credited appropriately. Sources must obviously be cited if you use a direct quote from the source. In addition, you must cite sources that you use ideas from even when you have paraphrased and put those ideas into your own words. Failure to cite sources is a form of academic dishonesty.

Any form of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for the assignment or test, a formal report to the Provost's office and potentially failure of this course. Additional information concerning academic honesty can be found in the *Mountie Manual* (<http://reslife.mnsfld.edu/MountieManual0607.pdf>).

Exceptionalities: Any students with documented psychological or learning disorders or other significant medical conditions that may affect their learning should work with Mr. William Chabala in our Counseling Center (Phone: 662-4798; email wchabala@mnsfld.edu) to provide me with the appropriate letter so that I can serve their particular needs more effectively. If you have an exceptionality that requires class or testing accommodations, Mr. Chabala will work with us to identify and implement appropriate interventions.

Grades: There are 600 total points available in this course. You will have three exams worth 100 points each (50% of final grade), and weekly assignments (50% of final grade). *I do not curve grades or offer extra credit.*

Exams

- Exams will be available from **9:00 am Fridays to 10:00 am Saturdays** on the following dates: **May 29th, June 12th, and June 25th**. You must take the exam during the time that it is available on-line. If you can not take the exams on these dates, then you should not enroll in this course.
- **Notify me immediately** if you have difficulty accessing the web site or exam page.
- Once you access the exam, you **MUST** complete it. You will not be permitted to access it a second time once you exit. If you lose your internet connection while taking the test or something else goes wrong, email or call me **IMMEDIATELY**. I will only consider giving you another opportunity to complete the test if I have proof that you attempted to contact me the moment you lost your internet connection. I strongly suggest using a computer that you can depend upon. In the event that you do have a problem, I expect you to take care of it so that it does not happen again. Do not expect repeated opportunities to access the exam.
- Exams will be "open book", meaning that you can use whatever resources you want **EXCEPT** another person. You are on your honor to take the exams without help from someone else. In order to prevent temptation on your part and suspicion on mine, do not take the exam at the same time and in the same room as someone else in the course. Cheating on an exam will result in failure of the course.
- You will need to study and know the material well because the exam will be timed and you will not have time to look up every answer. **You will have one hour and fifteen minutes to complete each exam.** You are responsible for watching the timer that is running at the bottom of your screen. *The timer will not shut off your exam when the time limit is exceeded* – you need to make sure you **SUBMIT** your answers **BEFORE** the 60 minutes expires. I allow a 1 minute grace period without penalty. Five points per minute over the time limit will be deducted from your exam score if you exceed the time limit by more than 1 minute.
- Exams will test your comprehension of the assigned readings and web sites, as well as your ability to apply information that you have learned. Exams may include multiple choice questions, matching, fill in the blank, and short essays.

- Please note that since much of the material we cover will build on earlier material we learned in the course, it is important for you to keep up and make sure that you understand the current material. Each exam can be considered comprehensive in that you may be quizzed over concepts that were also covered on earlier exams. For example, we will cover the scientific method and experimental design in week one, but you may be asked to apply what you have learned about these topics throughout the semester.

Assignments

You will be given a variety of assignments which may include quizzes, journal entries, discussion board posts, case studies, individual assignments, and group projects. You WILL be asked to work in groups for at least one assignment. You can expect to have 2-4 assignments per week. All assignments will be evaluated based on both writing competency and appropriateness of content.

Grade Scale:

A 100 - 93%	B + 89 - 87%	C + 79 - 77%	D + 69 - 67%
A - 92 - 90%	B 86 - 83%	C 76 - 73%	D 66 - 63%
	B - 82 - 80%	C - 72 - 70%	D - 62 - 60%
			F 59% >

Time Commitment: Make sure that you have enough time in your schedule to devote to taking this course. That means time to do all of the assigned readings, work on and complete the assignments and post your responses on the discussion board. Remember, this course is taught over a period of 15 weeks during a regular academic semester, while you will be covering the same subject matter during the summer session over a period of less than half that time. So, expect to spend a considerable amount of time working on this course.

Consider that during a regular semester you would attend three 50 minute lectures per week. Since this course only runs for six weeks, you would be attending five 75 minute lectures a week if you were taking the course on campus. This time should be spent reading from the required texts and exploring assigned websites. Additional time should be spent doing assignments and studying for tests, just as you would use outside class time to prepare these items if you were taking the course on campus. Therefore, you should schedule a **minimum** of 15 hours a week for this class.

Do not procrastinate! In order to pass this course, you will need to work consistently and steadily on the assignments and readings. Posts and assignments that are done under time pressure are inevitably of poor quality when compared to those that receive careful thought and attention. Note on your weekly planner the due dates for the various assignments and work ahead. **Late assignments (including discussion board posts) and exams are not accepted.**