University of Alberta

BIOL 208: Principles of Ecology
Southern African Field School
Spring/Summer 2017

Instructor:  Dr. Audrey Helen Reid  
E-mail: ahreid@ualberta.ca  
Office Hours: M-F before 7:00 pm, upon request

Lecture Time: M-F, time TBA

Course Description:
Ecology is the scientific study of interactions between organisms and their environment in a hierarchy of levels of organization: individuals, populations, communities, and ecosystems. Provides a comprehensive survey of general concepts that can stand-alone or serve as preparation for advanced courses in ecology. Labs emphasize collection, analysis, and interpretation of data from ecological experiments and field studies to illustrate and complement lecture material. Examples are drawn from a broad range of organisms and systems. Prerequisite: BIOL 108 or SCI 100. Open to students in the BSc Forestry and BSc Forest Business Management program once they have completed REN R 120 and REN R 205.

Course Prerequisites: BIOL 108 or SCI 100.
It is important to prepare yourself for this course through a review of the prerequisite material. Students who do not have the required prerequisites at the time of taking this course should not expect supplementary professorial tutoring from the instructor.

Course Objectives and Expected Learning Outcomes:
This course is an introduction to the science of ecology, and how interactions between organisms and their environment shape the natural world. This course will provide students with a foundation upon which they may take many of the advanced ecology courses offered at the University of Alberta. Upon completion of this course students will be able to:
• Describe the basic concepts and principles related to interactions between organisms and their environment  
• Interpret and discuss key components of individual, population, community, and ecosystem ecology  
• Understand and apply the scientific method to ecological questions  
• Critically evaluate various forms of scientific communication  
• Appreciate the complexity of ecological interactions and the interconnectedness of ecological processes

Mastery of these learning outcomes will be determined through daily quizzes, along with a final exam at the end of the term. Throughout the course students will have the opportunity to obtain formative feedback through the daily quizzes. In addition to lecture
material students will gain mastery of ecological concepts through hands-on laboratory sessions, which will additionally provide students with formative and summative assessment.

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**Required Textbook and Supplies:**


- The textbook is available in digital format from: [https://www.vitalsource.com/publisher/products/ecology-manuel-molles-james-cahill-v125907742x](https://www.vitalsource.com/publisher/products/ecology-manuel-molles-james-cahill-v125907742x)
- I highly recommend that you get the digital version, mostly to save packing space and weight. Just please make sure that it is accessible offline, as we will have limited Internet accessibility at the Savannah Research Station.

**BIOL 208 Lab Manual, 2017.**

- You will be provided with a digital copy of the lab manual, edited and adapted for SAFS specifically.

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**Additional Learning Resources and Assistance**

*Although this is a field course, as University of Alberta students you have the right to access campus resources remotely. Any and all academic or health concerns should first be brought to your instructor(s), as they will be able to address student needs in a more timely and appropriate fashion given the circumstances.*

**Student Success Centre:**

Students who require additional help in developing strategies for better time management, study skills or examination skills should contact the Student Success Centre ([http://www.studentsuccess.ualberta.ca/](http://www.studentsuccess.ualberta.ca/)), located in SUB (Student Union Building). They are a great first-stop for any academic concerns, especially if you are unsure where to go or what to do.

**Decima Robinson Support Centre:**

If you need additional help with the mathematical concepts in this course please visit the Decima Robinson Support Centre ([https://www.ualberta.ca/mathematical-and-statistical-sciences/undergraduate-studies/decima-support-centre](https://www.ualberta.ca/mathematical-and-statistical-sciences/undergraduate-studies/decima-support-centre)), located in 528 CAB (Central Academic Building). They are generally open from 9:00 am until 3:00 pm on weekdays, and are available for one-on-one homework help on a drop-in basis.
Centre for Writers:
Students desiring additional assistance with writing assignments (both native and on-native English speakers) can visit the Centre for Writers (http://c4w.ualberta.ca/), located in Assiniboia Hall. One-on-one appointments can be booked online at their website, along with workshops and additional assistance.

Counselling and Clinical Services, and the University Health Centre:
Learning effectively is difficult if you feel unwell, both physically and mentally. For any and all mental health concerns please contact Counselling and Clinic Services (https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/counselling), located in SUB (Student Union Building). For physical health concerns, please contact the University Health Centre (https://www.ualberta.ca/services/health-centre), also located in SUB.
Both are great resources, and you shouldn’t hesitate to contact either if you have any health concerns.

Students Eligible For Accessibility-Related Accommodations (students registered with Student Accessibility Services - SAS):
Eligible students have both rights and responsibilities with regard to accessibility-related accommodations. Consequently, scheduling exam accommodations in accordance with SAS deadlines and procedures is essential. Please note adherence to procedures and deadlines is required for U of A to provide accommodations. Contact SAS (www.ssds.ualberta.ca) for further information.

Grade Evaluation:
Evaluation in this course consists of a combination of formative (quizzes) and summative (exams) assessment. Formative evaluation allows students to identify their strengths and weakness in a subject, allowing for improvement later in the course. Summative evaluation rewards students for mastery of a subject.

Final letter grades for this course are based neither on an absolute numerical scale (e.g. >95% of total marks = A+) nor on a strict curve (e.g. the top 5% of students = A+, regardless of actual marks). Rather, a combination of the two will be used based upon historical patterns, current performance, and natural breakpoints in distributions. The absolute percentage scores to secure a particular grade will vary from year to year because it is not possible to write exams with consistently identical difficulty levels. However, student will only receive a passing grade (D or higher) if they obtain a final mark of at least 45% in BOTH the lecture and the lab components of the course. Grades are unofficial until approved by the Department and/or Faculty offering the course.

More information concerning University of Alberta Assessment and Grading Policies are available online at https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Policies/Assessment-and-Grading-Policy.pdf
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Component</th>
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<tr>
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<td>May 29</td>
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<td>Interspecific Comp. Essay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily Quizzes</td>
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<td>Lab Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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*There is no possibility of a re-examination in this course, as the final exam weight is less than 40%*

**Format of Exams and Quizzes**
Exams and quizzes will consist a variety of types of questions.

Daily quizzes may be in the format of, but not limited to, multiple choice, graphing, math problems, short answer, etc.

Exam questions will be in the format of essay questions; a potentially list of questions will be provided at the start of the course. Students are encouraged to study these questions throughout the course. The final exam will consist of select questions from the full list, in which students will be required to answer in essay format **without** the use of any aids or materials during a three-hour period.

**Exam Protocol:**
Students will not be allowed to begin an examination after it has been in progress for 30 minutes. Students must remain in the exam room until at least 30 minutes has elapsed. Electronic equipment cannot be brought into examination rooms. Hats, gloves, scarves, coats, and other excessively bulky clothing is not allowed. Head coverings and other clothing worn for religious purposes are allowed; please contact the instructor in advance of the examination if you have any concerns or questions.

Students who bring unauthorized electronics to examinations will receive a zero on the examination and may face charges under *The Code of Student Behaviour*.

**Representative Evaluative Material:**
Representative evaluative material will not be provided due to the nature and format of the final exam questions. However, example grading rubrics for the final exam questions will be provided. This is in partial compliance with GFC policy available at [https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Procedures/Access-to-Evaluative-Course-Material-Procedure.pdf](https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Procedures/Access-to-Evaluative-Course-Material-Procedure.pdf).
Lab Participation:
Students are required to actively participate in all lab and field activities. To obtain full marks, students must attend every required lab and field activity. Lack of participation or attendance in any lab or field activity will result in proportional marks deducted from their lab participation grade.

Extra Credit:
Any and all requests for extra credit will be denied.

Missed Term Exams:
For an excused absence where the cause is religious belief, a student must contact the instructor(s) within two days of the start of class (deadline: Monday, May 8th) to request accommodation for the term (including the final exam, where relevant). Instructors may request adequate documentation to substantiate the student request.

A student who cannot write a term examination due to incapacitating illness, severe domestic affliction or other compelling reasons can apply for deferral of the weight of the missed term exam to the final exam. To apply, students need to fill out a declaration from the Faculty of Science (https://www.ualberta.ca/science/-/media/science/research-and-teaching/documents/2013/department-declaration.pdf) and submit either a signed paper copy or a signed scanned copy to the instructor within one day of the examination.

In all cases, the instructor and/or TAs may request adequate documentation to substantiate the reason for the absence at their discretion. Deferral of term work is a privilege and not a right; there is no guarantee that a deferral will be granted. Misrepresentation of Facts to gain a deferral is a serious breach of the Code of Student Behaviour.

Deferred Final Examination:
A student who cannot write the final examination due to incapacitating illness, severe domestic affliction or other compelling reasons can apply for a deferred final examination. Students who failed at the start of term to request exam accommodations for religious beliefs are expected to follow the normal deferred final examination process. Such an application must be made to the student’s Faculty office within two working days of the missed examination and must be supported by a Statutory Declaration or other appropriate documentation (Calendar section 23.5.6). Deferred examinations are a privilege and not a right; there is no guarantee that a deferred examination will be granted. Misrepresentation of Facts to gain a deferred examination is a serious breach of the Code of Student Behaviour.

The deferred examination for this course will be set at a date time determined by the instructor. This will be the only date and time for the deferred final exam. Students who miss the final exam, but are not permitted by the Faculty of Science to take a deferred exam, will receive a 0% for the exam.
Academic Integrity:
The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

All forms of dishonesty are unacceptable at the University. Any offence will be immediately reported to the Associate Dean of Science who will determine the disciplinary action to be taken. Cheating, plagiarism and misrepresentation of facts are serious offences. Anyone who engages in these practices will receive at minimum a grade of zero for the exam or paper in question and no opportunity will be given to replace the grade or redistribute the weights. As well, in the Faculty of Science the sanction for cheating on any examination will include a disciplinary failing grade (NO EXCEPTIONS) and senior students should expect a period of suspension or expulsion from the University of Alberta.

TL;DR: Although this is a field course, any and all forms of academic dishonesty will be brought to the Associate Dean of Science, and you will be punished heavily.

Cell Phones:
Cell phones are to be turned off and put away during all lectures and labs, unless explicitly told otherwise. Cell phones are not to be brought to exams. Students who bring cell phones to examinations will receive a zero on the examination and may face charges under The Code of Student Behaviour.

Recording And/or Distribution Of Course Materials:
Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

Disclaimer:
Any typographical errors in this Course Outline are subject to change and will be announced in class. The date of the final examination is set by the Registrar and takes precedence over the final examination date reported in this syllabus.

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Policy about course outlines can be found in the University Calendar.
http://calendar.ualberta.ca/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=806&hl=%22syllabus%22&returnto=search