

**BIOSC 0370: Ecology**  
**Spring 2020**  
**Tues/Thurs, 11:00-12:15 pm, 169 Crawford Hall**

**Instructor:** Dr. Dan Wetzel  
**Email:** dwetzel@pitt.edu  
**Office:** A259 Langley

**Instructor Drop-in hours: Tues 12:15 – 1:15pm and Fri 9 – 10am in 343 Crawford Hall**

You are encouraged to come to drop-in hours, no appointment needed. These are times where you can ask questions about course material, work through assignment questions, or just to chat.

**Instructor Office hours by appointment:** Please email me if you need to discuss any issues privately; not for discussion of general class material.

**UTAs**

Bethany Dubick (bed50@pitt.edu)                      Robert Campion (rfc20@pitt.edu)  
Sydney Gordner (smg140@pitt.edu)                      Emilie Paciotta (emp89@pitt.edu)

**UTA Drop-in hours: Mon 11 – 12pm and Mon 5 – 6pm in 343 Crawford Hall**

These are times where you can ask questions about course material, work through assignment questions, or just to chat.

**UTA Study Session: Thurs 3 – 4 pm in 102 Clapp Hall**

A semi-structured weekly session for students to work through practice questions with peers and UTAs. This session will allow students to collaborate, test/apply their knowledge, and ask questions.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The goal of this course is to provide students with an overview of ecology from the level of the individual organism to populations, communities, and ecosystems. In the process, students will learn key ecological concepts and methods, apply mathematical models to ecological problems, and interpret ecological data.

**PREREQUISITES**

You must have completed BIOSC 0160 with a “C” or better.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

**TEXTBOOK**

*Ecology: The Economy of Nature* 8th Edition, by Rick Relyea and Robert Ricklefs (**Required**). The 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the textbook is also acceptable. Textbook & E-book available at the bookstore include access to **Sapling learning**. The use of Sapling is encouraged, but not required. The textbook is on reserve in the Langley Library.

**TOP HAT**

In-class student response system (**Required**). Active learning is an essential part of instruction and you are expected to participate and answer questions in class. Access to Top Hat is free, though you will need an electronic device to use it in class (phone, tablet, or computer; please contact me if this is a problem). Join Code: 681243.

**CALCULATOR**

A basic calculator will be required for exams (e.g., TI-30Xa ≈ \$10 on Amazon). **Graphing calculators are not permitted.**

**EXPECTATIONS**

**ATTENDANCE**

Attendance in lecture is required; come to class prepared and on time. Class meetings are interactive and student attendance and participation is essential for success in this course. Come prepared to think, question, write, and discuss your ideas with the class community. Some material covered in lecture and on exams may not be found in the text. You are responsible for everything covered, mentioned, discussed, and displayed in class.

## EXPECTATIONS

### RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR LEARNING

My role is to facilitate your development as an independent learner; your role is to be active in your learning, ask questions and come to me (or the UTAs) early if you need help - do not wait until the last minute. Take responsibility for your personal objectives. It is your responsibility to work towards your success in this course.

### CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

As a member of the University community you are expected to treat faculty and other students with respect. I expect you to be engaged in the class discussions. It is disrespectful for you to sleep, text, or use a laptop/device for purposes outside the purview of our course during class. If you do so, you will be asked to leave. During discussions, if you disagree with an issue, you may express your disagreement but you may not attack the person expressing the opinions.

## EVALUATION METHODS

Three exams (non-cumulative) will be administered throughout the semester. A final exam (cumulative) will be administered during finals week. Announced and unannounced quizzes will be given in class; you cannot make-up missed quizzes. Throughout the course I will assign in-class and take-home assignments that will require you to think and write responses. Late assignments will not be accepted.

### EXAMS (75%)

There will be three (3) lecture exams, and one (1) cumulative final exam.

- Exams will be multiple choice and short answer; they will include material covered in the book and in class.
- **IMPORTANT:** You are required to bring your student/photo ID, PeopleSoft number, and a No. 2 pencil to all examinations. No non-permitted devices or notes may be used during exams.
- You will not be given extra time if you arrive to the exam late, and there will be no admittance to the classroom after a single student has completed their exam.
- There will be no make-up exams given.
- The final exam is cumulative.
- Your lowest exam score from the 4 exams administered will be dropped.

### QUIZZES (15%)

There will be five (5) quizzes offered over the course of the semester.

- Structure of the quizzes may vary throughout the semester.
- You cannot make-up missed quizzes; late take-home quizzes will not be accepted.
- The lowest quiz score of the 5 administered will be dropped.

### TOP HAT (10%)

We will use Top Hat for attendance, in-class activities, homework assignments, and quizzes.

- You must bring a charged Top Hat compatible device to class (please contact me if you foresee this being a problem).
- Missed in-class attendance/participation cannot be made up, but a buffer will be applied to offset an occasional absence, tardiness, lack of a device, technology issues, etc. Missing a few in-class points will not affect your grade, but chronically missing in-class points will have a negative impact on your grade.

## GRADES

The total points earned out of 400 points will determine your final grade. It is essential that you keep your own record of your grades should any discrepancy arise.

There will be **no make-up exams**. If you miss an exam, this will be considered your dropped exam. You cannot miss more than one exam and pass the course. A score of "0" on an exam earned by cheating/academic integrity violation cannot be dropped.

There are no anticipated extra credit opportunities in this course. Final grades in this course will not be curved.

**Note:** You must earn a "C" or better (not a "C-") for this course to count toward a major in Biological Sciences.

## GRADES

Assessment	Points Possible	My Score
<b>Exams: <sup>1</sup></b>		
Exam 1	100	
Exam 2	100	
Exam 3	100	
Final Exam	100	
<b>Assignments: <sup>2</sup></b>		
Quiz 1	15	
Quiz 2	15	
Quiz 3	15	
Quiz 4	15	
Quiz 5	15	
<b>Top Hat</b> (attendance, participation, assignments)	40	
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	

<sup>1</sup> Lowest exam score will be dropped; 300 exam points possible

<sup>2</sup> Lowest quiz score will be dropped; 60 quiz points possible

**Final Grade:** Your final grade will be determined based on your total points earned during the semester. The following grade scale will be used:

Final Percentage	Letter Grade
97.5 – 100%	A+
92.5 – 97.4%	A
90.0 – 92.4%	A-
87.5 – 89.9%	B+
82.5 – 87.4%	B
80.0 – 82.4%	B-
77.5 – 79.9%	C+
72.5 – 77.4%	C
70.0 – 72.4%	C-
67.5 – 69.9%	D+
62.5 – 67.4%	D
60.0 – 62.4%	D-
59.9% or less	F

## IMPORTANT POLICY ANNOUNCEMENTS

### SAPLING LEARNING

All sapling learning materials will be curated to match content covered in our course, but the completion of Sapling activities is voluntary, optional, and ungraded. Sapling activities will not count toward your grade in this course.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process as initiated by the instructor. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the quiz, exam or paper will be imposed. For the full Academic Integrity policy, visit: [www.provost.pitt.edu/info/ai1.html](http://www.provost.pitt.edu/info/ai1.html)

**Note:** This includes inappropriate use of the Top Hat response system.

### COURSEWEB

Important information regarding this course and your course grades will be posted to CourseWeb. Course documents (including PPTs, outlines, handouts, etc.) will be posted on CourseWeb. Students should check CourseWeb frequently.

### EMAIL

Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address.

### EXAM REVIEW/REGRADE

Exams will not be handed back in class, but you may make an appointment to look over your exam. You may not remove or reproduce any part of the exam or answer key; violation of this will result in a grade of 0 on the exam and an Academic Integrity Violation Report. You may request a regrade of an exam by submitting your request in writing within one week of the exam grades being posted. Unless the regrade request is simply due to mathematical error, be aware that your entire exam may be reevaluated.

## **IMPORTANT POLICY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **G GRADE**

G grades are assigned to students who have been attending a course, have been making regular progress, and are prevented (by circumstances beyond their control) from completing the course after it is too late to withdraw. If you wish to petition for a G grade, you must submit a request for this grade and documentation of your reason(s) in writing to Dr. Wetzel at least one week prior to the last class.

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION**

As an educational institution and as an employer, Pitt values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity. Accordingly, the University prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, disability, or status as a veteran. For more information, visit <http://cfo.pitt.edu/policies/documents/policy07-01-03web.pdf>

### **DISABILITY**

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 as early as possible in the term. Disability Resources and Services will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. Please be aware that DRS testing services require advanced scheduling (up to 7 business days) before the exam date. For more information, visit: [www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/](http://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/)

### **CLASSROOM RECORDING**

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

### **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF**

Taking care of yourself is vital to gain the most out of your Pitt experience. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep, and taking time to relax. Using your time to take care of yourself will help you achieve your academic goals more than spending all your time studying.

For course related assistance: ask questions in class, visit Dr. Wetzel in office hours, take advantage of student study groups, and talk to our awesome UTAs. Pitt's Study Lab also provides free in-person and online workshops to help you improve your studying and test-taking skills. Visit this website for more information: <http://www.asundergrad.pitt.edu/study-lab>

All of us benefit from support and guidance during times of struggle. Take the time to learn about the resources available to our students and take advantage of them. This site provides links to food, health, employment, housing, and support resources both at Pitt and within the Pittsburgh Community: [bit.ly/help-resources](http://bit.ly/help-resources)

### **DISCLAIMER**

The instructor reserves the right to modify the course schedule or other aspects of the syllabus during the semester as necessary to achieve course objectives. Any changes to the syllabus (or to the course schedule) will be announced in class, on CourseWeb, and/or via email. Students are responsible for adjusting to these announced changes to the course.

## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

WEEK	DATES	TOPIC	CHAPTERS
1	Jan 7 Jan 9	Introduction to Ecology 1: The Environment: Climate, Climate Change, Biomes	1, 5, 6 5, 6, & p 548-550
2	Jan 14 Jan 16	1: The Environment: Climate, Climate Change, Biomes 2: Response to Environment: Evolution	5, 6, & p 548-550 7
3	Jan 21 Jan 23	2: Response to Environment: Evolution 2: Response to Environment: Speciation & Macroevolution	7 7
4	Jan 28 Jan 30	2: Response to Environment: Adaptation 3: Life Histories	2, 3, 4 8
5	<b>Feb 4</b> Feb 6	<b>Exam 1</b> 3: Life Histories	8
6	Feb 11 Feb 13	4: Sexual Strategies 4: Sexual Strategies	9 9
7	Feb 18 Feb 20	5: Behavioral Ecology 5: Behavioral Ecology	10 10
8	Feb 25 Feb 27	6: Population Ecology: Population Growth and Dynamics 6: Population Ecology: Population Growth and Dynamics	12, 13 12, 13
9	<b>Mar 3</b> Mar 5	<b>Exam 2</b> 7: Population Ecology: Population Distributions	11, 13
-	Mar 9-13	<b>NO CLASS – Spring recess</b>	
10	Mar 17 Mar 19	8: Species Interactions: Predation, Herbivory, Parasitism 8: Species Interactions: Predation, Herbivory, Parasitism	14, 15 14, 15
11	Mar 24 Mar 26	8: Species Interactions: Competition & Mutualism 8: Species Interactions: Competition & Mutualism	16, 17 16, 17
12	Mar 31 April 2	9: Community Ecology: Structure and Succession 9: Community Ecology: Structure and Succession	18, 19, 22 18, 19, 22
13	April 7 <b>April 9</b>	10: Ecosystems: Movement of Energy and Elements <b>Exam 3</b>	20, 21
14	April 14 April 16	10: Ecosystems: Movement of Energy and Elements 11: Conservation Ecology	20, 21 23
-	<b>April 22</b>	<b>Final Exam</b> <b>Wednesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> 8-9:50am</b>	

### IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY DATES

January 6	Classes begin
January 17	Add/drop period ends
January 20	MLK Holiday (University closed, no classes)
January 24	Extended drop period ends
March 6	Monitored withdraw period ends
March 9-13	Spring Recess (no classes)
April 17	Last day of classes
April 20-25	Final exams

**\*\*\*Details of this syllabus are subject to change\*\*\***