

NRES 211
Introduction to Conservation Biology
Fall Semester 2008
T-Th 12:30-1:45
163 Hardin Hall

Course Personnel, Format, Policies, and Timeline

Instructor

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Office Hours: M & W 1:00-2:00 or by appointment

TA

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Recommended Text

Essentials of Conservation Biology, 4th edition
Richard Primack, Sinauer Press, 2006
<http://www.sinauer.com/detail.php?id=7200>

Course Description: This course is an introduction to a multidisciplinary field with a goal to preserve **biological diversity (biodiversity)** at all levels of the biological hierarchy (genes, species, populations, communities, and ecosystems).

Expectations: Students will review and comprehend the suggested readings, attend all classes, and participate in class discussion and activities. Students will be expected to put the reading and writing for this course as a high priority for this semester. The instructor will provide a schedule and framework of activities and assessment but **students have the ultimate responsibility for learning in this course!**

Learning Objectives: As a result of this course, students will be prepared to:

1. Define conservation biology and integrate key concepts, components, and interactions.
2. Clearly articulate an understanding of conservation biology and biodiversity, including definitions, history, trends, concerns, policy, and values to humankind.
3. Access principal information resources relevant to conservation biology; transform information into timely papers, discussion topics, projects, and responses to current questions and issues in conservation biology.
4. Use examples and case studies to describe current status and trends in biodiversity, threats to biodiversity, and what can be done to help.
5. Articulate an understanding of how the diversity of life on earth (biological diversity) is intertwined with the lives of people and human life support systems.
6. Develop an ability to engage in current conservation issues and to be able to effectively communicate these issues to others.

Course Logistics: The conservation biology course will meet Tuesday's and Thursday's from 12:30 until 1:45 in Harding Hall 163. Class sessions will include news reports, outline of learning objectives, lecture, in-class learning activities, discussion, and evaluation. Monthly in-class assessment and discussion will review and summarize relevant information. The graded exercises and class discussions will assess student progress.

Grading: Grades will be based on the following assignments. > 90% of the point total will be in the "A" range, 80-89% the "B" range, 70-79% the "C" range, 60-69% the "D" range, and < 60% an "F". **There will be a 10% point reduction every day an assignment is late.**

If you receive a low grade on any written exercise (eg. below 70 on a 100-point scale), we will offer to provide detailed feedback on the assignment and invite you to re-write the paper. It is due at the next class period after you get the assignment back. You will be able to bring your grade up to a maximum of 80 on that assignment if the re-write is done well.

Assignments

See Blackboard (<http://my.unl.edu>)

Attendance policy: You are expected to attend all classes and to participate in class discussions. Attendance will be recorded. You may have **two absences**, which means you must tell the instructor or TA beforehand or as quickly as possible afterwards why you need(ed) to miss class. After two absences, if you miss additional classes, your grade will be reduced at the end of the semester by 10 points for each additional absence.

Example 1: you miss 2 class meetings – No grade penalty.

Example 2: you miss 3 class meetings – Grade reduced 10 points.

Example 4: you miss 5 class meetings – Grade reduced 30 points.

Academic Honesty: Written assignments will be based on your own and your groups synthesis of and reaction to readings etc. However, the research paper is to be based largely on others' work and plagiarism, whether intentional or inadvertent, is a serious issue. I have provided specific information about how to cite others' work and an explanation of what plagiarism is on Blackboard. If you have questions at any time about whether or not you have cited properly, please ask. If any form of plagiarism occurs, the paper will not be counted and I will report the incident to Student Judicial Affairs for action. Please review Section 4 of UNL's Student Code of Conduct for definitions and warnings against cheating and plagiarism.

Tentative Schedule

The overall topic schedule is subject to change based on pace and student input on evaluations.

Date	Topic	Reading Assignments
26-Aug	Introduction	
<u>PART I. Introductory Concepts</u>		
28-Aug	What is conservation biology?	
2-Sep	Biodiversity : Patterns and Processes	
4-Sep	Biodiversity : Patterns and Processes	
9-Sep	<i>Exam & In class discussion</i>	
<u>PART II. Valuing Biodiversity</u>		
11-Sep	Ecological Economics, Direct and Indirect Economic Value	
16-Sep	Ecosystem Services	
18-Sep	Ecological Ethics	
23-Sep	<i>Exam & In class discussion</i>	
<u>PART III. Threats to Biological Diversity</u>		
25-Sep	Vulnerability to Extinction, Problems of Small Populations, Demographic Processes	
30-Sep	Habitat Destruction, Fragmentation, Degradation	
2-Oct	Invasive Species, Disease, & Global Climate Change	
7-Oct	Overexploitation	
9-Oct	<i>Exam & In class discussion</i>	
<u>PART IV. Practical Solutions & Applications</u>		
14-Oct	Establishing, Designing, & Managing Networks of Protected Areas	
16-Oct	Establishing, Designing, & Managing Networks of Protected Areas	
21-Oct	Outside Protected Areas	
23-Oct	Fall Break	
28-Oct	Monitoring and Adaptive Management	
30-Oct	Restoration Ecology / Establishing New Populations	
4-Nov	<i>Exam & In class discussion</i>	
<u>PART V. Conservation and Human Societies</u>		
6-Nov	Ex Situ Conservation Strategies/Marine Conservation	
11-Nov	The Role of Policy	
13-Nov	Agroecology	
18-Nov	Agroecology	
	Group Poster Presentations	
20-Nov	<i>Exam & In class discussion</i>	
<u>PART VI. Synthesis and student presentations</u>		
	An International Approach to Conservation and Sustainable Development/An Agenda for the	
25-Nov	Future	
27-Nov	<i>Thanksgiving vacation</i>	
2-Dec	Student presentations in class	
4-Dec	Student presentations in class (Final Paper Due)	
9-Dec	Student presentations in class	
11-Dec	Student presentations in class	
19-Dec	Final - 7:30 to 9:30 a.m.	