

SYLLABUS

Biology 130, Introductory Ecology

Website: on Blackboard

Basic Structure

Lecture twice per week

One Discussion Session per week

Grading: straight grade, no curve

Exams & Assignments:

Element	% of Final Grade
Three exams, equal weight, no make-ups	10% each
Two take-home problem sets	10% each
Six discussion section assignments (group)	6% each
Poster (group)	14%
Extra Credit (optional)*	up to 20%

**all points added to final score at end of course. EC options on most exams & exercises plus one outside project if cleared with instructor (EC is strictly optional and should never substitute for maximum effort on the main course elements; higher quality work expected for EC, grading on higher scale).*

Course Schedule

Lecture: MW 16:00-17:20

Discussion Sections No. 1-8 (50 min. each) W 8:00-15:50

For daily activities see **Course Calendar**, below

Personnel

Instructor: Evan A. Sugden. Office 209C Huestis. Hours MTH 10:00-12:00.

Graduate Teaching Fellows ("GTF"s or "TA"s)

Lauren Poulos. Office TBA Hours TBA

Hannah Wilson. Office TBA Hours TBA

Textbook and Materials

Essentials of Ecology, Miller & Spoolman

SimBiotic "EcoBeaker" software modules (downloadable; see Blackboard for details)

(You will be allowed into this site to download the assigned exercises:

<https://simutext.com/student/pages/Logon.jsp?accesskey=null>)

Modules for 3 other Discussion Sections. Download from Blackboard.

Special Readings, link or download on Web Page

Organization

This course will use Blackboard for general information, access to documents, assignment distribution and submission, communication, and other purposes. It is essential that you have both a Blackboard account and are familiar with how to navigate it.

General Description

Ecology has two aspects. The formal aspect is the science of the relationships of organisms to their environments. In the applied aspect we consider how we can use our scientific understanding of these relationships to describe and improve human existence on Earth, keeping in mind that humans are also organisms dependent on their environment. This course seeks to explore both these aspects of Ecology. Our textbook lays out the major themes around the vital concepts of “biodiversity” and “sustainability”. Discussion sessions are designed to give you “hands on” experience with selected ecological topics and methods as well as to provide a space in which you can more easily discuss course ideas with the TAs and the instructor. The most important goal of this course is practical: to provide you with a basis for understanding the ecological challenges that face us so that you may make informed decisions in your life regarding your place in our collective world. Hopefully, you will also finish the course with a greater appreciation for Life on Earth in all its dynamism and diversity.

Communication

Instructor and TAs (below) will try to make themselves as available as possible. However, answering questions for 200 students can quickly become impossible. We ask that you pose questions to fellow students first; often you can answer them amongst yourselves. (If it pertains to course administration, double check the website.) There will be special discussion forums through which you can talk with each other. Please query the staff as a last resort. This is not meant to discourage you from contacting us but to keep us from being overwhelmed with routine messages.

Caveats

Students often ask what they can do to perform well in a course. In this, as in other classes, the answers are simple: attend class regularly with a clear and open mind, keep up with the pace of the readings and presentations, complete the exercises and exams, ask questions. It is always good to work with your fellow students and there will be many opportunities for this in BI 130. Consider yourself invited to visit with the instructor and TAs within their time budgets concerning any course matter.

We both respect and expect your honesty, integrity, and equal participation. Violations such as cheating on exams or plagiarizing of any kind will be dealt with stringently. Group work does not mean copied work; your own write-ups are essential.