Amphibians and Reptiles of Oregon (BIOL 468/568)

Instructor: Tom Titus, 318 Huestis Hall, titus@uoregon.edu
Lecture: 10:00-10:50 M-Th, 111 Huestis
Office hours: 10:50-11:50 M-Th, 111 Huestis
TA: Krystal Young, krystaly@uoregon.edu

Course Schedule

Week 1:
6/25 Course introduction, animal diseases, handling
6/26 Introduction to amphibians and "reptiles"
6/27 Introduction (cont)
6/28 Cascades: physiography, climate, habitats, diversity
6/29 Cascades Field Trip: Hidden Lake (bring lunch, water, heavy shoes and/or rubber boots, collecting gear, field journal), meet 8:30AM, return about 5PM

Project Proposals due

Week 2:
7/2 Amphibian life history: diversity and evolution
7/3 Amphibian and reptile aptations to altitude
7/4 Fourth of July Holiday, NO CLASS
7/5 Great Basin: physiography, climate, habitats, diversity
Meet 2PM for Great Basin Field trip
BI568 reading summary due


7/8 Great Basin Field Trip, return Sunday about 7PM
BI568 week 2 reading summary due

BI568 Reading:

Week 3
7/9 Thermal ecology of Great Basin lizards
7/10 Great Basin amphibians: Aaptations to an arid environment
7/11 Land Use and Great Basin Herpetofauna
7/12 Coast Range/Willamette Valley: physiography, climate, habitats, diversity

Project Outline due,
BI568 week 3 reading summary due

7/13 Coast Range Field Trip: Wildcat Creek, meet 8:30AM, return about 5PM (bring lunch, water, heavy shoes and/or rubber boots, collecting gear, field journal).


Week 4
7/16 Coast Range/Willamette Valley; Herpetofauna of ancient forests
7/17 Herpetofauna of ancient forests
7/18 Review, course evaluations
7/19 Final exam
7/20 Willamette Valley Field Trip: Mt. Pisgah, meet 10AM, return about 4PM (bring lunch, water, heavy shoes and/or rubber boots, collecting gear, field journal).

Course projects due
Field Journals due
BI568 week 4 reading summary due

BI568 Reading: Pollett et al. 2010. Stream buffers ameliorate the effects of timber harvest on amphibians in the Cascade Range of Southern Washington, USA. Forest Management 260:1083-1087
Field Trips: Field trips are required (not to mention fun!). Participation in the Great Basin Field Trip is non-negotiable. If you know IN ADVANCE (within the first two days of class) that you will miss a one-day field trip, we will arrange a compensatory activity related to your course project. Regardless of prior arrangements, you will still be responsible for the information covered on that field trip. Be at the designated meeting place ON TIME. The vans will leave once seating has been arranged. Handling of rattlesnakes is absolutely forbidden on course field trips.

Course Websites: My “Checklist of Oregon Amphibians and Reptiles” can be accessed at http://biology.uoregon.edu/reference/herpetology/checklist.html. The checklist has links to a set of digitized photographs for most Oregon species. Please use the website as a supplement for identification of amphibians and reptiles that you will encounter on the field trips and elsewhere. A Blackboard site will include syllabus, lectures, Field Guide to a Field Journal, BI568 readings, and field trip lists, and old exams.

Required Texts:

Additional Helpful Books:

Course Project:
The course project will be worth 30% of the course grade. Because the course is a mere four weeks long, you MUST BEGIN ORGANIZING YOUR PROJECT IMMEDIATELY! NO LATE PROJECTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Topic: Choice of topics is open, but the primary focus must be on some aspect of the biology of Oregon amphibians and/or reptiles. Original research is acceptable but probably not realistic given our time constraints. Past projects have covered the gamut from standard research papers to original music and poetry.

Project checkpoints:
Project Proposal (Week 1): On Friday, June 29 you will present a brief project proposal (not to exceed one page) for instructor approval. Include a short narrative outlining the nature of the project and its significance. Also include a list of criteria by which you would like the final version to be graded.

Project Outline and Resources (Week 3): By Thursday, July 12 you will have completed a detailed outline of your project and a list of project resources, including literature. Graphics oriented projects should include a diagrammatic sketch of the project layout.

Final Version (Week 4): The final version of your project will be due on Friday, July 20. Please submit a hard (paper) copy and a disk with the electronic version. Grading will be based on the criteria you submitted and we agreed upon during the first week of class. 10% of your project grade will be based on your adherence to the schedule outlined above.

Field Journal
You are required to maintain a detailed field journal during this course, which will be worth 20% of your final grade. The journal will be composed primarily of notes taken during the three field trips. Please see the guide to keeping a field journal posted on Blackboard. Field journals will be due immediately following our last field trip on Friday, July 20.
BI568 Reading Assignments
For BI568 students weeks 2-4 will include a weekly reading assignment. For each paper write a one paragraph summary of the paper, including 1) the hypothesis that was tested (Was an hypothesis tested? If not, what was the purpose of the paper?), 2) How was the hypothesis tested, or the data gathered and analyzed? 3) What was/were the conclusion(s)? 4) What is a logical next study based on these results?

Grading: You have the option of a letter grade or pass/no pass. BI468 grades will be based on 40% for the final exam, 40% for the course project, and 20% for the field journal. BI568 grades will be based on 40% for the final exam, 30% for the course project, 15% for the field journal, and 15% for reading summaries. NO INCOMPLETE GRADES WILL BE GIVEN.