
ORNITHOLOGY (BIOL 3950/5950):
Spring 2021 Syllabus
Dr. Brad Bergstrom
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Lect. MWF 12:00-12:50 (BSC 1024)
Lab/Field F 7:30-10:20 (1088)
1107 BSC 333-5770
(Offc. Hrs. MT 3-4 W 2-4; other
times by appt)

Required Texts: (1) Gill, F.B., and R.O. Prum. 2019. Ornithology. 4th ed. W.H. Freeman, N.Y.
(2) Dunn, J.L., and J. Aldorfer. 2017. Field Guide to the Birds of North America. 7th ed. National Geographic Society, Washington, DC.

Recommended Book: Ehrlich, P.R., D.S. Dobkin, and D. Wheye. 1988. The Birder's Handbook: A Field Guide to the Natural History of North American Birds. Simon and Schuster, New York.

Helpful Website: All About Birds (Cornell Lab of Ornithology) <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/>
Online birding system (what's being seen where): <https://ebird.org/explore>
Downloadable Apps for SmartPhones: Merlin, iBird, Audubon Society, Peterson, Sibley guides

LECTURE SYLLABUS

Week TopicChapters in Gill and Prum

1	Diversity of birds; Geographic patterns; General avian characteristics; Phylogenetic systematics.xvii-xxii, Chapt. 1, (Skim 20, 2), 3
2,3	Origin and early evolution of birds; (reptilian ancestry, fossil birds, DNA evidence). Extinction. Variation and evolutionary diversification (polymorphism, ecotypes, hybrids). Speciation models; Kin selection; Coevolution; Biogeography of birds.Chapt. 2,19
4,5	Integument, feathers, molt; Flight; Anatomy & PhysiologyChapt. 4,5,6
6,7	Sensory/nervous systems; Vocalizations; Behavior; Reproduction; Annual cycles;Chapt. (Skim 7,8), 12, 9
8,9	Migration; Social behaviorChapt. 10,11
10,11	Life History; Mates and mating systemsChapt. 17,13,14
12,13	Nests; Development of young, and parental careChapt. 15,16
14,15	Avian communities; ConservationChapt. 20,21

Exam Dates: #1: February 17; #2: March 24; #3: Fri, May 7, 10:15 am -12:15 pm.

NOTICE: Attendance at ALL LECTURES and LABS is MANDATORY! Points will be deducted for each absence. Tardiness = Absence! Note: no lecture Jan. 18 (M), Mar. 17 (W).

LABORATORY & FIELD

On most Fridays we will go into the field, either walking or by special bus. Please assemble in the lab at 7:25 a.m. to check out binoculars. Stay tuned in lecture to know what we're doing for that week's lab. *We will leave the building (or bus stop) promptly at 7:30. That means you need to do whatever it takes (multiple alarm clocks, wake-up service, buddy system...) to make sure that your mind and body are present in the lab a little bit before 7:30 am on each scheduled day. The bus will not wait for you; so if you're late, you're absent.* Wear appropriate field attire (long pants, boots or high-tops; rain gear if advisable; bug spray); bring field journal, field guide.

TENTATIVE LABORATORY TOPICS

Weeks 1,3 -- Bird Anatomy: external gross, skeletal, feathers, feet, bills, internal organs	QUIZ WEEK 3
Week 2,4 -- Local birds in winter (field)	QUIZ WEEK 5
Week 5,8 -- Bird Sounds I and II.	QUIZ WEEK 9
Week 11 -- Museum Preparation, or nests, or other	
Week 12 -- Friday Holiday (April 2), NO LAB	
	FINAL FIELD QUIZ April 30
Week 15 -- Special Projects Due (April 30; Topics TBA)	

(Note: most weeks we will be in the field; weeks 1, 3, and 5 we will be in lab, and others TBA).

*Bonus Points will be awarded: (1) for species identified in field and properly annotated in journal, beyond 75 species baseline [10 pts per 40 species]; (3) special Saturday fieldtrip attendance 4 pts. each.

GRADING :

Lecture Tests @ 100 pts	= 300
4 Lab/Field quizzes	= 100 (approx.)
Lab/Field Project	= 45
Semester Bird List	
(base points, up to 75 spp.)	= 15
*Bonus Points	= 25 max.

TOTAL= 460 (=100%, but 485 pts. possible with bonus)

A/B/C/D cutoffs will be 90/80/70/60%, *or lower*, at my discretion (**NOTE: not lower for 5950**).

Tentative dates and destinations for optional Saturday full-day trips:

Jan. 30: St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, FL
March 20: Sweetwater Wetlands Park, Gainesville
April 17: St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, FL, or other

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students requiring classroom or testing accommodations because of documented disabilities should discuss their needs with the instructor at the beginning of the quarter. To register with the Access Office, go to 1115 Nevins or call 245-2498 (voice) or 219-1348 (tty), or visit <https://www.valdosta.edu/student/disability/>.

SPECIAL COVID-19 STATEMENT: Students will wear a fitted facial covering of nose and mouth at all times indoors and when unable to distance outdoors (NOTE: neck gators are not effective and therefore will not meet this requirement; masks with exhaust valves also are not effective, as they vent particles into the air). This is CDC guidance and also a requirement of the University System and VSU; beyond that, it is the right thing for all of us to do to be mutually respectful of each other's health and well-being. If you should develop symptoms or come in close contact with someone who has tested positive or has COVID symptoms, contact the Student Health Center (333-5886) and/or make an appointment with the Lowndes County Public Health Service COVID testing center by calling 844-955-1499, and do not come to class until you receive a negative test and your symptoms clear (or 10 days after symptoms start if you do not get a test). This is a face-to-face course, and therefore you are required to attend class physically. Any special accommodations will require documentation from Student Affairs. VSU's Coronavirus FAQ page is <https://www.valdosta.edu/health-advisory/faq.php>. For whatever reason you might miss class, you must inform the instructor ASAP you will be (or have been) absent and receive instructions for making up work (latter is at the discretion of the instructor). But only an official notification from Student Affairs will be considered as an excused absence; visit: <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/contact-us.php>

For students requesting counseling, visit: <https://www.valdosta.edu/student/student-services/counseling-center/>

MS Teams for remote office hours: Generally, if you have questions about class materials, you may call me at my office during office hours. Or, you can e-mail any time. On occasion (e.g., before an exam), I will schedule and invite you to a MS Teams meeting during an office-hour block. You are already assigned to a Team for this class, and you can easily link to it from Office 365 Outlook (web) e-mail; or just click the link on the invitation you receive by e-mail to join a meeting. For a primer on using MS Teams, visit: <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/it/helpdesk/employee-resources/employee-services/microsoft-teams.php>

COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES: This course is designed to give the Biology Major a basic understanding of the biology of birds, including anatomy, physiology, reproduction, behavior, ecology, and evolution. Class Aves includes nearly 10,000 species of uniquely adapted warm-blooded vertebrates, which occupy nearly every environment and niche available on Planet Earth. Birds are the most observable group of vertebrates, due to their mostly diurnal habits and tolerance of humans, and so direct non-invasive observation of a wide diversity of birds is possible in a course as it is with no other group of vertebrate animals. The course features a heavy emphasis

on identification and observation of birds in their natural habitats. In addition to visual learning, acoustic memory skills are taught in this class, as they arguably are in no other.

With reference to the Educational Outcomes for the B.S. Degree in Biology (see p. 113 of 2014-2015 VSU Undergraduate Catalog) and as explained above, BIOL 3950 is particularly designed to give the student extensive background in Outcomes #2 and #5.

With reference to the VSU General Education Outcomes¹, BIOL 3950 will significantly address the following: #3) Students will use computer and information technology when appropriate; #4) Students will express themselves clearly, logically, and precisely in writing and in speaking, and they will demonstrate competence in reading and listening; #5) Students will demonstrate knowledge of scientific and mathematical principles and proficiency in laboratory practices; #7) Students will demonstrate the ability to analyze, to evaluate, and to make inferences from oral, written, and visual materials.

¹<http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/VSUGeneralEducationOutcomes.shtml>