

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

SYLLABUS BIOL 7010: ECOLOGY & EVOLUTION – Summer 2022

Instructor Name: Emily Rose, Ph.D.

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Office Location: Bailey Science Building 2211

Office Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 2:15-4:15pm and by appointment, email for arranging virtual meetings with Zoom [link](#)

Lecture location: Bailey Science Center 2022

Lecture times: Wednesdays 2:00-6:00pm

Course Overview:

BIOL 7010. Special Topics Ecology and Evolution. 4 Hours. Prerequisite: Acceptance into the graduate program in biology or permission of the instructor. In-depth analysis of a current issue in ecology and evolution requiring student presentations and extensive background reading. The specific topic within ecology and evolution will change each time the course is offered. Course may be taken one additional time for credit, with permission of the instructor.

Required Materials:

Peer reviewed journal articles will be provided to review the most current literature.

Course Learning Objectives:

This course covers a wide range of topics within the realm of ecology and evolution and allows student to develop their own ideas through a peer-reviewed research grant writing process.

By the end of the semester, each student will:

- 1) Develop a better understanding of ecological and evolutionary concepts and cultivate critical thinking skills through the scientific method.
- 2) Understand the basis of evolutionary ecology theory and its application.
- 3) Translate analyzed data into meaningful scientific results and develop their own questions/hypotheses.
- 4) Compose literature review based upon their thesis topic and build upon their scientific writing skills.
- 5) Work on their ability to convey ideas and educate others while giving presentations.

These course objectives are aimed to fulfill the VSU General Educational outcomes 3,4,5 and 7. This course's set of learning objectives support the outcomes 1, 2 as specified by the VSU Biology Department for its Master's program.

Grade Determination:

Assessment	Points	Grading Scale:
Participation	50	>315, A >280, B >245, C <245, D
Paper discussion presentation	100	
Thesis presentation	50	
Review paper	100	
Peer review	50	
Total Points	350	

Participation: Points for participation will be given based on your preparedness and your contribution to the discussions and presentations. I will be taking attendance for all of our class meetings and points will be deducted for students who are chronically late or missing class. Points will be deducted if you come to class or lab late. If you are not prepared for lab or are disrespectful to your fellow classmates or professor you will lose participation points.

Student led paper discussion presentations: Each student will lead a classroom discussion and during the first class meeting we will fill in a schedule for the presentations. Presentations should be relatively brief (~ 30-45 minutes) and highlight what you view as the main findings, impacts and potential issues for the paper discussion. **DO NOT** just recap what is in the papers; everyone will have read them already and we will not require a blow-by-blow retelling. Rather, try to focus on points of controversy, unanswered questions and so on. Your presentation is worth a maximum of 100 points and will be graded by me. Emphasis will be placed on the clarity of your presentation and your effectiveness in leading the class discussion.

Thesis presentations and literature reviews/proposal introductions: Each student will give a (~ 30-45 minutes) and highlight your thesis goals, progress, and plans for the summer. Students will be turning in a three page paper with 10-15 citations centered around their thesis proposals. This can be written in any format that is compatible with the target journal for each student's research.

Peer-review: You will provide a 1-2 page critique of a subset of the review papers submitted. Each paper will be reviewed by 2 other members of the class. Imagine that these papers have been submitted to a scientific journal for possible publication and you have been asked to review them. Your reviews should emphasize the strengths and weaknesses in each paper and what the author could do to improve it. As the last part of the review, you must assign a numerical grade, based on a maximum total of 50 points. I will then send each of you all the reviews of your paper and its averaged reviewer score (individual point scores will remain anonymous).

Course Policies:

Title IX Statement

Valdosta State University (VSU) is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive work and learning environment free from discrimination and harassment. VSU is dedicated to creating an environment where all campus community members feel valued, respected, and included. Valdosta State University prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex (including sexual harassment and sexual violence), sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status, in the University's programs and activities as required by applicable laws and regulations such as Title 3 IX. The individual designated with responsibility for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries concerning nondiscrimination policies is the University's Title IX Coordinator: the Director of the Office of Social Equity, titleix@valdosta.edu, 1208 N. Patterson St., Valdosta State University, Valdosta, Georgia 31698, 229-333-5463.

Academic Integrity Statement

Cheating, plagiarism, copying and any other behavior that is contrary to University standards of behavior will not be tolerated ([Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures](#)). Students caught violating any aspect of the Academic Integrity Code will be penalized in all cases. Penalty ranges from “0” on an assignment to “F” for the course without regard to a student’s accumulated points. Students may also face expulsion. It is the student’s responsibility to become familiar with the policies of the university regarding academic integrity and to avoid violating such policies. By taking this course, you agree that all required course work may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin, a tool within BlazeVIEW. For more information on the use of Turnitin at VSU see [Turnitin for Students](#).

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 semester. If you need accommodations for an exam, you must communicate this information with me at least 1 week before the exam. Students not registered must contact the Access Office, Farber Hall, Phone; 245-2498. Website: <http://www.valdosta.edu/access/>

Additional Academic Support

The [Academic Support Center \(ASC\)](#) offers all VSU students **free peer tutoring** in core curriculum courses, including math, writing (any subject), chemistry, biology, foreign languages and more. **Please bring your assignments, textbooks, and homework to tutoring sessions.** Also available are **free, one-hour seminars** for help with **study skills, time management**, and a variety of other topics. Visit our office on the main campus, located in Odum Library, 2nd floor, or call 229-333-7570 for an appointment. We also offer 24/7 access to ThinkingStorm, a professional, online tutoring company. To make appointments for either VSU tutors or ThinkingStorm tutors, click the link “Free Tutoring” in Blazeview (under “resources” or “more.”). VSU’s Academic Support Center is also offering online tutoring, see instructions: <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/campus-wellness/documents/asc-online-tutoring-.pdf>

Experiential Learning Statement

This course includes an Experiential Learning opportunity carefully designed to allow students to explore concepts, skills, and principles beyond the traditional classroom, lab, or studio. Students will have opportunities to make connections across campus, collaborate with others, and apply and

synthesize what they have studied in the course. In addition to the experience, students reflect on what they have learned during and at the completion of the course/activity to deepen their learning. Reflections help students transfer skills and concepts to different contexts including ‘real-world’ settings. For more information about Experiential Learning please visit <https://qep.valdosta.edu/experiential-learning/>.

Mental Health Awareness

As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained or violent relationships, death and loss, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may diminish your academic performance and/or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. VSU services are available and treatment does work. You can learn more about confidential mental health services available on campus at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/student/student-services/counseling-center/>. 24 hour emergency help is also available through the University Police at 229-259-5555 who will contact on-call counselors or appropriate resources for support.

Student Online resources

VSU cares about student success both on and offline, and a variety of resources are available to help students both academically and personally during the Spring 2020 semester.

One of the best resources is VSU’s Coronavirus FAQ page located at <https://www.valdosta.edu/health-advisory/faq.php>, Information is available there about internet access, academics, and services, among many other options, including how you can access the Brightspace Pulse app that will allow you to view BlazeVIEW on your smartphone (see <https://www.d2l.com/products/pulse/>). A website devoted to the health and wellness of VSU students can be seen at <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/campus-wellness/student-resources.php>.

To help students get acclimated to online learning, the University System of Georgia created a quick guide for students to access online courses at <https://sites.google.com/westga.edu/student-guide-online-learning/home>. In BlazeVIEW, all VSU students have a course with guides for how to use tools in BlazeVIEW; search for “VSU BlazeVIEW Student Tutorial Spring 2020.”

Student Opinion of Instruction Statement

At the end of the term, all students will be expected to complete an online Student Opinion of Instruction survey (SOI) that will be available through SmartEvals. Students will receive an email notification through their VSU email address when the SOI is available (generally at least one week before the end of the term). SOI responses are anonymous to instructors/administrators, and they will be able to access results only after they have submitted final grades. Before final grade submission, instructors will not be able to see any responses, but they can see the percentage of students who have or have not completed their SOIs. While instructors will not be able to see student names, an automated system will send a reminder email to those who have yet to complete their SOIs. Students who withdraw or drop a course will also be sent invitations to complete the Dropped Course Survey. Complete information about the SOIs, including how to access the survey, is available on the [SOI Procedures webpage](#).

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Note: The professor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus as necessary.

June 8th Week 1 Go over syllabus and goals for the summer.

June 15th Week 2 Individual meetings- We will fill in a schedule for the presentations.

June 22nd Week 3 Paper 1 and Thesis 1

June 29th Week 4 Paper 2 and Thesis 2

July 6th Week 5 Paper 3 and Thesis 3

July 13th Week 6 Paper 4 and Thesis 4

July 20th Week 7 Paper 5 and Thesis 5

July 27th Week 8 Paper 6 and Thesis 6