

Ecology PCB 3043 Syllabus and Schedule – Fall 2016

Time: Tu, Thrs 11 – 12:15 AM
Instructor: Dr. Mario H. Perez
Email: perezmh@fiu.edu

Location: ACH 3 - 110
My Office: OE 240
Office Hours: T, Th, afternoons

Course website: on Blackboard

Prerequisites: General Biology I, II (BSC 1010, 1011)

Students with disabilities: I will gladly accommodate all students with disabilities. Please arrive early the first day class to explain how your disability can be accommodated in the best manner to facilitate your learning.

This course is web-assisted: All links to course materials and grades will be provided *via* the FIU Blackboard ecampus

Blackboard website. An outline of each lecture will be available from the course website to use as a guide to structure your notes. If you miss class, ask a fellow student for the notes. **If you have a question, check the syllabus and course website first. If you are unable to find an answer to your question, please visit me during office hours. DO NOT** email me with questions regarding information that is posted on the website, syllabus or schedule.

PLTL This course is assisted by PLTL: The Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL; <http://pltl.fiu.edu/>) is a proven model that addresses the needs of traditional and non-traditional students. Peer-Led workshops are an effective way to engage large numbers of students with course material and each other. Improved performance and retention, development of communication and team skills, higher motivation and course satisfaction, and increased interest in pursuing further study in science are among the benefits of the PLTL approach. The PLTL model preserves the lecture and introduces a new structure, a weekly 75-minute workshop, where ten to twelve students work as a team to solve carefully structured problems under the guidance of a peer leader. The peer leader clarifies goals, ensures that team members engage with the materials and with each other, builds commitment and confidence, and encourages debate and discussion. PLTL will count toward 10% of your final grade.

COURSE GOALS:

The goal of this course is for you to learn the basics of the science of ecology by studying the fundamentals of how organisms interact with their abiotic and biotic environment. The readings and lectures will lead you through a progression of ecological concepts from the level of the individual organism, to populations, communities and, finally, ecosystems so that you can:

- Be familiar with fundamental ecological theories in order to understand and explain patterns observed in nature
- Learn ecological terminology and be able to use it in the proper context in order to

communicate intelligently about natural systems

- Be aware of important ecologists and the historical development of the discipline in order to understand contemporary ecological issues in a modern context
- Be able to critically evaluate primary ecological literature and interpret case studies in the context of ecological theory
- Be able to apply ecological theory to formulate solutions to modern ecological problems
- Be able to locate, read and summarize primary scientific papers and clearly convey ideas and criticisms in writing

TEXTBOOK (required):

Smith, T. M. and R. L. Smith. 2012. Elements of Ecology. 9th Edition.

The reading sequence is provided on the syllabus. The text follows a logical progression that introduces basic ecological theory and important terminology in a historical context. The text also provides case studies that will help you understand real-world examples in the context of general ecological theory. *Read the assigned readings before class* - it will improve your understanding of lectures, give you the background knowledge for in-class exercises and help you be a more active participant in class discussions.

ASSESSMENT:

Assessment in this course will be based on your performance on examinations and a writing assignment with points assigned in the following manner:

Relative contribution	Points (% of grade)
Exams (3)	40 (13.33 ea.)
Cumulative Final Exam	30
PLTL	(optional)
Participation (attendance, clicker pts)	30
Total Possible Points	100

If you choose not to do PLTL, then those 10 points will be added to the value of your final exam (40%).

Examinations: Examinations will have a combination of multiple choice and short essay questions. Multiple choice and true-or-false questions will mainly evaluate your assimilation of factual information, whereas the essay questions will evaluate your ability to integrate facts and theory to solve novel problems. The best way to prepare for exams is to come to class, study your notes, and keep up with reading assignments. Exams 1-3 will be unit exams while the final exam comprehensive. *There will be no make-up exams under any circumstance.* If you get caught cheating you will get a zero for that examination.

Grading Scale: A 100-94 A- 93-90 B+ 89-87 B 86-84 B- 83-80 C+79-77 C 76-74 C- 73-70 D+ 69-67 D 66-64 D- 63-60 F < 60

There will be no “rounding up of grades”.

Participation: You cannot learn and do well without attending class. Daily quizzes in the form of clicker questions will be implemented based on problem sets from the textbook and primary scientific literature that I assign the week prior will constitute your participation grade. **You will need to get an iclicker immediately and register with Blackboard.**

Honor Code: FIU students are bound by an academic honor code that includes serious sanctions for academic dishonesty (including but not limited to plagiarism and cheating). I will follow the university code (www.fiu.edu/~jms, follow link to student code of conduct) when a student is suspected of academic dishonesty.* In addition, students will be expected to behave in a professional manner in class, for example there will be no cell phones ringing during class, surfing the internet for unrelated matters or the putting of feet up on desks. You are expected to behave as the professions you are studying to become.

Sexual Harassment Policy:

FIU's sexual harassment policy is available at: <http://www.fiu.edu/~eop/EOPSexH.pdf>

Lecture and Reading Schedule: Any unforeseen changes in the assignment and exam schedule will be announced in class and updated on the syllabus. Please see schedule.