General Ecology – Botany/Zoology/Forest & Wildlife Ecology 460
Fall 2010
M W F, 9:55-10:45am, B302 Birge Hall (lowest floor)
Updated: 9/7/10

Instructor:
Professor Ellen Damschen, 451 Birge Hall, office 262-2636, lab 263-4437
E-mail: damschen@wisc.edu (preferred contact method)
Office Hours: By appointment

Teaching Assistants:
There are two teaching assistants for General Ecology 460 who will be assisting with every aspect of the course. They will hold regular office hours and are available to answer questions about the course or assignments. Their contact information is:

Heather Lumpkin, Monday & Tuesday labs
431 Birge, 265-8001
E-mail: hlumpkin@wisc.edu
Office Hours: 8:30-9:30 Wed in 431 Birge, or by appt

Michelle Gooch, Wednesday & Thursday labs
431 Birge, 265-8001
E-mail: mgooch@wisc.edu
Office Hours: 2-3 pm Mon in 431 Birge, or by appt.

Lab coordinator:
The lab coordinator attends lectures, but works mostly in the background for the course. Contact her about enrollment or scheduling issues and any problems accessing course materials. Feel free to consult her about ecological questions as a backup to the rest of the staff.

Susan Will-Wolf, 317 Birge, 262-2754, E-mail: swwolf@wisc.edu, Office hours by appointment.

*****E-mail is the preferred contact method for all staff*****


Additional required readings:  Several scientific papers are assigned as required additional reading; you should obtain your own copies. A list is posted on the course web site. For files of these in downloadable format, pdfs or hot links are posted on “My UW-Madison” library e-reserves under Botany for Bot/Zoo/For &Wild Ecol 460. NOTE: students must log in via the UW-Madison server with their campus username to access many of the readings; UW pays for full-text access by students and staff to many journals. Read text and papers by the date they are assigned in the lecture schedule. Be prepared to discuss papers on the dates indicated in the lab/discussion schedule. See “How to Read a Scientific Paper” in the lab manual.

Laboratory Manual (required):
Available from ASM StudentPrint (262-6216, Rm 3301, 3rd floor, in 333 East Campus Mall, across from Vilas Hall). Hours in-semester are Monday-Friday 9:30 am - 6:30 pm. 3-hole punch format, cost $11.85.

Websites:
General Ecology 460 websites – The Learn @UW course website https://learnuw.wisc.edu/ is the place to go for day-to-day course information. It will contain lecture and lab schedules, skeletal lecture notes, homework assignments, keys to exams, plus information and documents for discussion and lab. Answers to frequently asked questions can also be found here. The website is updated regularly. By the morning prior to each class, the skeletal lecture notes for that lecture will be published on the web site. Please be aware that Dr. Damschen makes changes to lectures that can lead to some inconsistencies between skeletal notes
and lectures. In addition, they are not complete and cannot replace the material covered in lecture. Remember only enrolled students have access this site and you must use your UW-Madison netID and password to log in. The public class web site [http://botit.botany.wisc.edu/courses/460/](http://botit.botany.wisc.edu/courses/460/) is updated with general information only.

**Textbook website** – The text also has an accompanying website that includes chapter outlines, self-tests, data analysis modules, living graphs, and other useful information for this class. You must sign up as a student to access the information. Note that you do not need to send the instructor copies of self-test results, etc. Just cancel or click through those boxes if they arise. Note that Dr. Damschen frequently takes questions from the online self-tests to use on exams! The text website is: [http://bcs.whfreeman.com/ricklefs6e/](http://bcs.whfreeman.com/ricklefs6e/)

**Course Objectives:**
The principle objectives of this course are two-fold: to examine biological processes at the level of whole organisms and higher (populations, communities, and ecosystems), and to survey the tools and thinking processes used by ecologists to conduct ecological studies (lab). By the end of the course, students should be able to answer or understand the debate encompassing the following key questions in ecology:

1. Why are some species common while others are rare?
2. What limits the local, continental, and global distribution of species?
3. Why are there so many different types of species on earth? Why aren’t there more species?
4. How do organisms adapt to their environment?
5. How are ecosystems structured and regulated?
6. What role do natural ecosystems play in the maintenance of human populations?
7. What roles do humans play in the functioning of natural ecosystems?
8. How does an ecologist approach answering a particular ecological question with field work, experiments, or models?
9. How does an ecologist evaluate the appropriateness of tools to answer a particular ecological question?

**Lecture expectations:**
You are expected to attend lecture. Out of respect for everyone in the class, please turn off cell phones and participate fully in class. Laptops may be used to take lecture notes. However, if the use of a laptop distracts from the course in any way, the instructors reserve the right to ask students to shut-down their laptops or to leave the classroom.

**Laboratory/discussion expectations:** Attendance is mandatory and TAs take attendance; you will be held accountable on the lab exam for all material covered in labs. Laboratory policies are explained at the beginning of the laboratory manual. Laboratory and discussion sections are linked and can’t be split between days. Laboratory/Discussion sections meet in 110 Birge Hall starting the week of September 13. You are expected to read the exercise and complete the pre-lab assignments before lab.

If you have a conflict with a particular lab/discussion day, contact the laboratory Teaching Assistant at least 2 weeks BEFORE the conflict. With permission, you may be able to attend another lab day. For emergencies, contact the appropriate persons ASAP. Do not assume you can attend a different lab/discussion without permission.

**Assignments and Due Dates:**
The lecture and lab schedules include important due dates for all assignments. All assignments are due at the start of class (either lecture or lab/discussion) on the days listed on the schedules. To be fair to all students in the class and to the instructors who are responsible for grading the assignments, **no late assignments will be accepted.**
Grades:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exams (highest 3 scores @ 15% each)</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam (comprehensive)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discretionary Grade</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra Credit from Lecture Quizzes</td>
<td>(up to 2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Total</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab writing assignments (Muir Wds report: 3%, Muir Wds rpt rewrite: 3%, Field trip synthesis: 4%, Greene Pr expt report: 5%, Nat history journal: 5%)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion participation (2.5% lead discussion, 2.5% participate at other times)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open book/notes laboratory exam (Failure to attend/participate in lab can drop total lab grade by up to 3%)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory/Discussion Total</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The following scale will be used to assign grades. Note that the scale may be lowered, but will not be raised.

A: 90 - 100%, AB: 87 - 89%, B: 80 - 86%, BC: 77 - 79%, C: 70 - 76%, D: 60 - 69%, F: 0 - 59%

Examinations:

**Lecture** - There will be four non-cumulative midterm exams and one final exam. The first three midterm exams will be held in class, will take 1 hour, and will emphasize material presented since the previous exam. During the 2-hour final exam period, both the fourth midterm exam and the final exam will be given. The fourth midterm will be non-cumulative and include material since the third midterm. The final exam will be cumulative. Students will be given the entire 2 hour period to complete both exams. If students are happy with their first three midterm grades, they can opt to only take the final exam during this 2 hour period. Each exam will cover material from lecture, assigned reading, and other course assignments, and will emphasize material covered in lecture and highlighted on ungraded problem sets. Lecture exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The first three midterm exams will begin promptly at 9:55AM. On exam days, put away notes before exams are distributed, sit with space between you and others, and do not wear hats.

For the final exam, university policy is that you may request an alternate time if you have three or more final exams scheduled within a 24-hour period. **However, you must request an alternate final exam time/date within the first two weeks of class.** Most of you may have overlooked this last requirement buried in the fine print. **Pay attention to this requirement for other courses as well as ours. Our final exam this year is scheduled very late.** Remember that university policy expressly forbids instructors to allow students to take the final exam early just so they can leave campus early.

**Lab** - There will be one 4-hour mostly open notes/open book laboratory exam during the last laboratory section. Any calculation done in lab will be part of the lab exam, as will questions about field trips. Focus is on recognizing and finding the information and directions to use, following directions correctly, and appropriately interpreting the results. So you want to have your laboratory exercise information and notes carefully organized before you arrive.
**Calculators** - Only one- or two-line, non-programmable, non-graphing scientific calculators (cost usually $20 or less) will be allowed for lecture exams; they will be needed at least for Midterm lecture exams 2 and 3. No exceptions will be granted, and we will check (no internet access, text entry, or large memory allowed). Be sure to bring a scientific calculator that includes logarithms and statistical functions in addition to basic math functions. The campus Digital Outpost carries about a dozen different models; all campus area bookstores carry at least a few models, and they are of course also available from (among other places), Walgreens, Comp USA, Staples, RadioShack, OfficeMax, Office Depot, and Amazon.

**Exam Grades** - The three highest scores of the three midterm lecture exams plus the final exam will count toward your final grade. If you miss one in-class lecture exam for any reason, excused or unexcused, that will count as the dropped exam. *There are no make-up lecture exams.* For the lab exam, you may be given permission to take the exam on a day other than your scheduled lab/discussion, as requested at least two weeks in advance and for a very good reason. *There will be no make-up lab exam on any other days.*

**Discretionary Grade:**
The instructors will determine the lecture discretionary grade for each student based on class attendance and participation. High discretionary grades will be given to students who have positive attitudes, participate in class, participate in unannounced quizzes, and come to class prepared.

**Attendance and Extra Credit Opportunities:**
You are expected to attend all lectures. Dr. Damschen will not penalize anyone for not attending lecture. However, extra credit opportunities will be available to those who attend lecture. On eight different unannounced dates scattered through the semester, Dr. Damschen will give a short quiz. The quiz will be one question and will be based on lecture material. The quiz will be graded as follows: not in attendance = 0 points, in attendance but incorrect answer = 1 point, in attendance and correct answer = 2 points. Only your seven best scores (of eight possible opportunities; for a maximum of 14 points) will be counted. These points will be applied as extra credit to your final grade, such that if you receive 14 points you will receive 2 percentage points extra credit toward your total course grade, and if you receive less points the percentage will be calculated as number of points earned / 7. Your lowest score, or a missed quiz, will be dropped. If you miss more than one of the quizzes for reasons that are school-sanctioned activities, please keep written documentation of your excused absences to present at the end of the semester. Students are responsible for all material in lecture whether or not they attend. Dr. Damschen and the TAs will not revisit material covered in lectures that students miss due to unexcused absences.

**Exam Regrading Policies (note that laboratory or other assignments will not be regraded, only exams):**
Drs. Damschen and Will-Wolf the TAs will attempt to grade every exam fairly and accurately. If you disagree with the way your answer on an exam was graded, you must submit a request for a regrade in writing following the instructions in the Exam Regrading Guidelines. The Exam Regrading Guidelines can be found on the course website. If you submit any exam question for regrade, then we reserve the right to regrade the entire exam. No questions about the exam will be accepted until 24 hours after it is returned and all regrade requests must be submitted to Dr. Damschen’s office within 24-72 hours from the time of the original in-class exam. No regrade requests will be accepted for the final exam.

**Academic Integrity and Ethics:**
Evidence of cheating or attempted cheating will be dealt with by the staff following published UW-Madison policies. The situation may be referred to the office of the Student Assistance and Judicial Affairs, and a Dean for further action. Please refer to the undergraduate student Academic Misconduct information on the UW-Madison website at: [http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html](http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html).
Disability Services:
Students who are seeking disability information or support for a disability should contact the McBurney Center http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/information/mission.php or 263-2741. The McBurney Center is responsible for approving and helping to arrange all accommodations for UW-Madison students. If you require special accommodations for exams or other lecture activities, please see Dr. Damschen or Dr. Will-Wolf immediately so that these accommodations can be made well in advance of exam dates or other course deadlines. Bring your McBurney documentation to support your request. Attending the field labs requires the physical ability to negotiate dirt paths and off-trail uneven ground through vegetation. We will do our best in-house to accommodate students with temporary physical disabilities. If your physical disability is long-term, we will need to confer with you and probably a McBurney Center representative before labs begin, to see what can be done.

Discussion Paper Reading List:

Disclaimer:
The course instructors reserve the right to make modifications to this information throughout the semester. The newest version will be posted on Learn@UW. Refer to the “updated” date at the top of the syllabus to make sure you have downloaded the most recent version.