FUNDAMENTALS OF ECOLOGY (BIOL-UA 63/ENVST-UA 325)
PROFESSOR KATIE SCHNEIDER
TUES AND THURS 9:30 – 10:45
GENERAL SYLLABUS

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR DR. SCHNEIDER:
Email: ks146@nyu.edu
Phone: 212-992-9669 (x29669 from a campus phone)


SimBio for assignments (cost under $15). I will explain how to download this software later on in course.

PREREQUISITES: Principles of Biology I (BIOL-UA 0011, 9011 or 0013) or Foundations of Science 6: Biology (SCIEN-AD 113) & Principles of Biology II (BIOL-UA 0012), or Principles of Biology II (BIOL-UA 0014 or 9012), or Environmental Systems Science (ENVST-UA 100) or Foundations of Science 6: Physics (SCIEN-AD 114).

COURSE DESCRIPTION: Ecology is the study of the interaction between organisms and the environment. In this course we will investigate the relationship between abiotic (nonliving) and biotic (living) components of an ecosystem. Building upon an introduction to environmental factors, we will examine the interplay between these components at the organismal, population, community and ecosystem levels. Throughout the course, we will discuss current ecological applications and issues, such as habitat destruction, sustainability, disease, invasive species, and global climate change. One mandatory field trip is scheduled in September. This trip will start before our regular class time. You will be responsible for your transportation to the site (subway).

This is a lecture course designed primarily for students majoring in biology (ecology track) and environmental studies. This course is not intended for college freshman. In addition to the prerequisites, it is strongly encouraged that you have also completed college level math prior to enrolling in this course. If you have not taken the course prerequisites, you are very likely to have a difficult time doing well in this course.

GRADING:
The final grade for this course will be based on:

Two Lecture Exams (non cumulative) 200 pts
One Final Exam (~75% new material, ~25% older material) 100 pts
Three take home assignments 150 pts
In-class assignments (NO MAKEUPS, 1 dropped) 50 pts
Extra credit (described in class and in more detail below) Total 500 pts
Letter grades will be determined as follows. If you earn the following points, your grade will be at least as indicated; instructor reserves the right to “curve” the lowest grade upwards as appropriate: Above 470 = A, 450 – 470 = A-, 435 - 450 = B+, 415 - 435 = B, 400 - 415 = B-, 385 - 400 = C+, 365 - 385 = C, 350 – 365 = C-, 335 – 350 = D+, 315 – 335 = D, Below 315 = F, INC = Incomplete, W = Withdrawal. This scale is subject to change based on overall course performance. If you receive an INC, you must resolve the INC before the end of the next semester or it will become an F. It is your responsibility to request an INC in writing before the end of the course.

1. Exams:
   - Exams are based upon lectures and readings, but lectures are emphasized. Lecture notes will be posted, but will not cover all of the material presented in lecture. It is important to attend the lectures, come on time and stay for the entire lecture.
   - Attendance for exams is mandatory. The possibility for a makeup exam will be considered if you have a serious personal emergency. Makeup exams will not be provided in the event of transportation problems, etc. You will receive a zero for a missed, unexcused exam. Dr. Schneider will determine the format of the makeup exam, which will likely be essay based.
   - If you feel you were not given adequate points for a question you must hand in a one paragraph printed explanation of why you think you deserve more credit and your argument will be considered. Your request must be submitted within one week of receiving your grade.
   - The final exam is cumulative but will focus heavily on material from the last third of the semester.

2. Take-home assignments:
   - Take-home assignments and due dates will be announced in class and available through NYU Classes. All assignments must be turned in by 5pm on the day that they are due. Emailed late assignments will NOT be accepted without penalty. If an assignment is late, ten percent will be deducted each 24 hour period after the assignment is due (e.g. every day after 5 pm).
   - Any questions about assignment grades must be turned in (in writing) within one week after the grades are posted.

3. In-class assignments:
   - These assignments are in-class ONLY and will not be announced in advance. Your lowest grade will be dropped, so if you miss one assignment that one is dropped. There are NO make-ups. This is for 10% of your grade so your course grade is affected by your presence (or absence) in the classroom.

4. Extra Credit:
   - If you opt to do an extra credit assignment, you may choose ONE of the following two opportunities.
     A. Attend a scientific talk on ecology. Hand in a single printed page within one week of attending the seminar. Late hand-ins will not be accepted. You assignment must include: Your name, the date and title of the seminar, the name of the seminar speaker and where they are from, a paragraph summarizing the main points, the single thing that most surprised or interested you in the seminar, AND how the talk relates to something that we’ve discussed or will discuss in class. Please email me the title of the seminar before you attend. Some examples of local seminars that may want to attend can be found at:
NYU Environmental Studies http://environment.as.nyu.edu/page/newevents
NYU Center for Atmospheric Ocean Science http://c aos.cims.nyu.edu/page/events_colloquium
NYU Biology http://biology.as.nyu.edu/docs/IO/6494/2012FallBioMondaySeminars.pdf
Columbia University E3B http://www.columbia.edu/cu/e3b/seminar.html
B. Visit a museum, botanical garden, aquarium or zoo. Take advantage of what NY has to offer! There are SO many local opportunities to do this assignment! After your visit, hand in a single printed page with the following: Your name and ID, the date that you went, proof that you went, and a typed page summarizing what you observed, including what you found to be most interesting, least interesting, something that you learned, AND how your experience relates to something that we’ve discussed or will discuss in class. Hand in the assignment within one week of your visit. Late hand-ins will not be accepted.

5. Field trip to Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
One mandatory field trip is tentatively scheduled for a Thursday in September. In order to account for students who have class after ours, the trip will meet early in the morning. You are responsible for transportation to the site, which is accessible by subway. Please inform me if you need any specific accommodations. We will discuss more details about the field trip during class.

POLICIES:

1. All students must adhere to the academic integrity policies of NYU (more on this below).

2. Come to lecture prepared and plan to stay the entire time. This means you must read the assigned chapter from your textbook prior to class. Expect to spend a substantial amount of time (roughly about 5 hours per week outside of class, on average) with assigned reading in this course if you hope to do well. Additional readings or other homework assignments may be assigned to complement the textbook material. If you cannot come to class, you may miss the in-class assignment for that day (no make ups).

3. Plan to stay in lecture for the duration of the class. If you must leave for an emergency, sit at the end of the row and exit quietly. Please do not record or film lectures.

4. Do not disrupt the course. Do not use your cell phone. Please keep eating during class to a minimum and clean up all trash. Please don’t spend class time surfing the internet. It is distracting to you and to the people behind you. Respect me and your classmates. Disruptive conduct during lecture or while on the field trip can result in disciplinary action as per academic policy.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
If you are a student with a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact The Moses Center for Students with Disabilities, 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, 212-998-4980 (http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-andwellness/students-with-disabilities.html). They will determine with you what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All communication is confidential.
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT:
CAS Academic Policies (From http://cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity):

I. A COMMUNITY OF THE MIND
The College is a "community of the mind." Its students, faculty, and staff all share the goal of pursuing truth through free and open inquiry, and we support one another's endeavors in this regard. As in any community, membership comes with certain rights and responsibilities. Foremost among these is academic integrity. Cheating on an exam, falsifying data, or having someone else write a paper undermines others who are "doing it on their own"; it makes it difficult or impossible to assess fairly a student's interest, aptitude, and achievement; and it diminishes the cheater, depriving him/her of an education. Most importantly, academic dishonesty is a violation of the very principles upon which the academy is founded. Thus, when students enter the College, one of the first things that they are asked to do is to sign a community compact, recognizing these principles of academic integrity. For this reason also, violations of these principles are treated with the utmost seriousness.

II. SOME GUIDELINES
Academic honesty means that the work you submit - in whatever form - is original. Students are expected - often required - to build their work on that of other people, just as professional researchers and writers do. Giving credit to someone whose work has helped you is expected; in fact, not to give such credit is a crime. Plagiarism is the severest form of academic fraud. Plagiarism is theft. Obviously, bringing answers into an examination or copying all or part of a paper straight from a book, the Internet, or a fellow student is a violation of this principle. But there are other forms of cheating or plagiarizing which are just as serious, for example:

- presenting an oral report drawn without attribution from other sources (oral or written);
- writing a paragraph which, despite being in different words, expresses someone else's idea without a reference to the source of the idea;
- submitting essentially the same paper in two different courses (unless both instructors have given their permission in advance);
- giving or receiving help on a take-home examination or quiz unless expressly permitted by the instructor (as in collaborative projects);
- presenting as your own a phrase, sentence, or passage from another writer's work without using quotation marks;
- presenting as your own facts, ideas, or written text gathered or downloaded from the Internet;
- submitting another student's work with your name on it;
- purchasing a paper or "research" from a term paper mill;
- "collaborating" between two or more students who then submit the same paper under their individual names.

Term paper mills (web sites and businesses set up to sell papers to students) often claim they are merely offering "information" or "research" to students and that this service is acceptable and allowed throughout the university. THIS IS ABSOLUTELY UNTURE. If you buy and submit "research," drafts, summaries, abstracts, or final versions of a paper, you are committing plagiarism and are subject to stringent disciplinary action. Since plagiarism is a matter of fact and not intention, it is crucial that you acknowledge every source accurately and completely. If you quote anything from a source, use quotation marks and take down the page number of the quotation to use in your footnote.
When in doubt about whether your acknowledgment is proper and adequate, consult your instructor. Show the instructor your sources and a draft of the paper in which you are using them. The obligation to demonstrate that work is your own rests with you, the student. You are responsible for providing sources, copies of your work, or verification of the date work was completed. While all this looks like a lot to remember, all you need to do is to give credit where it is due, take credit only for your original ideas, and ask your instructor or adviser when in doubt.

Consult the APA, MLA, or Chicago style guides for accepted forms of documentation. You can access these resources, as well as additional information on proper citations on the NYU Libraries Citation Style Guide.

III. PROCEDURES AND SANCTIONS

The penalty for academic dishonesty is severe. The following are the procedures as approved by the Faculty of Arts and Science. See also the College Bulletin.

1. If a student cheats on an examination or in laboratory work or engages in plagiarism, appropriate disciplinary action should be taken. The Department can take the following actions:
   a) The faculty member, with the approval of the Director of Undergraduate Studies (Director), may reduce the student's grade or give the student an F in the course.
   b) If after lowering the grade or assigning an F the department believes a more severe penalty (i.e., probation, suspension, expulsion) is warranted, it can refer the case to the Dean or his/her representative (Associate Dean for Students) for further action.

2. In all cases of either (a) or (b), the Director shall inform the Department Chair of any action in writing and send copies of this letter to the Dean and to the student. The letter shall include the nature of the offense, the penalty, and the right of the student to appeal such penalty. A copy of the letter shall be kept in a confidential chairman's file and not in the student's departmental file. The Dean's office copy shall also be kept in a confidential file. (The Professor and/or the Director is encouraged to meet with the student and discuss the nature of the offense and the action taken.)

3. For cases involving a first offense at New York University, the Dean shall send the student by registered mail a notice that a second offense will result in a one-semester suspension, or a more severe penalty. (The student is also called in to discuss the offense, and review the consequences of the disciplinary action.)

4. For cases involving a second offense, the Dean shall proceed as follows:
   a) Upon receiving a second Director's letter concerning a given student, the Dean shall convene a three-member ad hoc committee, with no member being from the department involved, to examine the evidence. This ad hoc committee shall consider if there are reasonable grounds to believe that cheating/plagiarism has occurred and if so, shall affirm the suspension penalty. It shall report its conclusion to the Dean within three business days.
   b) If the committee affirms the suspension, the Dean shall send the student by registered mail the suspension letter within two business days of receiving the report. The letter shall advise the student of his or her right to appeal. The student shall have two business days from the letter's delivery to request an appeal of the suspension as provided in Section 5 (below). The suspension shall ordinarily be stayed during the pendency of appeal.
   c) If the committee does not affirm the suspension, the report shall be kept on file for a one-year period.

5. The student in all cases has the right to appeal to the Dean. In the event of an appeal, the Dean shall elicit a written complaint from the faculty member and proceed as described above.
# Course Schedule

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