FOR 464/564 – AMPHIBIAN ECOLOGY AND CONSERVATION

GENERAL INFORMATION
Instructor: Dr. Christopher Schalk
Office: 203B Forestry
Phone: 936-468-1332
Email: schalkc@sfasu.edu
Office Hours: TTh 8:30-9:30 am or by appointment

MEETING TIME
W (Sections 004): 6:00-8:30pm, 208 Forestry

COURSE DESCRIPTION
A survey of the ecology, behavior, conservation, and management of amphibians with an emphasis on frogs and salamanders.

COURSE GOALS
To expose students to the life history, diversity, ecology, conservation, and management of amphibians through a combination of lectures, readings, and class discussions. Students that successfully complete the course will have an understanding of amphibian diversity, physiology, life history, behavior, and ecology. They will be learn the potential mechanisms of amphibian declines and conservation strategies.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES
This course is designed to address the following Program Learning Outcomes (PLO’s), as given in the Bachelor of Science in Forestry (BSF) degree program:
1. Demonstrate understanding and competency of forest ecology and biology;
2. Demonstrate understanding and competency in the measurement of forest resources;
3. Demonstrate understanding and competency in managing forest resources;
4. Demonstrate understanding and competency of forest resource policy, economics, and administration.
5. Demonstrate understanding and competency in oral and written communication skills.

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<tr>
<th>Program Learning Outcomes: Proficiency Levels</th>
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<td>FOR 255</td>
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STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
Upon completion of this course, successful students will be able to:
1. Demonstrate an understanding of amphibian ecology and conservation biology. Specifically, students will be knowledgeable about ecology and key conservation concerns (PLO’s 1, 3, 4).
2. Demonstrate an understanding of current the ecology and conservation concerns and strategies for amphibians (PLO’s 1, 2, 3, 4).
3. Demonstrate competency in written and oral communication skills (PLO 5).

TEXTBOOKS
Required

GRADES
Exams (100 points each) – 200 points
Amphibian Ecologist Presentation – 50 points
Discussion Participation – 100 points
Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles Species Account – 150 points

**Total: 500 points**

GRADING
Your percentage will be calculated out of 500 total points for the class. Final grades will be assigned based on the following: A ≥ 90.0%; 90.0% > B ≥ 80.0%; 80.0% > C ≥ 70.0%; 70.0% > D ≥ 60.0%; 60.0% > F. There will be no curve and no individual extra credit.

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

Exams
The in-class exams will cover lectures, textbook chapters, and any other assigned material (papers, videos, etc.). I will not provide exam reviews or review sessions. I hold onto all exams; tests can be viewed during office hours.

Amphibian Ecologist/Conservation Biologist Presentation
Each student will give a 10-15 minute powerpoint presentation focused on the research of an influential amphibian ecologist/conservation biologist. The presentation should focus and discuss their major research accomplishments and any important studies produced (i.e., peer reviewed publications) during their career. The presentation should focus on their original research studies and *not* review papers. I *strongly* encourage students to come see me *before* they begin their research/presentation for guidance.

Discussion Participation
Students are expected to participate in weekly discussions on the assigned readings. To facilitate discussion, each student is required to bring in two typed questions that they will submit each class. The grade will be determined based on the frequency of their participation as well as thoughtfulness/utility of their contributions to class discussion.

Catalogue of American Amphibians and Reptiles (CAAR) Account
A Catalogue Account constitutes a summary of the taxonomy of a given taxon and a detailed and comprehensive overview of the literature concerning that taxon. Students will work in groups to produce a CAAR account for an amphibian species with the goal of submitting the account for publication at the end of the semester. The CAAR grade will be evaluated on two factors: 1) the quality of the CAAR account (100 points) where all group members will receive the same grade on the final CAAR account, and 2) student evaluation by their peers (50 points). The CAAR
Instructions for Authors and peer evaluation criteria will be provided in a separate handout. If a group fails to turn in a CAAR assignment on the scheduled due date, it will result in a 10 point daily deduction until it is submitted.

**TENTATIVE LECTURE SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK OF</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>TEXTBOOK READING(S)</th>
<th>CAAR ASSIGNMENTS DUE (EMAIL TO ME BEFORE CLASS)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/26</td>
<td>Introduction/Amphibian Phylogenetics and Biodiversity</td>
<td>Ch. 1</td>
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<td>9/2</td>
<td>Physiological Ecology</td>
<td>Ch. 2</td>
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<td>9/9</td>
<td>Movement Ecology of Amphibians</td>
<td>Ch. 6</td>
<td>Taxonomic Headings, Synonomy, Content</td>
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<td>9/16</td>
<td>Amphibian Communication</td>
<td>Ch. 7, 9</td>
<td>Conservation Status</td>
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<td>9/23</td>
<td>Mating Systems and Reproduction</td>
<td>Ch. 8, 10</td>
<td>Phylogenetic Relationships, Fossil Record</td>
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<td>9/30</td>
<td>Ecology and Behavior of Amphibian Larvae</td>
<td>Ch. 12</td>
<td>Distribution (including map), Etymology</td>
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<td>10/7</td>
<td>Complex Life Cycles</td>
<td>Ch. 13</td>
<td>Description, Diagnosis</td>
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<td>10/14</td>
<td><strong>EXAM I</strong>/Defensive Strategies</td>
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<td>10/21</td>
<td>Population Ecology</td>
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<td>Published Descriptions, Illustrations</td>
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<td>10/28</td>
<td>Community Ecology</td>
<td>Ch. 15</td>
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<td>11/4</td>
<td>Intro to Amphibian Declines and Disease Ecology</td>
<td>Ch. 16</td>
<td>Pertinent Literature, Complete Literature Cited</td>
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<td>11/11</td>
<td>Applied Issues in Amphibian Conservation</td>
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<td>CAAR Revisions</td>
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<td>11/18</td>
<td><strong>Thanksgiving Break – No Class</strong></td>
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<td>CAAR Revisions</td>
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<td>11/25</td>
<td>Forest Management Practices and Amphibians</td>
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<td>CAAR Revisions</td>
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<td>12/2</td>
<td>Climate Change and Amphibians</td>
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<td>Complete/Final CAAR Due</td>
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<td>12/11</td>
<td><strong>EXAM II</strong></td>
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**NOTE:** I will be assigning additional required readings each week throughout the semester.
CLASS POLICIES

**Complete lecture notes will NOT be posted online:** I highly recommend coming to lecture and taking notes.

**Completing assignments:** It is your responsibility to complete assignments independently and in a timely manner. CAAR Assignments will be subjected to a daily loss of 10 points until submitted (see above CAAR section). I will not accept any late submissions on discussion questions.

**Entering class late:** Entering a lecture late can qualify as disruptive behavior when the student disturbs me during my lecture or disturbs the students around them while becoming situated. See below for more details.

**Missed Exams:** The only exception for an in-class exam is if the absence is planned and approved by the instructor at least 15 days prior to the date of absence or upon receipt of a documented medical excuse or an excuse provided by the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. In this case an alternative exam will be given. A student who wishes to make up an exam will have 7 calendar days after they return. After 7 calendar days the student will receive a “0” for that exam.

**Communicating to your professor:** Email will be the primary means of communication for the course. So please, check your email often. *Any correspondence to your professor should follow the following format:* subject line: FOR 255, to whom (Dr. or professor xx), statement, thank you, and student’s name. The professor has the right of not answering emails to those students that fail to follow this format. *Note:* Do not contact me via D2L as I do not utilize that method for class communication.

**Grades cannot be discussed via e-mail at any time** due to federal law. I will speak to you in person instead during my office hours. DO NOT involve a third-party who is not affiliated in an official capacity with SFASU (e.g., friend, roommate) in any matters pertaining to your enrollment in this course. Your instructor is legally prohibited from discussing most course/grade-related issues with third parties according to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99).

**Disruptive behavior policy:** A student may be asked to leave the classroom for any behavior I find disruptive. A first offence will not be penalized; however, further offences may be penalized with reduction in a student’s final grade as follows: 10% for a second offence, 20% for a third offence, etc.

**Plagiarism policy:** A first offence will be penalized with a zero that cannot be dropped. A second offence will be penalized with an F and/or the option to drop the course. *Please pay particular attention to this policy as you will be working on group projects for the semester and this policy will apply to all group members.*

**Extra credit:** There will be NO PERSONAL extra credit or bonus point opportunities under any circumstance or for any reason. I reserve the right to assign class bonus points at any time.
**Other Policies**

**Lab Safety and Conduct Policy:** Appropriate clothing, including pants and boots, is required for labs with an outdoor component. It is at the discretion of the instructor what appropriate dress for the field is. You may also require a jacket or rain gear in the winter and drinking water during warm weather, as appropriate. If we are scheduled to go to the field, then we will go, regardless of weather conditions. Come to lab appropriately dressed. *Usage of tobacco products is not permitted in lecture or lab.*

**Academic Integrity (A-9.1):** Academic integrity is a responsibility of all University faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by University policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism. **Definition of Academic Dishonesty:** Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit. Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp).

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54):** Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Students with Disabilities:** To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

**Responsible Use of Technology:** It is expected that all students will only use cell phones, PDAs, laptop computers, MP3 players and other technology outside of class time or when appropriate in class. Answering a cell phone, texting, listening to music or using a laptop computer for matters unrelated to the course may be grounds for dismissal from class or other penalties.

**Acceptable Student Behavior:** Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not
be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

**University Policy 13.9 deals with firearms and the concealed carry policy.** Students with concealed carry licenses that choose to carry on campus are required to follow all Texas laws and University policies and it is their responsibility to understand and comply accordingly. See: [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/13.9-Firearms-Explosives-and-Ammunition.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/13.9-Firearms-Explosives-and-Ammunition.pdf)