FORS 6364
Advanced Amphibian Ecology and Conservation

GENERAL INFORMATION
Instructor: Dr. Christopher Schalk
Office: 201B Forestry
Phone: 936-468-1332
Email: schalkc@sfasu.edu
Office Hours: MW: 10:00-11:00 am or by appointment

MEETING TIME
W (Sections 004): 6:00-8:30pm, 222 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 learn the potential mechanisms of amphibian declines and conservation strategies.

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOMES
The course is designed to address the following Program Learning Outcomes, as given in the M.S./PhD Forestry Program Matrix:

1. The student will demonstrate proficiency in research design, relative to their field of study.
2. The student will demonstrate proficiency in the process of reviewing scientific literature pertinent to their field of study.
3. The student will demonstrate proficiency in basic statistical analysis; relative to their field of study.
4. The student will demonstrate sufficient preparation in their field of study to pursue a professional career.
5. The student will demonstrate competency in oral and written communication skills.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>PhD/MS Forestry Program Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Proficiency Levels</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course</td>
<td>PLO 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>FORS 6364</td>
<td>A</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. 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
Class Presentations (25 points each) – 50 points
Discussion Participation – 100 points
Amphibian Ecology Project – 100 points

Total: 450 points

GRADING
Your percentage will be calculated out of 450 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.

Class Presentation
Each student will give two 12-15 minute powerpoint presentations that is related to that week’s lecture topic. The presentation must present research of a peer-reviewed publication that is focused on amphibians published within the last 5 years (2016-2021). The presentation should focus and discuss the purpose of the study, methodology, results, and major findings. The presentation should focus on primary research studies and not review papers. Students must have their research paper approved before they begin to work on their presentation. Students may go to any of the following journals to select a paper to present: Journal of Wildlife Management, Wildlife Society Bulletin, Wildlife Biology, European Journal of Wildlife Research, Wildlife Research, Journal of Herpetology, Copeia, Ichthyology and Herpetology, Herpetologica, Herpetological Monographs, Biological Conservation, Conservation Biology, Biological Invasions, Ecology, Ecological Applications, Journal of Applied Ecology, Journal of Animal Ecology, Journal of Zoology, Canadian Journal of Zoology, PLoS One, Ecological Indicators, Oikos, Oecologia, Ecography, Diversity and Distributions, Journal of Thermal Biology, Science, Nature, PNAS.
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.

Amphibian Ecology Project
Graduate students will work on a review paper to be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal at the end of the semester. PhD. students (enrolled in FORS 6364) are expected to contribute substantially to the manuscript and contribute to two or more sections.

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<tr>
<th>WEEK OF</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>TEXTBOOK READINGS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/23</td>
<td>Introduction/Amphibian Phylogenetics and Biodiversity</td>
<td>Ch. 1</td>
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<td>8/30</td>
<td>Physiological Ecology</td>
<td>Ch. 2</td>
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<td>9/6</td>
<td>Movement Ecology of Amphibians</td>
<td>Ch. 6</td>
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<td>9/13</td>
<td>Amphibian Communication</td>
<td>Ch. 7, 9</td>
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<td>9/20</td>
<td>Mating Systems and Reproduction</td>
<td>Ch. 8, 10</td>
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<td>9/27</td>
<td>Ecology and Behavior of Amphibian Larvae</td>
<td>Ch. 12</td>
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<td>10/4</td>
<td>Complex Life Cycles/Metamorphosis</td>
<td>Ch. 13</td>
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<td>10/11</td>
<td>EXAM I</td>
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<td>10/18</td>
<td>Defensive Strategies</td>
<td>Ch. 14</td>
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<td>10/25</td>
<td>Community Ecology</td>
<td>Ch. 15</td>
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<td>11/1</td>
<td>Intro to Amphibian Declines and Disease Ecology</td>
<td>Ch. 16</td>
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<td>11/8</td>
<td>Applied Issues in Amphibian Conservation</td>
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<td>11/15</td>
<td>Amphibians and Forest Management</td>
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<td>11/22</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break/Amphibian Projects</td>
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<td>11/29</td>
<td>Climate Change and Amphibians</td>
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<td>12/6</td>
<td>EXAM II</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. Please note because lectures notes are available to students at the beginning of the semester (i.e., plenty of time to print/download them) and students tend to retain information better by writing it down, taking photographs of the slides will not be permitted in class. Taking photographs of the slides will constitute as disruptive behavior (see policy below).

Completing assignments: It is your responsibility to complete assignments independently and in a timely manner. I will not accept any late submissions on discussion questions or the final paper.

Attendance policy: Attendance is mandatory. One unexcused absence will result in your final grade being reduced by one letter grade; two unexcused absences will result in your final grade being reduced to an F.

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: FORS 6364, 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.

Academic Dishonesty 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.
**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)

**Mental Health Resources.** SFASU values students’ mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. SFA provides a variety of resources to support students mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**On-campus Resources:**
SFASU Counseling Services
www.sfasu.edu/counselingservices
3rd Floor Rusk Building
936-468-2401

SFASU Human Services Counseling Clinic
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
Human Services Room 202
936-468-1041

**Crisis Resources:**
Burke 24-hour crisis line 1(800) 392-8343
Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1(800) 273-TALK (8255)
Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741