ADVANCED HERPETOLOGY (BIOL 5044)  
SPRING 2024

Instructor:  DR. MATTHEW KWIATKOWSKI  (it’s easier than it looks: kwee-aht-kow-skee)

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Office:  Miller Science 241

Office Hours:  M 1:00 – 3:00 pm, W 11:00 – 12:30 pm, Th 11:30 am – 1:00 pm, or by appointment. Office hours may get cancelled occasionally when unforeseen conflicts arise. Be assured Dr. Kwiatkowski will find a time to meet with you.

Lecture:  TR 9:30 – 10:45 pm, Miller Science 225
Laboratory:  T 1:00 – 3:50 pm, Miller Science 218

Course Description:  A survey of the classification, distribution, ecology, evolution, and conservation of amphibians and reptiles. Emphasis on natural history and identification of regional species in lab. Field trips are required (detail below). Requires outside readings, papers and/or research projects.

Required Course Materials:


Lab Safety and Behavior: Herpetology lab will include field trips. With any field trip, regardless of the course, students must observe certain safety and behavior guidelines. The safety and behavioral guidelines can be found at the end of this syllabus. Students must read through these policies and return a signed copy to the instructor before being allowed to participate in lab.

Attendance:  Attendance at all lectures is essential to performing well in this course. Even though lectures will be posted to D2L, details that are discussed in class may not appear in the PowerPoint slides. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain information from missed lectures. Quizzes cannot be made up no matter what the reason for the absence.

Withdrawal Policy:  It is the student’s responsibility to withdraw from the course if necessary. The deadline to withdraw from a course is 22 April 2024. More information about add/drop policies can be found at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-add-drop-6.10.pdf.

Assignments and Grading:  Final grades will be based on student performance on exams and will be assigned according to the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 – 90%</td>
<td>A     (Exceptional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89.9 – 80%</td>
<td>B     (Above Average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79.9 – 70%</td>
<td>C     (Average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69.9 – 60%</td>
<td>D     (Below Average)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 59.9%</td>
<td>F     (Failing)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following weights will be used to calculate an overall grade:

- **Lecture Exams** (4 X 100 points each) **400 pts**
- **Lecture Quizzes** **50 pts**
- **Mandatory Lab Safety and Conduct Policy Signed** **5 pts**
- **Laboratory Quizzes** **100 pts**
- **Lab Practical** **50 pts**
- **Leading Paper Discussion Sessions (2 X 25 pts)** **50 pts**
- **Field Trip Group Leader and Field Notes (3 X 20 pts each)** **60 pts**
- **Project Leader & Coordinator** **50 pts**
- **Project Presentation** **50 pts**

**Total:** **815 pts**

* Points may vary from that shown here depending on the class schedule and whether activities can be completed.

**Lecture Exams:** Lecture exams will include a variety of question types, which may include multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay. Lecture exams will reflect higher expectations of graduate students in familiarity, understanding, and synthesis of material. As such, more emphasis may be placed on short answer and essay questions.

If you are late to an exam, you will be allowed to take the exam as long as no one has turned it in yet. However, the class tardiness policy will still apply (see below), and you will have no extra time to finish the exam. If you are late to an exam and someone has already turned in the exam, you will not be allowed to take the exam.

If you miss an exam for any reason, the optional cumulative exam (see below) offered at the end of the semester will act as a make-up exam. Only ONE make-up exam is allowed. The optional cumulative exam will be given during the 2-hour exam period during finals week on Thursday, 5 May 2022, 8:00 – 10:00 am. Realize this is the same period in which the fourth regular exam is given. Hence, if you take the optional cumulative exam, you will have to complete two exams during the two hour period during finals week.

**Optional Cumulative Exam:** An optional cumulative exam can be taken to replace a student’s lowest regular exam score if desired. It will be a cumulative exam where students will be expected to synthesize material presented throughout the semester. If a student missed a regular exam, the cumulative exam will act as the make-up exam. The optional cumulative exam will be the same day as the 4th regular exam, which is Thursday, 5 May 2022, 8:00 – 10:00 am. Hence, if you take the optional cumulative exam, you will have to complete two exams during the two hour period during finals week.

**Discussion Sessions:** We will discuss scientific articles about amphibians and reptiles this semester. Graduate students must submit at least three potential discussion questions to the instructor at least one lecture prior to the discussion time (questions can be emailed). Graduate students must also lead discussion by asking questions of the class. Therefore, graduate students must read the articles thoroughly before coming to class. One missed discussion can be made up by writing a summary of the paper (you must ask Dr. Kwiatkowski about the format of the summary).

**Extra Credit Lecture Quizzes:** Pop quizzes will be given during lecture throughout the semester. These are pop quizzes so students must attend lecture to ensure that they are present to take the quizzes. Quizzes will cover material from both the textbook and lecture notes. Dr. Kwiatkowski will explain in lecture which material will be covered on the different quizzes. Absolutely no make up quizzes will be given.

**Laboratory Quizzes:** Lab quizzes will be given regularly when the class meets in lab and not in the field. Points value may vary among quizzes. One make-up assignment is allowed for a missed quiz. Students must contact Dr. Kwiatkowski within one week of missing a lab quiz to discuss the make-up assignment. Quiz format will be discussed during the first lab meeting.

**Field (Lab) Trips and Notes:** Graduate students will be expected to help organize field trips, which may include preparing field gear prior to the field trip and acting as group leader if undergraduate students are divided into different groups in the field. Group leader means making sure undergraduate students are staying together in a group and are following safety and conduct policies in the field.

Field notes from each field trip will be due soon after each trip has concluded. The notes should be a record of field conditions (weather, habitat, etc.), species seen during the trip, and data for the projects. **No lab/field notes can be made**
up if a student is absent from a lab. Graduate students must participate in all field trips and assist in preparation for the trips. This includes driving vehicles. If a student misses a field trip, 50 points will be deducted from each field trip missed and any points from the field notes will be lost as well.

Project Leader & Coordinator. We will conduct one or more mini-studies during the semester. Graduate students, after consultation with Dr. Kwiatkowski, will coordinate and direct student groups in setting up the study and data collection. Graduate students will then give a 15-20 minute presentation on the project and the results in lab at the end of the semester.

Course Evaluations: A course evaluation during dead week is considered a mandatory part of course participation. If you do not participate in the evaluation, one percentage point will be deducted from your lecture grade.

Course Objectives:
- To familiarize students with the diversity and evolutionary relationships within and among major amphibian and reptile taxa.
- To familiarize students with behavioral, ecological, physiological, and morphological adaptations unique to amphibians and reptiles.
- To familiarize students with conservation concerns regarding amphibians and reptiles.
- To familiarize students with local species of amphibians and reptiles.
- To familiarize students with the primary literature associated with amphibians and reptiles, with an emphasis on understanding the scientific process.
- To familiarize students with organizational tasks and leadership activities.

Student Learning Outcomes (Course Competencies):
1. Student performance will be assessed with lecture exams during the semester, a cumulative final exam, leading discussion of article reviews, laboratory practicals, and an essay paper incorporating the scientific literature.
2. Students should be familiar with evolutionary relationships within and among major amphibian and reptile taxa.
3. Students should be familiar with diagnostic traits of major amphibian taxa.
4. Students should be familiar with diagnostic traits of major reptile taxa.
5. Students should be familiar with behavioral, morphological, and physiological adaptations of amphibians and reptiles and their function in an ecological context.
6. Students should be familiar with the majority of local amphibian and reptile species.
7. Students should read primary literature and be able to discuss the contexts, hypotheses, methods, results, and conclusions of the different studies.
8. Students should be prepared to lead discussions on scientific articles from the primary literature, including discussion of the topics in SLO 7.
9. Students should be able to prepare a paper using primary literature to support their ideas.

Program Learning Outcomes:
- PLO 1 - Knowledge. The student will demonstrate a good knowledge base in biological concepts.
  - PLO 1 is achieved with each SLO listed above.

- PLO 2 – Communication Skills. Clearly communicate scientific information. Provide clear structure and transitions, incorporating substantial primary literature-based supporting evidence, and demonstrate audience appropriate purpose, agenda, language, and style.
  - PLO 2 is achieved with SLO 9 above.

- PLO 3- Scientific Thinking. The student will demonstrate an understanding of scientific methods and design original scientific research.
  - The first part of PLO 3 is achieved with SLO 7, 8, & 9 listed above.

Withheld Grades. 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 coursework 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 to compute the grade point average. For additional information, go to https://www.sfasu.edu/policies/course-grades-5.5.pdf.

**Student Wellness and Well-Being.** SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, 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:**
- **The Dean of Students Office** (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby)
  - [www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents](http://www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents)
  - 936.468.7249
  - dos@sfasu.edu
- **SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic** Human Services, Room 202
  - [www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp)
  - 936.468.1041
- **The Health and Wellness Hub** “The Hub”
  - Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.
  - To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:
    - Health Services
    - Counseling Services
    - Student Outreach and Support
    - Food Pantry
    - Wellness Coaching
    - Alcohol and Other Drug Education
  - [www.sfasu.edu/thehub](http://www.sfasu.edu/thehub)
  - 936.468.4008
  - thehub@sfasu.edu
- **Crisis Resources:**
  - Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
  - National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
  - Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
  - johCrisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

**Class Disruptions:** Class disruptions will not be tolerated because they detract from other students’ learning. As adults, students should be able to sit through class without disturbing others. It is recommended that students regard lecture as practice for future professional meetings; they may be fun, interesting, or as boring as watching grass grow. Regardless, the student has to get through lectures acting like an adult.

**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.
Dr. Kwiatkowski might not give you a warning or make an announcement that you are disrupting class. Instead, points will simply be deducted in the grade book. Students are free to inquire at any time whether they have had points deducted during office hours.

**Online Behavior:** The online lecture format creates unique problems for lecture. To facilitate discussion and familiarity, it is best for students to have a video feed on so they are visible to the class and instructor. However, all students with the video feed on are responsible for any activity visible to the class and instructor. As such, students must have appropriate attire including shirt and pants (no pajamas or less). Students are responsible for their behavior and the behavior of others in their room. Students should pay attention during lecture and not talk with people in the room. People moving around in the background of the video is distracting, so plan your video environment accordingly. Points may be deducted for 1. inappropriate attire, 2. leaving lecture, 3. talking with others outside of a class context, 4. distracting activity by other people in your video. (10 points deducted each time)

**Tardiness:** Tardiness to lecture disrupts the lesson and the concentration of fellow students. Reasonable accommodations will be made in cases of emergency situations if documentation is provided. It is the student’s responsibility to provide the instructor with documentation of emergencies. (10 points deducted each time)

**Sleeping:** Sleeping during class can be distracting to other students and the instructor. If a student is so tired that they cannot stay awake for a lecture, as boring as it may be, the student should not be in class. (10 points deducted each time)

**Cell Phones and Texting:** Cell phones must be turned off or set to silent mode during lecture. Points will be deducted if a cell phone goes off, when a student answers/talks on the phone during lecture, or if a student texts during lecture. In cases of family health (pregnant spouse, hospitalized family member, etc.), the student must inform the instructor of the situation BEFORE class begins. In these cases, the cell phone ringer must remain off (i.e., phone set to vibrate). (10 points deducted each time)

**Leaving Class or Video Feed:** Leaving class is disruptive to other students who are trying to pay attention. Leaving the class for any reason will count against you. Similarly, leaving while your camera is on can be distracting. Hence, be sure to use the restroom before lecture. If a student knows they will need to leave lecture early, notify the instructor well ahead of time. Points will not be deducted if the student has a legitimate excuse for leaving early. (20 points deducted each time)

**Talking/Disruptive Behaviors:** Dr. Kwiatkowski highly encourages students to ask questions or make relevant comments during a lecture. However, talking to others or other disruptive behaviors will not be tolerated because, again, it disrupts the learning environment of other students. (25 points deducted each time).

**Laptop computers:** Laptop computers are not allowed in face-to-face lectures. In the past, too many students have used them for surfing the internet or working on other projects during lecture, which distracts other students. (15 points deducted each time).

**Sleeping:** Although sleeping may be quiet, it can still be distracting for other students. If students are so tired they are falling asleep, they should not come to lecture since they are not listening to the lecture anyway (10 points deducted each time).

**Academic Integrity.** The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.
Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

**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/.

**Lab Schedule:** This schedule is even more tentative. Field trips are at the mercy of the weather and may be rescheduled. Attendance on three field trips is required and at least one of those must be a night trip for frog choruses (night trips are not listed below).

**NOTE** There is the potential for a lab quiz any time the class meets in the lab (as opposed to field trips).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 23</td>
<td>Intro, Syllabus, Field Safety; Field Techniques</td>
<td>Field safety agreement signed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Frog Calls Intro; Winter/ Early Spring Herps; Field?</td>
<td>Lab quiz unless in the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 6</td>
<td>Winter/ Early Spring Herps; Field?</td>
<td>Lab quiz unless in the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Winter/ Early Spring Herps; Field?</td>
<td>Lab quiz unless in the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Winter/ Early Spring Herps; Field?</td>
<td>Lab quiz unless in the field</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Mid Spring Herps; Field?</td>
<td>Lab quiz unless in the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 5</td>
<td>Field</td>
<td>--</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Mid Spring Herps; Field?</td>
<td>Lab quiz unless in the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Mid Spring Herps; Field?</td>
<td>Lab quiz unless in the field</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 2</td>
<td>Late Spring Herps; Field?</td>
<td>Lab quiz unless in the field</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Late Spring Herps or Field</td>
<td>Lab quiz unless in the field</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Late Spring Herps or Field</td>
<td>Lab quiz unless in the field</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Lab Practical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>Project results presentations (graduate students)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Herpetology Safety and Conduct Policies
Student Copy

Reptiles and amphibians are fascinating and Dr. Kwiatkowski wants students to have fun during the lab and field trips. However, some important responsibilities have to meet during class activities.

Read through the policies below. Sign the copy titled “Signed Copy” and return it to Dr. Kwiatkowski. Students must return the signed copy to Dr. Kwiatkowski before they will be allowed on any field trips. Failure to return the signed copy will result in the loss of all points associated with field trips.

Safety
Like any field that studies wildlife, there are potential safety concerns when studying Herpetology, especially since it includes the study of venomous reptiles. Please follow the safety guidelines below during class activities.

- In the field, always wear shoes that cover the entire foot. This means no sandals in the field!
- Wearing work gloves in the field is a good idea
- ALWAYS watch where you step and where you put your hands
- If you see a snake, do NOT try to catch it. Keep a safe distance from the snake; keep an eye on it and call to Dr. Kwiatkowski. Whatever you do, STAY CALM
- Any student found handling a venomous snake in a manner not approved by Dr. Kwiatkowski will be removed from the class and assigned a failing grade.

Treatment of Wildlife
People have many preconceived biases against some herpetofauna, especially snakes. While a fear of venomous snakes is understandable, students are expected to conduct themselves as students of science and advocates for wildlife. Accordingly, the following conduct policies apply to all students:

- Students are not to purposely harm any wildlife during the lab or during field trips (except for mosquitoes!).
- If Dr. Kwiatkowski learns of any intentional harm coming to wildlife during the lab or during field trips, the student in question may be removed from the class and assigned a failing grade
- If a student exhibits a hostile attitude towards reptiles and amphibians during the class, the student may be excluded from field trips due to disruptive behavior. The student will lose all points associated with that activity.

I have read through the policies above and understand the consequences of violating these policies.

Name ___________________________________________   Date ________________
Herpetology Safety and Conduct Policies
Signed Copy
(return to Dr. Kwiatkowski)

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