

Syllabus BIOL 3137 – 002

Ecology Lab

Spring 2025

Meeting Times: Thursday 2:00pm – 4:50pm

Location: BEP 124

First Day of Class: Thursday, January 16th

Last Day of Class: Thursday, April 24th

Instructors:

Jared Dickson

Lecturer, Department of Biology

Office: BEP 104

Email: jdickson@uttyler.edu

Phone: 903-566-6329

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00 am - 12:30 pm, or by appointment

McKenzie Adkins

TA, Department of Biology

Office: BEP 262

Email: madkins@uttyler.edu or madkins4@patriots.uttyler.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:30p-4:30p, or by appointment

Course Description: This laboratory course focuses on how animals interact with their environment and how we can scientifically study the natural world by looking at these interactions. The goals of this laboratory course are for students to be able to understand those animal/environment interactions and to be able to apply statistics to test hypotheses about the interactions. The curriculum will emphasize the scientific method and hands-on activities.

Student Learning Objectives: By the end of the class, you should be able to...

- 1) Understand what a hypothesis is, and formulate your own hypotheses

- 2) Understand the steps of the scientific method and be able to follow them systematically
- 3) Present scientific results in a concise and informative format
- 4) Recognize and understand ecological interactions

Evaluation: Students will be evaluated based on the following work:

1. Participation is worth 5% of your grade. This will include keeping up with readings, attendance, and actively participating in class discussions.
2. Two lab reports, **each** worth 20% of the final grade.
3. Weekly lab assignments will be worth 10% of your grade.
4. Examinations. One midterm (20%) and a final exam (25%) will be given. **In the event you wish to dispute an exam question, an essay outlining your argument must be submitted within one week of the exam being handed back.** Your written appeal should be based on course materials and should stress the scientific validity of your original response.
5. We will follow a 10-point scale for grading:

90-100% = A 80-89% = B 70-79 = C 60-69% = D 0-59% = F

Participation: You are required to be on time in the lab every day and to stay the entire time until the instructor lets you go. The instructor will also monitor your participation within your lab group.

Lateness/Leaving Early/Absence: You are required to be at lab on time every class period and to stay the entire class period. Failure to do so may result in a loss of points up to and including all of the day's participation points and all of the points on all assignments that were handed in that day. Absences will be excused at the instructor's discretion and there must be documentation.

Valid excuses include a sporting or other university-related event, a death in the family, or an illness affecting yourself or someone you must provide care for (such as a spouse or a child). Car troubles may sometimes be excused at my discretion, provided there is documentation from a police official (such as an accident report) or a mechanic's shop that covers the dates in question. Valid excuses *do not* include oversleeping or work schedule problems. If you miss class because you or someone you provide care for was ill, you must provide a doctor's note listing the dates affected. This means you or your loved one will need to visit the doctor on the day you are absent (or earlier) so that you can get a doctor's note.

Lab Reports: There will be two lab reports during the course of the semester, worth 100 points each. The format of the lab reports will be explained in lab. Please follow this format carefully. The goal is to write a formal scientific paper where you set up the hypothesis, explain your methods, concisely present your results, and discuss your findings as they relate to the hypothesis. Just like the lab assignments, each person is expected to write their own lab report, in their own words. You are allowed to work together and come up with answers together, but each person must write everything out on their own and in their own words. People who hand in identical or nearly identical lab reports will receive a 0 for the assignment as plagiarism is not tolerated. You are not allowed to share your lab report with others in your group and ask them to change the wording. This is still considered plagiarism.

Academic integrity: Cheating or any other type of academic misconduct will be reported to the university administration, and at minimum will result in failure of the course.

Weekly Lab schedule (subject to change):

- 01/16 Syllabus/Hubbard Brook (Laptop)
- 01/23 Phenology (Laptop)
- 01/30 Population Variation (outside)
- 02/06 Population Genetics (outside)
- 02/13 Human Demography (off campus)
- 02/20 Open Lab (ask questions about lab report 1, study for Midterm)
- 02/27 **Lab report 1 due**, Midterm Exam
- 03/06 Population Dynamics (outside)
- 03/13 Predation
- 03/20 **No Lab- Spring Break**
- 03/27 Inter/Intra Species Competition
- 04/03 Aquatic/mussel Lab (Gilley Creek)
- 04/10 Aquatic/mussel Lab Sample ID
- 04/17 Open Lab (ask questions about lab report 2, study for Final)
- 04/24 **Lab report 2 due**, Final Exam
- 05/01 **No Lab** (Finals week in lecture courses)

Academic Integrity: Students should be aware that absolute academic integrity is expected of every student, in all courses taken at The University of Texas at Tyler. Failure to comply can result in strong university-imposed penalties. For instance, submitting plagiarized work to meet academic requirements including the representation of another's work or ideas as one's own; the unacknowledged word-for-word research results shall be grounds for charges of academic misconduct. **Any cheating or other types of academic misconduct will be reported to the university administration and at minimum will result in an automatic failure of the course.**

Exams

- **TAKEN INDIVIDUALLY**, without input or assistance from anyone else, including students that have taken the exam, quiz, or course previously.
- The use of notes, texts, or any other reference material is **PROHIBITED**.
- Possession of anything containing course content will be considered cheating, whether or not you actually refer to them or not during the exam
- **TALKING** during an exam to anyone other than the instructor or proctor will automatically be considered cheating. It does not matter what you were talking about.
- Any use of a cell phone or any other electronic device that could be used to record or transmit test material is **PROHIBITED**. Phones must be out of sight and silenced during the exam.
- Hats worn during exams must be turned around or removed so the face is not covered in any way.

Lab Reports or Writing Assignments

- Students may **NOT** plagiarize any part of the lab report, it must be written individually.
- Methods may be similar since the same labs will be conducted; however, they may not be identical, since everyone writes a bit differently.
- Results may have similar data to your group members; **HOWEVER**, you should prepare your own tables and figures and create your own titles.
- You will submit this to a plagiarism checker via Canvas (unicheck), which will check for all forms of plagiarism. Your similarity report should be less than 40%, if it is not, you better double-check your work!
- All submissions should be in a Word document.

WHAT IS PLAGIARISM AND HOW CAN IT BE AVOIDED?

Plagiarism may be defined as (1) presenting work, ideas, or phrasing of another, in whole or part, as one's own without giving credit and proper documentation of sources; (2) copying material directly from sources (including electronic media) except when the material is enclosed in quotation marks and the source is clearly identified; (3) paraphrasing too closely to the original, even when the source is identified; and (4) claiming credit for work in any media (electronic, digital, artistic, etc.) where the student is not the original creator of said work. Work that is plagiarized will receive an automatic grade of "F". If you are unsure about this subject, please take the time to talk to your instructor and /or read this:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism>

[Links to an external site.](#)

You will also be required to turn in all written assignments (lab report assignments) in a Word document on **CANVAS** which will use **UNICHECK** to assess your paper for Plagiarism. You will find this on your Canvas page for this lab course; each assignment will be compared to previous student work and the work of your classmates! You will only need to turn in a copy of your assignment via the CANVAS Link.

Use of an AI Generator such as ChatGPT, iA Writer, MidJourney, DALL-E, etc. is **explicitly prohibited** unless otherwise noted by the instructor. The information derived from these tools is based on previously published materials. Therefore, using these tools without proper citation constitutes plagiarism.

Additionally, be aware that the information derived from these tools is often inaccurate or incomplete. **It is imperative that all work submitted should be your own.**

Any assignment that is found to have been plagiarized or to have used unauthorized AI tools may receive a zero and/or be reported for academic misconduct.

Corrupted File Policy: Any student that turns in a corrupted file will be given 24 hours to turn in a file that can be opened successfully by the instructor. Failure to do so will earn a grade of "0" (Zero) for the paper.

Students Rights and Responsibilities

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link:

<http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/StudentRightsandResponsibilities.html>

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness

If you are repeating this course for a grade replacement, you must file an intent to receive grade forgiveness with the registrar by the 12th day of class. Failure to do so will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates will receive grade forgiveness (grade replacement) for only three course repeats; graduates, for two course repeats during his/her career at UT Tyler.

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the 12th day of class (See Schedule of Classes for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Registrar's Office and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Registrar's Office if you have any questions.

Disability Services

In accordance with federal law, a student requesting accommodation must provide documentation of his/her disability to the Disability Support Services counselor. If you have a disability, including a learning disability, for which you request an accommodation, please contact Ida MacDonald in the Disability Support Services office in UC 282, or call (903) 566-7079.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement:

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an

identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation:

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.