

BIOL 824: Principles of Ecology

Spring 2019

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University of Nebraska at Kearney

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Introduction

This class is all about ecology, it has a review of current ecological knowledge, readings of some of the most important players in the discipline, and an opportunity to grow an ecosystem! The course is organized into 3 parts: 1) an overview of the entire field of ecology 2) a short book by Turney introduces important concepts for understanding ecology in its context of deep time. The reason for this is to gain an appreciation for the billions of years life existed on Earth before people evolved. There have been profoundly different habitats on Earth during this time. Also, human perception plays a role in how we view our planet. Turney further introduces some important technical scientific methods. Then 3) the bulk of the course is ‘classic paper’ readings that hopefully provide a sense of history for ecology and a solid understanding of it.

This is an unusual structure for an ecology course I realize. Feedback from previous classes is good however and I hope this class structure provides a comprehensive view of both ecology and the history of life on Earth. There is a lot of material in this course, a lot of reading. Try not to fall behind! Please do participate actively on the discussion boards, there is lots of material to understand and absorb.

I view this class as a seminar class which means lots of reading and lots of discussion in addition to graded assignments. With this class having a seminar-like structure please note that this class requires 3 posts per week instead of my usual 2 post requirement. Some readings do delve into

the mathematical side of ecology. Modern ecology is heavily mathematical. Please dig deeply into the math when it does occur. I hope this will be an interesting class for everyone!

Objectives

By the end of the course I hope everyone:

1. Be able to define clearly ecology and its important concepts in scientific writing style.
2. Develops an operational understanding of basic ecological equations.
3. Be able to explain the role of abiotic and biotic factors in population distribution, growth, and stability.
4. Describe the links between classic and modern ecological studies.
5. Has increased critical thinking skills and reading experience needed to analyze papers in the discipline of ecology.
6. Retain the ideas of deep time and the scientific methods that underlie them.

Required Texts (purchase at any store of your choice, make sure books are in stock when ordering). These books are getting older but are still good texts. Purchasing them used is fine (or it may be only possible way), this may take longer for shipping however!

Real, Leslie and Brown. 1991. Foundations of Ecology: Classic Papers with Commentaries. U. of Chicago Press.

Turney, C. 2008. Bones, Rocks, and Stars: The Science of When Things Happened

Required Software and Equipment

Written assignments must be submitted in MS Word formats doc or docx, for all assignments. If you do not have Office 2007 or newer on your computer, you may download Office 365 as a UNK student or purchase Office from [UNK IT](#) for a discounted price. You may also use other applications such as LibreOffice which can read and produce doc and docx formatted files. Acrobat Reader will be necessary for viewing PDF files of lectures and a video player capable of showing mp4 files. You will need to buy some consumable materials for this class such as a mason jar and some activated charcoal. Details will be posted to Canvas about this project.

A word about assignments

All work turned in for the course is considered professional written work. The work should be the best possible language, logic, formatting, structure, as well as of course, content! Please strive for clarity of writing and be sure to answer the questions asked, nothing less and nothing more. I have posted material on scientific writing on Canvas in the 'Files/Scientific Writing' folder. I will place examples of previous highly scoring assignments available in an 'Examples' folder as well. Please pay attention to this issue of scientific writing, with the exception of the plagiarism assignment and the discussion board posts (which should also be written professionally), every single point in the course is based on written work. So being clear on what is expected is critical.

Grading

Detailed directions for each assignment will be given on Canvas. I will clarify any questions people have on those directions. Such communication is important as distance classes sometimes loses details unintentionally, so please do ask questions.

Assignment	Points
Plagiarism Assignment	10
Paper 1: Google and scientific writing	50
Midterm Exam	150
Participation (Canvas Discussion @ 10 pts per week, starts 3rd week, no points Spring Break or last 3 wks of class)	100
Ecology demonstration exercise report	40
Final Exam	150
TOTAL	500

Grading Scale

A +	99-100%	B +	87-89%	C +	77-79%	D +	67-69%
A	92-98%	B	82-86%	C	72-76%	D	62-66%
A -	90-91%	B -	80-81%	C -	70-71%	D -	60-61%
F	below 60%						

Special Circumstances UNK Policies

Withdraw (W) and Incomplete (I) Grades:

Until the conclusion of the 10th week of the semester, you may withdraw from any class and receive a grade of "W." This grade does not count toward your grade point average and merely indicates that you withdrew from (or "dropped") the class. No instructor can withdraw a student from the roster; that is, if you stop coming to class the instructor cannot withdraw you from the class. The instructor will be forced to assign you a failing ("F") grade for the class. Withdrawing from a class involves filling out a simple form that the instructor and student both sign and returning this form to the registrar's office by the withdraw deadline.

Under very unusual circumstances, a grade of incomplete ("I") may be issued. An incomplete is not a substitute for a "W" (withdraw), and it is not a substitute for a poor or failing grade. An incomplete is issued if circumstances beyond the student's control prevent the student from completing the required work for the class by the end of the semester (example: student is hospitalized during final exam week). If you qualify for an incomplete grade, it is expected that you will receive this grade in all your classes. An incomplete grade will give you an extension to complete outstanding work only; it is not an opportunity to "start over" in the class. All outstanding work must be completed within one year or the "I" grade automatically converts to a failing ("F") grade. An incomplete grade will be considered only during the final six weeks of the semester, after the deadline for receiving a "W" has passed.

Students with Disabilities or Those Who are Pregnant

Students with disabilities or those who are pregnant are encouraged to contact me for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska at Kearney to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to students with documented disabilities or those who are pregnant. To receive accommodation services for a disability, students must be registered with UNK Disabilities Services Coordinator, David Brandt, in the Academic Success Office, 163 Memorial Student Affairs Building, 308-865-8214 or by email unkdso@unk.edu. For those needing accommodation due to pregnancy, you need to visit with Student Health. The following link provides information for students and faculty regarding pregnancy rights. <http://www.nwlc.org/resource/pregnant-and-parenting-students-rights-faqs-college-and-graduate-students>

Reporting Student Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence or Sexual Assault

Reporting allegations of rape, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sexual harassment, and stalking enables the University to promptly provide support to the impacted student(s), and to take appropriate action to prevent a recurrence of such sexual misconduct and protect the campus community. Confidentiality will be respected to the greatest degree possible. Any student who believes she or he may be the victim of sexual misconduct is encouraged to report to one or more of the following resources:

Local Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault Advocacy Agency 308-237-2599

Campus Police (or Security) 308-865-8911

Title IX Coordinator 308-865-8655

Retaliation against the student making the report, whether by students or University employees, will not be tolerated.

If you have questions regarding the information in this email please contact Mary Chinnock Petroski, Human Resources Director (petroskimj@unk.edu or phone 8655).

Copyright Statement

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Syllabus for Biology 824 Principles of Ecology

The following schedule is an outline of the topics covered in each lecture on your tapes. “Found” refers to readings in Real and Brown’s Foundations of Ecology while “Bones” refers to reading assignments in Turney’s Rock, Bones, and Stars.

Week & Date	Lecture Number & Topics	Assignments and Readings
1 Jan 7	1) Introduction	Brown Preface, Chp 1 (on Canvas in content folder)
	Ecology Review 2.1) Ecology Summary Part 1 2.2) Ecology Summary Part 2	
2 Jan 14	2.3) Ecology Summary Part 3 3.1) Ecology Summary Part 4	Ricklefs: The Economy of Nature 6 th Ed. (no readings, this is source for lectures)
	3.2) Ecology Summary Part 5	Plagiarism Assignment due Friday (See Class Policies Section3)
3 Jan 21	4) Ecology and Time	Bones: Intro, Chps: 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
	5) Ecology and Time [there is no lecture 6]	
4 Jan 28	7) Lake as an example microcosm	Found: Intro & Part I, Forbes 14-27
	8) Succession and Climax	Found: Clements 59-67 (up to 97 optional)
5 Feb 4	9) Superorganism . . . no	Found: Gleason 98-117
	10) Review of initial readings and updating on modern view of ecological systems	Paper 1 due Feb 8 at 5:00 pm CST
6 Feb 11	11) Describing population growth and life tables Theory and in practice: May and MacArthur/Pianka	Found: Part II Theoretical Advances Real and Levin 177-191, May 273-275, MacArthur and Pianka 276-282 Midterm Assigned, due Mar 1
7 Feb 18	12) Theses, Antitheses, and Syntheses Conversational Biology and Ecological Debate	Found: Part III Synthesis of Ecology Kingsolver and Paine 309-317
	13) Inter-specific competition, niche partitioning, bottom-up regulation	Found: Hutchinson 342-355, Hairston et al. 357-361
8 Feb 25	14) How the discovery of new methods has led to greater understandings of past ecosystems	Found: Part IV: Method. Adv. Brown 445-455

Week	Lecture Topics	Assignment & Readings
	15) The usefulness of pollen in ecological reconstructions and Intrinsic growth rate	Found: von Post 456-482 and Found: Birch 513-524
9 Mar 4	16) Mammal predation and the sawfly. Last day to drop March 9	Found: Holling 525-552 Ecosystem exercise posted
10 Mar 11	17) Thermodynamic Equilibria of Animals	Found: Porter and Gates 553-570
11 Mar 18	UNK Spring Break	None
12 Mar 25	18) This section looks at example ecosystems, is ecology too site-specific?	Found: Part V Case Studies, Peet 605-615
	19) Influence of weather on populations	Found: Davidson and Andrewartha 616-638
	20) Population Ecology of Warblers	Found: MacArthur 686-706
13 Apr 1	21) The role of experimental manipulation in ecological studies – nod to Darwin	Found: Part VI Expt. Manip. Lubchenco and Real 715-733 Macro: chp 9 & 10
	22) Interspecific Competition	Found: Connell 836-849
	23) Zoogeography of Islands	Found: Simberloff & Wilson 861-879
14 Apr 8	24) Huffaker (in Foundation book), Diamond, and Kareiva (on Canvas)	More expts: Manipulation, comparative methods, tri-trophic Found: Huffaker 795-835
15 Apr 15	25) Ecology overview, Gotelli book example	Look at modern ecology, Gotelli book Final Exam posted Monday
	26) Synthesis: Ecological implications according to Brown (on Canvas)	Modern Ecology Brown: Chap 11, 12, 13
16 Apr 22	27) Human impacts: habitat loss, global climate change, The Anthropocene	Current Events: Readings on Canvas
	No lecture 28	
17 Apr 29	Final Exam: Due 5 pm CST on Tuesday, April 30th	

Orientation to Dr. Albrecht use of Canvas

Version 2.1 Spring 2019

UNK Biology Department

Introduction:

The UNK Biology Distance Master's program has many faculty participating. Part of the experience and challenge of the program is that, as in other professional situations, faculty are different from each other. Faculty have different lecture styles, different discussion board expectations, different grading priorities, and even different methods to deliver class material. I realize this might be confusing for people, but hopefully the various methods will demonstrate what works and what does not for you in your own careers. Please read this section as I try to clarify how I use Canvas in this class.

Please contact me with any questions about Canvas, the class materials or grading. Also note that the UNK e-Campus website does provide both Video Tutorials and Atomic Learning Tutorials on using Canvas, email, and MS Office see [this page](#).

A note about Expectations:

I approach this program with the goal of providing, as closely as possible, the level of experience I was fortunate enough to experience in my graduate career at some very good universities. This means that generally my expectations are high. By this I mean at least six hours of study time per week, a high degree of mastery of even complex material, and the persistence to do outside research and ask questions of me as needed. I will do my best to find, present, and interpret material I think is important and appropriate for the subject area of classes. I will also do my best to explain how the process of science works including experimental design, statistical testing, writing, and thought processes. I will also work to be as available as possible, and turn around posts, emails, and graded work as quickly as I can. For graded work this means 2 weeks or less.

It is my hope and expectation that everyone in this program is here because they enjoy biology and wish to become more knowledgeable about the subject and more proficient at teaching or researching.

Here is a quick checklist of points that may help you succeed in the course, based on my experience as a graduate student and professor:

1. **Have you prepared for the class as it progresses?** Have you read the material, not just once but twice? Have you looked up authors, concepts, or words you were not familiar with during the reading? Do you understand how this reading fits into the discipline in

general, and why it was assigned? On primary literature papers have you noticed the author, date, and author's institution of the paper in addition to the data, statistical tests, and concepts in the paper?

2. Before asking an entire class what a word means **have you tried to look it up?** Did you try to find the word from appropriate, professional, recognized sources? Have you used the assignment itself, the index in the book, or another biology text you own? Wikipedia is also a good place to start, but may not be a good place to end such a search.
3. Is the work you are turning in **reflective of you** as the professional you are working towards? Have you looked at it for mistakes? Do you have all the important concepts covered in your work? Is the organization of the paper clear and useful? Have you put in thought and work on the figures and tables to make them clear, professional, and are they referenced correctly? Has the work been proofread for grammatical, factual, spelling, and formatting errors? Do you know that the formatting is correct?

Canvas:

The main portal for the class work in the UNK Biology Distance Master's program is the learning management system (LMS) Canvas. Being familiar with the LMS is helpful for success in the program. Here are the components that are the ones I use the most:

1. "Files" Section of Canvas for this class:
 - a. This is where Powerpoint, pdf, and video files are that are materials for classes.
 - b. Video files (the lectures) should be **downloaded** (not streamed) for viewing. This means a right click, not a left click on most computers.
 - c. The video files are in MP4 format, which can be played by many video players.
 - d. Some files are large and should be downloaded on fast internet connections.
 - e. I may post papers here as well as book sections or links to other sites, these are class materials and should be read and have notes made on them.
 - f. It is fine to download files available at any time during the semester. There are no restrictions on what devices you use or how many times you use them. Please note these files are UNK files created by me in terms of authorship.
2. "Discussions" Section:
 - a. This section of the LMS is how you will communicate with me and each other in the class. Note: do not use the 'mail' system in Canvas, I hardly look at this area and will not be using it. Email me through the Loper system / Outlook if you want to email me.
 - b. In my classes Discussions are an important part of the class experience, there are a lot of points associated with participation on Discussion Board. But more than this people get to know each other, really help each other, and provide good feedback on ideas folks have on the class material.
 - c. Typically, discussion boards open Monday around 9:00 am Central Time, and closed Sunday night around 10:00 pm Central Time (I reserve the right to change these times) for a particular week.
 - d. Because discussions are important, posts will be graded.

- i. At least **two** quality postings each week and **not** both on Sunday night.
 - ii. *The quality of your posts*. This is a somewhat subjective category, but the more thoughtful your comments the better the quality of discussion will be for the entire class. Comments should be at least a few sentences. Conciseness and clarity are necessary to keep the reading load for the class to a reasonable level, i.e.: page long postings are discouraged. Comments should be supported with information, file attachments or web sites, and should be relevant to the current topic of discussion. References are encouraged.
 - iii. *How well you interact as classmates*. Your responses should demonstrate that you are aware of the discussion that has been taking place. Go beyond stating “I agree” with someone with someone by stating your reasoning. Posts that say just “I agree” in one form or another will not be counted as contributing toward posting credit for the week.
 - iv. *Be polite and professional* be polite and constructive in your responses to other students and me.
- 3. “Assignments” Section:
 - a. Many, if not all, the assignments in the class will appear here, so please find this area of the LMS
 - b. There are two types of assignments I use most:
 - i. Quizzes: these are timed tests, typically multiple choice questions that are available for a limited amount of time. The time frame is for quizzes is usually to open at 5:00 pm Friday on the week they are assigned and closing on the following Monday at 10:00 pm Central Time. These tests must be completed online within their time limit (e.g. 30 minutes) once started.
 - ii. Papers: I create assignments that are links through which you can upload documents. This system has the distinct advantage over email in that papers go directly to a ‘space’ that is specific to one person for one assignment. Users will see a paper icon in the Gradebook for the assignment when documents have been uploaded.
 - 1. This function can be set to be available for a limited amount of time. See the syllabus schedule or assignment description for due dates and times. Typically, I post the assignments at least 1 week ahead of the deadline.
- 4. “Grades” Section:
 - a. This is the area of Canvas where grades are recorded and displayed, these are the actual grades I use to calculate final grades, so check the scores!
 - b. Note the symbols in the gradebook. It is your responsibility to make sure assignments are in on time, uploaded correctly, and that the correct file is uploaded.
 - i. If the wrong file is uploaded, or the file is late, penalty of at least 10% will be assessed.

- ii. As stated elsewhere in the syllabus header information must be on the paper including your name, give the file a unique filename not just “paper 1”. These are basic issues, but they keep occurring.
- iii. Empty assignment: this means no file has been uploaded, or test taken according to Canvas. You **do not** want to see this if you have taken a test or uploaded a file.

Pre-problem set (optional) Out of 0
-
-
-

- iv. Paper icon: this means that Canvas has received a file, or that a test has been taken. A file that is uploaded may still be corrupt, or the wrong file could have been uploaded, but whatever it is, Canvas has it. This means I have to grade the assignment before you will see a grade. Any paper, and any test with subjective questions (such as fill-in, short answer) will have this symbol until graded.

Pre-problem set (optional) Out of 0
-


- v. Graded assignment: this is the grade for the assignment. It is what will be used in the final grade calculations.

Plagiarism Certificate Out of 10
10
10

- vi. Other symbols: I think there may be a failed upload symbol that looks like a broken paper icon, but I have not seen this icon recently and I am not sure how Canvas shows failed uploads. If you see something other than the images shown above please contact me immediately.
 - vii. If the assignment is a paper I will give feedback on the paper after I grade it. This feedback is done with the review function in Word and “show all markup” needs to be chosen (in Review tab) to see this feedback. None of this can be seen in a preview window.
5. “Announcements”:
- a. These are pieces of information I post that I think will help people with the class or a particular assignment as a semester progresses. Please read these when I post them.
6. “Conferences” and other features:
- a. I may have live ‘conferences’ through Canvas during a class. I try to record them and make this link is available to you when the recording process works.
 - b. There are other features of LMS that I use from time to time so please look around at the program.
7. Scientific Writing:
- a. I have included documents in Files/Scientific Writing folder to help with scientific writing. I hope to see the highest level of professional writing in assigned papers.
 - b. I encourage everyone to work on improving their writing skills, as I continue to work on mine. Everyone in the program should have at least a few papers from primary journals from other classes or your own reading.
 - i. If not, get a few from the UNK library collection that you have access to as a UNK student on subjects you are interested in.
 - ii. Recent papers from a major journal should be read for style, voice, formatting. Such examples will show you how to build sentences, tables, figures, paragraphs, references, and abstracts. Everything you need to know is there.
 - c. Also, you can always ask for feedback on sample writing before large assignments are due!
 - d. Changing writing style or formatting seems easy for some students but hard for others. Not writing in scientific style or not formatting papers (or problem sets) correctly can cost a person valuable points on assignments. Please do your best with writing. I have provided reference material and encourage people to read current literature articles for structure as well as content.

Dr. Albrecht Class Policies

Version 1.9 Spring 2018

Introduction:

Every institution has its rules and policies and UNK and the Biology Department have them too. Because of the distance education environment, the degree of communication between student and faculty can be difficult, and misunderstandings do happen. Please keep in mind “talking” over the computer is not the same as face to face – several types of communication are lost. There is nothing quite like a conversation after class or in a hallway. Please be patient and allow more time than you might otherwise to get the solution you need. Here are my policies that will be in place for this class in addition to those of UNK and the Biology Department.

Policies:

1. Paper formatting: all work turned should have the following formatting.
 - a. Size 12 font, 1” margins all around the page, page numbers present, no right justification for the text
 - b. Header information on the first page: name, class, date, assignment at least.
 - c. All text double-spaced with proper English spelling and grammar used. The writing should be simple, clear, scientific writing style. At the least this means: subject-verb-direct object structured sentences.
 - d. Tables must be labeled at the top and have captions that explain them.
 - e. Figures must be labeled at the bottom and have captions that explain them. No titles within the phase (graph) space which is the Excel default unfortunately.
 - f. All work turned in should have correct references. All citations must be “(author year)” format in the text (including figures and tables if they are adapted from existing work) with a full citation at the end of the paper. Papers should be listed alphabetically by last name of first author.
 - i. Citations **are** needed if textbook or lecture material is used (especially when quoted!). This is both the legal necessity and good practice for work beyond class.
 - ii. Full citations should be in a “References” section at the end of each paper and follow these formats, reverse indented and alphabetical by author.
 - iii. Each text citation should have a full citation in the Literature Cited section and each citation in the Literature Cited section must have at least one text citation.

- g. **Failure of any of these policies will result in letter grade reductions.** For those of use familiar with rubrics, these are level one issues.

2. Citation Style Examples: further information here:

<http://www.scientificstyleandformat.org/Tools/SSF-Citation-Quick-Guide.html>

a. Books:

Darling D. 2001. Life Everywhere: The maverick science of astrobiology. Basic Books. New York. 206 pp.

b. Computer Programs:

Microsoft. 2010. Microsoft Excel Version 14.06112.5000. Redland, WA.

c. Journal Articles:

Chekalyuk A C, and M Hafez. 2008. Advanced laser fluorometry of natural aquatic environments. Limnological Oceanographic Methods 6: 591-609.

d. Websites:

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2006. Livestock impacts on the environment. URL: <http://www.fao.org/ag/magazine/0612sp1.htm>. Accessed Feb 26, 2014.

3. Plagiarism and Cheating:

- a. **Please see and complete (the underline ahead is the hyperlink, please click on it) [this page](#) - I require everyone in the class has visited this site, take the quiz and send me a completion certificate (Test & Certificate section) by the 5:00 pm Central Time on the second Friday of the semester. Every semester, even if you have done it before (but only once per academic year is needed). Post a Word document containing a screenshot or scan into the Assignment link. The reason? So everyone knows exactly what plagiarism is. **ALL** sources in **anything** turned in for this class must be cited, including figures and anything taken from class texts (such as copying the text of problems) every time!**

- i. Also, I want to make sure you can take screenshots, place images in Word documents (and resize and crop as needed), as well as upload to Canvas.

- b. Also see the [UNK Student Handbook](#) for UNK policy statement on plagiarism

- c. I consider plagiarism a scourge and a stain on science and detrimental to the progress of humanity. Penalties include zeros on questions, or entire tests, or failing the class outright in addition to letters in the permanent files here at UNK
 - d. Citation information for APA style is given at the UNK eCampus website [here](#).
 - e. A quick rule: **more than 3 words in a row from any source must be referenced**
 - f. Do not communicate with outside experts to answer tests. This includes non-UNK websites. Assignments are meant to assess your knowledge, not that of others, or “answers-provided” websites.
 - g. Work individually unless directed into groups. Your work should be your own, and any personal pronouns used in your writing (which should be few in any case) should reflect this, i.e. no ‘we’ in assignments you work on by yourself!
4. Late work/technical difficulties:
- a. Late work will be subject to the following grade reductions:
 - i. 10% reduction of grade for any work submitted after stated deadline
 - ii. A further 10% grade reduction for each 24-hour period past the stated deadline
 - b. I understand that online classes demand attention to deadlines. However, this graduate program is *not* a self-paced one. This program is structured to academic terms and time frames (such as breaks) as the brick and mortar University of Nebraska system. In general people in the program show great dedication and hope this tradition continues.
 - c. Technical difficulties are part of the reality of the online world. Given that truism, do NOT wait to submit assignments until the last minute or hour of a deadline. Both you and I cannot be responsible for failures of power, computers, computer networks, or even Canvas. Do not procrastinate; *turn assignments in early*, so there is time to resubmit if there are any problems.
 - d. Important: please install and run some sort of anti-virus and anti-malware software on your computer. This is for all of us in the class, so that viruses are not spread through the class. Finally, a utilities program will help your computer run well by fixing registry files and defragmenting and optimizing hard drives:
 - i. Microsoft Security Essentials (recommended and free):
 - ii. other maintenance software such as System Mechanic (my favorite), Symantec System Works, Glary Utilities (free)
 - iii. Malwarebytes Anti-malware (free)
5. Online etiquette:
- a. **Please be respectful of others in the class, even me.** It is easy to be more confrontational via electronic post than in person. I understand conversations may become heated, and irony, even sarcasm may be attempted at times be

used to make a point; however, such attempts are often not understood via posts. Please try to remain clear and kind at all times.

- b. Posts I deem as offensive or inflammatory towards others or me will be removed from the discussion boards. If this becomes a continuing problem, grade reductions may result. I will keep copies of such posts.