# Course Syllabus:
# Conservation Biology BIOL 834-01, 3 credits
# Spring 2015

**Instructor:**

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**NOTE:** Email is my preferred method of contact if you inquire about a personal issue. General questions about the course can be posted on the Frequently Asked Questions Discussion Board in Blackboard.

**Office Hours:** TBA and/or Email to arrange a time for a phone discussion

**Course Description:** This course is a broad sampling of conservation biology, where we will discuss some of its fundamental biological and ecological principles. We will cover a variety of topics including: threats to biodiversity, environmental policy (with respect to threatened and endangered species), techniques used in studies of conservation biology (e.g., methods of habitat restoration and conservation genetics), and discuss current issues in conservation biology. Assigned readings from the textbook and from the scientific literature, a major writing assignment, presentation, problem sets and online discussions will be used to explore these topics. Plan to spend several hours each week on reading, writing, and responding to topic discussions.

**Course Objectives:**

1). Gain familiarity with concepts in conservation biology and identify a variety of tools used by conservation biologists
2). Examine and discuss research regarding threats to biodiversity and methods of detecting threats to biodiversity
3). Determine various approaches to solving conservation problems and identify pros and cons for each approach
4) Gain hands on experience using some conservation biology tools

**Instructor Role:** As your instructor I will provide feedback to students in two ways. First, I will participate in directing online class discussions by providing background information where appropriate, providing initial topics for discussion, reading comments posted by students, and providing clarification or summary information for student comments. In addition I will likely comment on individual student posts, but I may not comment on every single post for every

student. Any comments or observations I post will be made available to all students via the general discussion board, unless they concern a personal matter. I will respond to every email sent from student UNK lopermail accounts, you can expect a response to your emails within 24 hours of sending, Monday-Friday. However emails sent on the weekends (or late on Friday) will not be seen until Monday morning.

**Required Text (Available in pdf form on the coursewebite):**

Sodhi NS, Ehrlich PR. 2010. *Conservation Biology for All*, Oxford University Press Inc., New York, NY, USA.
ISBN 978-0-19-955424-9

**Required Hardware/Software:** Students should refer to the following eCampus website to make sure you meet the minimum hardware/software and internet connection speed required by all UNK eCampus students.

eCampus requirements: http://www.unk.edu/academics/ecampus/resources-info/students/requirements.php

NOTE: Microsoft Office Word is the only acceptable word processing software for this course (All other file formats are unacceptable for submitting online documents) This software can be purchased through UNK Technology Store at a significant discount to students. http://www.unk.edu/offices/its/technology_store/index.php

**Academic Integrity:** UNK's Policy is the maintenance of academic honesty and integrity is a vital concern of the University community. Any student found in violation of the standards of academic honesty shall be subject to both academic and disciplinary sanctions. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: Cheating, Fabrication and Falsification, **Plagiarism**, and Other Acts of Academic Dishonesty. You are expected to uphold the UNK standard of Student Conduct relating to Academic Integrity. You assume full responsibility for the content and integrity of the work you submit. Academic integrity will be strongly enforced in this course and plagiarism will not be tolerated. All assignments will be scanned through Safe Assignment via Blackboard. **Students who plagiarize will fail this course.**

**Grading Scale:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 97.5 – 100 % = A+ | 79.5 – 82.4 % = B- | 62.5 – 67.4 % = D |
| 92.5 – 97.4 % = A | 77.5 – 79.4 % = C+ | 59.5 – 62.4 % = D- |
| 89.5 – 92.4 % = A- | 72.5 – 77.4 % = C | 59% or less = F |
| 87.5 – 89.4 % = B+ | 69.5 – 72.4 % = C- | |
| 82.5 – 87.4 % = B | 67.5 – 69.4 % = D+ | |

**Grading System:** Grades will be determined according to the following scheme:

| Assignment | Points |
|---|---|
| 1) Personal Introduction | 10 |
| 2) Exams (2 short answer essay exams, 100pts each) | 200 |
| 3) Discussion Board: 5 of 9 discussions will be graded at random (20pts each) | 100 |
| 4) Problem Sets (3 sets, 50pts each) | 150 |
| 5) Current Topic Paper | 50 |
| 6) Current Topic Presentation | 20 |
| **Total Course Points** | **530** |

**Students With Disabilities or Those Who Are Pregnant**: Students with disabilities or those who are pregnant are encouraged to contact Dr. Reichart 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 brandtdl@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

If you have an accommodation plan, please see Dr. Reichart as soon as possible, so any necessary arrangements can be made for your learning. **No accommodations can be provided until a Reasonable Accommodation Plan is in place. Please remember, plans are not retroactive and cannot be used for assignments prior to the date of the instructor's signature.** To the greatest extent possible, University Representatives shall observe confidentiality with respect to any request for accommodation.

**Class Schedule & Assignments:** The class schedule and chapter reading assignments are listed below. Due dates must be followed and assignments are due by midnight CST on the date specified in instructions for each assignment. For assignments turned in late a penalty of 5 points per day will be deducted. An assignment will get no credit when taking the 5 points for tardiness equals zero for the assignment or seven days after the due date, whichever comes first.
NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to modify the class schedule and assignments if necessary; however, students will be informed of minor modifications via blackboard announcements.

**Problems sets**
Students will also complete three problem sets. These exercises are intended to give you some practice with basic analytical techniques in conservation biology. The exercises will be in the form of data set analysis – you will be given a data set and a research question, and you will use the analytical tools presented in the class to explore the data set and answer the research question.

**Expectations & Discussion Boards:** Students are expected to keep up with assigned course material and are responsible for checking announcements and assignments each week. **For discussion boards 9 discussions will be assigned; however, only 5 discussions will be graded for points. Discussion boards to be graded will be chosen at random throughout the semester** and grades for discussion posts will be based on participation and the quality of the assignment or discussion board post. For most discussion board posts, content should be a critical evaluation of the topic we discuss and should not be a brief thoughtless response, such as "this was a really cool study," OR "I agree with the other members of the group," etc. I expect students to spend time thinking about ideas, providing quality comments and/or posing articulate questions for each discussion topic. Most weeks will require two or more discussion posts per student. I **do not require** all discussion board posts to have comments with cited references; however, I expect students will be able to use information gleaned from textbook chapters or primary literature to provide appropriately detailed comments.

In addition, I expect students to use appropriate language (e.g., profanity and derogatory comments are unacceptable), to respect differences in opinion, and to show evidence of knowledge on the subject matter (i.e., gleaned from assigned readings).

| **Biol 834 Course Schedule Spring 2015** | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Date** | **Week** | **Assignments** | **Discussion Board** | **Topics** | **Chapters** |
| Jan 12-19 | 1 | Personal Introduction, DUE Jan 19, midnight CST | | Personal Introduction, Conservation Biology: past and present; Biodiversity | 1 & 2 |
| Jan 19-26 | 2 | | 1 | Conservation Biology: past and present; Biodiversity | 1 & 2 |
| Jan 26 – Feb 2 | 3 | Problem Set 1 – Quantifying Biodiv. DUE Feb 2, midnight CST | | Read p. 313-316 in chapter 16 | 16 |
| Feb 2 - Feb 9 | 4 | | 2 | Ecosystem functions and services | 3 |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Feb 9 - 16 | 5 | Current Topic Paper Assigned, DUE Apr 13, midnight CST | 3 | Habitat Destruction: death by a thousand cuts | 4 |
| Feb 16 - 23 | 6 | Current Topic Presentation Assigned, DUE Apr 20, midnight CST | 4 | Habitat Fragmentation and Landscape Change | 5 |
| Feb 23 – Mar 2 | 7 | | 5 | Overharvesting | 6 |
| Mar 2 - 9 | 8 | **Exam 1 Assigned, DUE Feb 23 midnight CST** | | | |
| Mar 9 – 16 | 9 | Problem Set 2 – *Phragmites australis*, DUE Mar 16, midnight CST | | Invasive Species | 7 |
| Mar 16 – 23 | 10 | | 6 | Climate Change | 8 |
| Mar 23 - 29 | 11 | Spring Break, No Class | | | |
| Mar 30 – Apr 6 | 12 | Problem Set 3 – Conservation Genetics, DUE Apr 6, midnight CST | | Conservation genetics Red p. 330-331 in chapter 16 | 16 |
| Apr 6 - 13 | 13 | Current Topic Paper DUE, Apr 13, midnight CST | 7 | Conservation in human-modified landscapes | 13 |
| Apr 13 – 20 | 14 | Current Topic Presentation, DUE Apr 20, midnight CST | 8 | The roles of people in conservation | 14 |
| Apr 20 – 27 | 15 | | 9 | From conservation theory to practice: crossing the divide | 15 |
| Apr 27 – May 4 | 16 | Final Exam, DUE May 4, midnight CST | | | |