

**Evolutionary Behavioural Ecology**  
**Biology 4436G**  
Course Outline/Syllabus Winter 2024

*Draft 1/4/2024*

### **1. Course Information and Prerequisites**

**Lectures:** Posted on Owl.

**Lab/Seminar:** Posted on Owl.

**Prerequisites:**

Biology 3436F/G or Psychology 3221F/G and either completion of at least 1.5 Biology courses from the 3000 level or above, or registration in year 4 of the Honours Specialization in Animal Behaviour.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean's Designate (Department/Program Counsellors and Science Academic Counselling) to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

### **2. Instructor Information**

**Instructor:** Posted on Owl.

**TA:** Information is available on Owl.

**Office hours:** by appointment.

During the semester, all electronic correspondence about Bio 4436G should be done using the Message tool in Owl. Students emailing their instructors or TAs directly must use their Western (@uwo.ca) email addresses.

### **3. Course Description, Learning Outcomes, Schedule, Delivery Mode**

**Course Description:** A study of the relationships between animal behavior, ecology and evolution. Topics will include evolution, optimization theory, survival strategies, game theory, reproductive strategies, and social behaviour.

**Learning Outcomes and Objectives:**

By the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Engage in meaningful discussion about behavioural ecology and how it relates to ecology, evolution, and behaviour.
2. Recall and explain the main behavioural ecology theories that are covered.

3. Critically evaluate text in the context of behavioural ecology theories.
4. Independently collect and synthesize information on a topic in the field of behavioural ecology.
5. Communicate scientific knowledge in written and oral forms.

**Contingency Plan:** This course will be delivered in-person, however in the unlikely event of any university-declared emergency, some or all of this course may be required to be delivered online, either synchronously or asynchronously. **The grading scheme will not change.** Any assessments affected will be conducted online as determined by the professor.

**TENTATIVE CALENDAR 2024: Students will be informed in advance of any upcoming changes.**

Posted on Owl.

#### **4. Course Materials**

##### **Required:**

**Laptop:** Use your own. You must have a stable internet connection and a working microphone.

**Owl:** All course documents and information (syllabus, lecture files, instructional documents, required readings, etc.) **will be posted to OWL and students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) on a regular basis for updates.** If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the OWL Help page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk, which can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

**Book:** Davies, N.B., J.R. Krebs, and S.A. West. 2012. An introduction to behavioural ecology. 4<sup>th</sup> edn. Wiley-Blackwell (the e-text is available for purchase for \$54.00 from the bookstore)

##### **Software:**

Statistical analysis software (preferably R and R Studio).

SimUText for Evolutionary Behavioural Ecology and Life History (\$23 USD)

It is important that you review the information below before you subscribe to the SimUText for **Evolutionary Behavioural Ecology** at **University of Western Ontario**. **To avoid possible problems, do not wait until the last minute.**

##### **1. CHECK YOUR TECH!**

Visit <https://simutext.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/categories/200170134-Check-Your-Tech-> to confirm that the SimUText application will work on your computer, and/or to explore your options if there is a problem.

##### **2. Registration Link**

When you are ready to subscribe and download installers, follow this link to initiate the process: <https://www.simutextca2.com/student/register.html#/key/C7Le-Pxpm-phj7-wcHG-aGBY>

##### **3. SimUText Application Installers**

After you have completed the subscription process, if you need to download the SimUText

application installers again, you will be able to access them by logging into the [SimUText Student Portal](https://www.simutextca2.com/student/) (<https://www.simutextca2.com/student/>).

Should you encounter problems, you may need your course-specific Access Key. It is: **C7Le-Pxpm-phj7-wcHG-aGBY**

Note that the dashes in the Access Key may not paste as readable dashes when copying from this pdf, so you may need to re-type the dashes in the address bar.

Problems or questions? Visit [SimUText Support](http://simbio.com/support/simutext) (<http://simbio.com/support/simutext>)

## **5. Methods of Evaluation**

**The overall course grade will be calculated as:**

5%	Crayfish Lab write-up
15%	Midterm test
10%	Project presentation – draft
10%	Project presentation – final
25%	Project write-up
35%	Final exam (date TBA)

Due dates are posted on Owl.

Extra: SimBio assignments (2% per section x 7 sections = 14%). These credits can be used to boost the 35% allocation. I will assign the higher of your final exam alone (35%) **OR** your final exam (21%) + SimBio (14%).

The final exam will be in person. The exam is cumulative will cover all lecture content.

A passing grade on the lab components (summing to 50% of course grade) is required to pass the course. If a passing grade is not met, the maximum course grade will be 45%.

- Written assignments will be submitted to Turnitin (statement in policies below)
- Students will have 1 submission to Turnitin
- Rubrics will be used to evaluate assessments and will be posted with the instructions
- After an assessment is returned, students should wait 24 hours to digest feedback before contacting their evaluator

Click [here](#) for a detailed and comprehensive set of policies and regulations concerning examinations and grading. The table below outlines the University-wide grade descriptors.

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work which is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable
F	below 50	Fail

## **6. Student Absences**

**Deadlines are fixed.** Late penalties (1% of course grade per 24 h) will accrue immediately after a deadline. Deadlines to complete the Crayfish Lab write-up and Project Presentation (draft) will be subject to a 48 h grace period when accrued late penalties will not be deducted. For example, if you hand in the Crayfish Lab write-up 40 h after the deadline, a 2% late penalty will have accrued but this late penalty will not be applied. If you hand in your Crayfish Lab write-up 50 h after the deadline, a 3% late penalty will have accrued and this late penalty will be applied (i.e., the maximum grade you can achieve on this assignment will be 2/5).

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

### **Assessments worth $\geq$ 10% of the overall course grade:**

Formal academic accommodations will be considered for the following evaluations:

- Missed midterm test or make-up midterm test. The make-up date for the midterm will be February 28, 2:30-3:30 pm, CHB 386. If you miss the make-up midterm for accommodated reasons, your final exam will be worth 36% and your SimBio assignments will be worth 14%.
- Project presentation (draft) beyond 2 days late. The period of accommodation is the period prior to the deadline.
- Project presentation (final) date and make-up date. The make-up date for the project presentation (final) is April 8, 9:30-10:30 am. If you miss the make-up project presentation date for accommodated reasons, the project presentation (final) must be done using recorded narrations.
- Project write-up. The period of accommodation is the period prior to the deadline.

You must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to the Academic Counselling Office of your Faculty of Registration as soon as possible. For further information, please consult the University's medical illness policy at

[https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/academic\\_consideration.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration.pdf)

The Student Medical Certificate is available at

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf)

### **Assessments worth $<$ 10% of the overall course grade:**

Academic accommodation will be considered by the instructor for the following evaluations:

- Crayfish Lab write-up beyond 2 days late. If accommodation is granted, the 5% will be re-weighted to the project write-up.

Students should note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds, or for other reasons.

### **Absences from Final Examinations**

If you miss the Final Exam, please contact the Academic Counselling office of your Faculty of Registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

Note: missed work can only be excused through one of the mechanisms above. Being asked not to attend an in-person course requirement due to potential COVID-19 symptoms is not sufficient on its own.

## **7. Accommodation and Accessibility**

### **Religious Accommodation**

When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request accommodation for their absence in writing at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the course instructor and/or the Academic Counselling office of their Faculty of Registration. Please consult University's list of recognized religious holidays (updated annually) at

<https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>

### **Accommodation Policies:**

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD), which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found at:

[https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/Academic Accommodation disabilities.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Accommodation_disabilities.pdf)

## **8. Academic Policies**

The website for Registrarial Services is <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>.

Only non-programmable calculators will be permitted on tests and exams.

**Scholastic offences** are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

### **Professionalism & Privacy:**

Western students are expected to follow the [Student Code of Conduct](#). Additionally, the following expectations and professional conduct apply to this course:

- Students are expected to follow online etiquette expectations provided on OWL
- All course materials created by the instructor(s) are copyrighted and cannot be sold/shared
- Recordings are not permitted (audio or video) without explicit permission
- Permitted recordings are not to be distributed
- Students will be expected to take an academic integrity pledge before some assessments
- All recorded sessions will remain within the course site or unlisted if streamed

### **Terms of Use of Lecture/Lab/Tutorial Content:**

**Scholastic offences:** are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is an academic offense and will not be tolerated. Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate, and by proper and accurate referencing in the form of scientific citations. All required papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

### **9. Support Services**

Please visit the Science & Basic Medical Sciences Academic Counselling webpage for information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters: <https://www.uwo.ca/sci/counselling/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have

experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at

[https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html)

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

Please contact the course instructor if you require lecture or printed material in an alternate format or if any other arrangements can make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Accessible Education at [http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible\\_education/index.html](http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html) if you have any questions regarding accommodations.

Learning-skills counsellors at the Student Development Centre (<https://learning.uwo.ca>) are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

Western University is committed to a thriving campus as we deliver our courses in the mixed model of both virtual and face-to-face formats. We encourage you to check out the Digital Student Experience website to manage your academics and well-being: <https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/>.

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.

## **10. Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Decolonization (EDID)**

**Land Acknowledgement:** We acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak and Chonnonton Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum. This land continues to be home to diverse Indigenous peoples (e.g. First Nations, Métis and Inuit) whom we recognize as contemporary stewards of the land and vital contributors of our society. Throughout Canada, North America, and the world, Indigenous Peoples are vital contributors to their communities, and we greatly value their presence, knowledge, and wisdom.

More information about Indigenous Services (<https://indigenous.uwo.ca/>) and this Land Acknowledgement (<https://communications.uwo.ca/comms/land-acknowledgement/>) are available.