

BIO4944G - Seminar in Ecology and Evolution

Winter 2024 Course Outline

Course description: Current research in ecology and evolution is critically reviewed and discussed through a combination of student presentations and written assignments.

Prerequisites/antirequisites:

Prerequisite(s): Completion of at least 1.5 Biology courses at the 3000-level or above and registration in Year 4 of an Honors Specialization in Biology.

Antirequisite(s): Biology 4920F/G, Biology 4950F/G, the former Biology 4930F/G, the former Biology 4931F/G.

“Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean 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.”

Instructor: Dr. Hugh Henry, BGS 3021, <hhenry4@uwo.ca>

Office hours: By appointment via Zoom

Learning outcomes:

In this course, successful students will be able to:

- integrate information from across the primary literature to synthesize novel and meaningful observations or ideas relevant to a topic in ecology and evolution
- communicate scientific information and concepts effectively in oral presentations and written assignments
- articulate and develop ideas relevant to ecology and evolution in the context of respectful and collegial class discussion

Syllabus:	Jan. 10 -	a) Course introduction b) Journal paper lottery c) Lesser snow geese case study
	Jan. 17 -	a) Seminar topic selection b) Journal papers 1-6
	Jan. 24 -	Journal papers 7-12
	Jan. 31 -	Journal papers 13-18
	Feb. 7 -	a) Journal papers 19-20 b) Presentation feedback
	Feb. 14 -	Film Festival
	Feb. 21 -	<i>Reading week</i>
	Feb. 28 -	Seminars 1-4
	Mar. 6 -	Seminars 5-7
	Mar. 13 -	Seminars 8-11
	Mar. 20 -	Seminars 12-14
	Mar. 27 -	Seminars 15-17
	Apr. 3 -	Seminars 18-20

Textbook and Required Readings: none

Evaluation:

Journal paper presentation (10%)	- 10-12 minutes + 5 minutes discussion
Written proposal (10%)	- 500 words and at least 6 references
Seminar (35%)	- 25-30 minutes + 10 minutes discussion
Essay (35%)	- 3000-4000 words before references, tables/figures
Participation (10%)	- includes both attendance and the frequency and quality of contributions to class discussion.

Due dates:	Written proposal	Wed., Jan. 31, 2:30pm
	Essay	Wed., Apr. 3, 2:30pm

For late written assignments, subtract 10% per day. There will be a 15% reduction in the participation mark for every class missed without a valid explanation. Students failing to present oral presentations on the required date will be required to present on the next available date, with a 20% penalty in the absence of academic accommodation. A passing grade on the final essays is needed to satisfy the Senate requirement that students must demonstrate “some minimal competence in essay writing” to pass the course. A fail on the final essay will result in a grade of 45% in the course.

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

Course Communications

Students should check OWL (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) and their uwo.ca email on a regular basis. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class. The missing of critical information due to your failure to check OWL or email cannot be used as a basis for appeal.

Academic Consideration for Student Absences

Students who experience an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury or other extenuating circumstance) sufficiently significant to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes (**NOT through their course instructors**):

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://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

The Student Medical Certificate is available at

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

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 are encouraged to contact Accessible Education, 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.

Academic Policies

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

In accordance with policy,

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp113.pdf,

the centrally administered e-mail account provided to students will be considered the individual's official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at their official university address is attended to in a timely manner.

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.

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>).

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.

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact 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 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/>.

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 (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.