BIO4944G Course Outline

1. Course Information

Course Information

Bio4944G, Seminar in Ecology and Evolution, Winter 2026,

List of Prerequisites

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 prerequisites for this course or written special permission from the Department of Biology to enroll in it, you may be removed and withdrawn from this course in accordance with university policy. This may be done after the add/drop deadline of the academic term, and the course will be marked as withdrawn (WDN) on your academic record. This decision may not be appealed.

2. Instructor Information

Instructors	Email	Office	Phone	Office Hours
Dr. Hugh Henry	hhenry4@uwo.ca			by appointment via Zoom

Students must use their Western (@uwo.ca) email addresses when contacting the instructor.

3. Course Syllabus, Schedule, Delivery Mode

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

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. 7 -	a) Course introduction
	b) Journal paper lottery
	c) Lesser snow geese case study
Jan. 14 -	a) Seminar topic selection
	b) Journal papers 1-6
Jan. 21 -	Journal papers 7-13
Jan. 28 -	Journal papers 14-20
Feb. 4 -	a) Journal papers 21-24
	b) Presentation feedback
Feb. 11 -	Film Festival
Feb. 18 -	*Reading week*
Feb. 25 **-**	Seminars 1-4
Mar. 4 -	Seminars 5-7
Mar. 11 -	Seminars 8-11
Mar. 18 -	Seminars 12-14
Mar. 25 -	Seminars 15-18
Apr. 1 -	Seminars 19-21
Apr. 8 -	Seminars 22-24

4. Course Materials

Textbook and Required Readings: none

Technical Requirements: MS Powerpoint

All course material will be posted to OWL: https://westernu.brightspace.com/

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (https://westernu.brightspace.com/) regularly for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the OWL Brightspace Help page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

5. Methods of Evaluation

Grading Scheme and Assessment Dates

The overall course grade will be calculated as listed below:

Journal paper presentation (10%)   - 10-12 minutes + 5 minutes discussion
Written proposal (10%)   - 500 words and at least 6 references
Seminar (35%)   - 20-25 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. 28
                   Journal paper presentation   variable
                   Seminar presentation   variable
                   Essay   Wed., Apr. 8,

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

Use of Generative AI Tools

Generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini) are prohibited <u>for each assessment</u>.

General information about missed coursework
Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration –
Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs,* posted on the Academic Calendar:
https://uwo.ca/univsec//pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf,

This policy does not apply to requests for Academic Consideration submitted for **attempted or
completed work**, whether online or in person.

The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic
responsibilities. These students should consult Accessible Education.

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on
the Office of the Registrar's webpage:
https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/
All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or
submission deadline.

All Academic Consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that
formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows
students to make <u>one</u> Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this
course. However, the following assessments are excluded from this and, therefore, always require formal
supporting documentation:

<div align="center">Seminar presentation</div>

When a student *mistakenly* submits their <u>one</u> allowed Academic Consideration request **without
supporting documentation** for the assessments listed above or those in the **Coursework with
Assessment Flexibility** section below, <u>the request cannot be recalled and reapplied</u>. This privilege is
forfeited.

Evaluation Scheme for Missed Assessments

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.

Essential Learning Requirements

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.

6. Additional Statements

6.1 Religious Accommodation
When a recognized religious holiday or observance conflicts with an examination, test, or other scheduled academic obligation, students must request accommodation via the University's Student Absence Portal (SAP). This request should identify the conflict and specify which course component(s) (e.g. test, midterm, exam) are affected.

Students are encouraged to submit the SAP request as early as possible, but no later than two weeks before any examination, or one week before any mid-term test or quiz, to allow sufficient time for adjustment.

The SAP request serves as official notification to both the course instructor and the Academic Advising Office, in accordance with University policy:
https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf

The Faculty of Science considers religious accommodations as scheduling conflicts. Instructors should provide either a make-up exam or an earlier sitting of the same exam to accommodate the student.

For more information on recognized religious holidays, please visit the Diversity Calendar posted on the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion website - https://www.edi.uwo.ca

6.2 Academic 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.

6.3 General Academic Policies
The website for Registrar Services is https://www.registrar.uwo.ca/.

Use of @uwo.ca email: 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 email address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that emails received from the University at their official university address are attended to in a timely manner.

Requests for Relief (formally known as "appeals")

Policy on Request for Relief from Academic Decision:
https://uwo.ca/univsec//pdf/academic_policies/appeals/requests_for_relief_from_academic_decisions.pdf

Procedures on Request for Relief from Academic Decision (Undergraduate):
https://uwo.ca/univsec//pdf/academic_policies/appeals/undergrad_requests_for_relief_procedure.pdf

6.4 Scholastic Offences

Policy on Scholastic Offences:
https://uwo.ca/univsec//pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf

Procedures on Scholastic Offences (Undergraduate):
https://uwo.ca/univsec//pdf/academic_policies/appeals/undergrad_scholastic_offence_procedure.pdf

Use of Electronic Devices During Assessments

In courses offered by the Faculty of Science, the possession of unauthorized electronic devices during any in-person assessment (such as tests, midterms, and final examinations) is strictly prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: mobile phones, smart watches, smart glasses, and wireless earbuds or headphones.

Unless explicitly stated otherwise in advance by the instructor, the presence of any such device at your desk, on your person, or within reach during an assessment will be treated as a *scholastic offence*, even if the device is not in use.

Only devices expressly permitted by the instructor (e.g., non-programmable calculators) may be brought into the assessment room. It is your responsibility to review and comply with these expectations.

Use of Generative AI Tools

Unless otherwise stated, the use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, or similar platforms) is **not permitted** in the completion of any course assessments, including but not limited to: assignments, lab reports, presentations, tests, and final examinations.

Using such tools for content generation, code writing, problem solving, translation, or summarization—when not explicitly allowed—will be treated as a **scholastic offence**.

If the use of generative AI is permitted for a particular assessment, the conditions of use will be specified by the instructor in advance. If no such permission is granted, students must assume that use is prohibited. It is your responsibility to seek clarification before using any AI tools in academic work.

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).

6.5 Support Services

Please visit the Science & Basic Medical Sciences Academic Advising webpage for information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, requests for relief, 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 (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced GBSV (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. If you have any questions regarding accommodations, you may also wish to contact Accessible Education at

  http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

Learning-skills counsellors at Learning Development and Success (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.

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