

Syllabus for Ornithology

Biol 4433/5433: Spring 2009

<http://www.wtamu.edu/~rmatlack/bio4433.htm>

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Meeting times: Lecture - TTh 10:00-10:50 (ANS 320); Lab – Wed 7:00-11:00 (ANS 310)

Office Hours: T 11:00-1:00, W 11:00-12:00, Th 11:00-12:00 and by Appointment. I am happy to schedule an appointment to meet with you anytime I am available. You may schedule an appointment to meet with me via email or phone. I check my email and voice mail several times each day and will promptly reply to your messages.

Text Book: *Ornithology*, 3rd Ed., F. B. Gill, and *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America

*Other appropriate field guides may be substituted but select your guide with care. You will be allowed to use field guides on the field exams and choosing a poor guide will influence your performance. See me before you decide to substitute another guide.

Course Content: This course will examine the biology, ecology, diversity, behavior, and field identification of birds.

Course Objectives:

1. Examine the biology of birds with an emphasis on anatomy, reproduction and structures associated with flight and communication
2. Become familiar with the ecology and behavior of birds
3. Survey the diversity of birds
4. Become proficient at identifying, by sight and call, bird species common to the Panhandle
5. Learn to effectively use field guides and binoculars to identify birds in the field
6. Further your ability to think analytically and critically about information presented to you in class and in your readings
7. Practice interpreting graphs and understanding data sets

Class Policies:

Attendance - I cannot imagine that you will find it possible to master this material without regular class attendance in the lecture and the laboratory. Regardless of whether you are in class or not, however, you are responsible for everything which is discussed in lecture, any announcements made in class, everything that is assigned as class reading, and any handouts given out in class. If you miss class, you must make your own arrangements for access to class notes or handouts from classes that you miss. I will not provide copies of my class notes except under very rare circumstances (serious injury, surgery, etc.) and by PRIOR arrangement only.

Grading:

Lecture:

3 Exams (2 lecture exams and a final exam)	150 pts each	450 total
Independent field observations (10 @ 10 points each)		100 pts

Lab:

2 Lab Exams	100 pts each	200 pts
Winter bird field practical		50 pts
Photo ID quizzes	up to 10 @ 10 pts each	100 pts
Call/song quizzes	up to 5 @ 10 pts each	50 pts
Lab final (field practical and cumulative call/song test)		150 pts
*Other Lab Assignments	?	Up to 100 pts

*Additional assignments will be given, as necessary, to facilitate learning of the material or to help meet the course objectives.

NOTE: Please be quiet and attentive during field trips. Large groups are detrimental to seeing a lot of birds so it is imperative that everyone be conscious of this and do their best to keep disturbances to a minimum. Avoid talking loudly, fast movements when birds are close, and pay attention to me so I can convey information to you in a quiet voice. Disruptive or inconsiderate behavior will not be tolerated. **Ten points will be deducted from your laboratory grade for disruptive behavior during field trips (for each offense!). If you continue to be disruptive you will not be allowed to participate in field trips.**

Lecture Exams: Lecture exams will cover all of the material discussed in my lectures and all assigned readings. The first lecture exam will also include material on the order of birds of the world that will be covered in the laboratory portion of the class.

Laboratory Exams: Lab exams will tend to be hands-on exams. **Lab exam 1** will focus on structures of the pigeon (more properly called a rock dove), the bird skeleton, and other material covered prior to lab exam 1. **Lab exam 2** will focus on species identification of study skins and other material covered since lab exam 1. The **winter bird field practical** will assess your ability to identify birds wintering in the panhandle (some of these will migrate out of the area before the lab final). Format of the winter bird field practical will follow that of the final lab exam. The **final lab exam** will consist of a field practical and you will be required to identify birds, by sight and sound, in the field. Additionally, you will be required to identify birdcalls played back in the lab (cumulative – you are responsible for all calls provided during the semester). You may use a field guide and any field notes for the field portion of this exam. You are not allowed to use the help of other students. Talking or other behavior that can be construed as cheating will not be tolerated and you will be assigned a 0 for any quiz or test.

Graduate students enrolled in Biol 5433:

Graduate students are required to complete additional work (enrichment) in stacked classes. In Ornithology, each graduate student will be required to serve as editors for the independent field observations produced by the undergraduates in the course. As an editor, your responsibility will be to check the observations for correct common names, format, and completeness and to identify species

that may have been misidentified (e.g., species that do not occur in the area). Additionally, graduate students will be responsible for providing accurate species lists for the class following each class field trip.

Your class grade will be based on the percentage of the points you make out of the total number of points available (Class grade = (points made/total points available) x 100). Letter grades will be assigned using the grade scale presented below.

Grade scale: A= 90-100%
B= 80-89%
C= 70-79%
D= 60-69%
F= 0-59%

Tentative Lecture Exam Dates:

Exam 1	5 February (includes all lecture material to this point and orders material from lab)
Exam 2	12 March
Final Exam (Exam 3)	7 May @ 9:30 am

Makeup exams – All exams must be taken at the times announced in class or in the syllabus. Makeup exams will be given at the instructor's discretion unless the student has a doctor's letter or letter of absence for a school-sponsored event. If you have a serious reason for missing an exam, you must contact me **BEFORE** the scheduled exam period to notify me that you cannot take the exam. You are then responsible for arranging with me to make up the test or quiz **within two days** of your return to campus. **If you are late to an exam and students have completed their exam and left the classroom you have missed the exam.** If you miss a laboratory quiz or exam you may not be able to make up the assignment or you may be given a test or quiz that differs in format, number of questions, etc. from that given to the rest of the class on the assigned date.

Note: Exams are subject to change and I reserve the right to change any and all information contained in the syllabus.

Academic dishonesty - If you are uncertain about what constitutes academic dishonesty, please read the appropriate sections in the Code of Student Life. I will have zero tolerance for academic dishonesty. Instances of dishonesty will be punished to the fullest extent possible, including the receipt of a failing grade for the course. Take care to avoid the appearance of cheating! During exams keep your eyes on your own paper, keep books and bags closed, and put all paper away.

Lecture content:

<u>Topics</u>	<u>Readings</u>
Characteristics of birds; naming and classification	Ch1; Avian cognition and intelligence
History of birds	Ch 2
Feathers	Ch 4
Flight	Ch 5
Physiology	Ch 6
Senses	Ch 7
Vocalizations	Ch 8
Annual cycles of birds	Ch 9
Migration and navigation	Ch 10
Social behavior	Ch 11
Mates, mate choice and sexual selection	Ch 12
Breeding systems	Ch 13
Bird sex	Ch 14
Nests and incubation	Ch 15
Parents and their offspring	Ch 16
Conservation	Ch 21
Note: Other topics will be added if time permits	

Laboratory content:

Date	Lab Topic	Location
14 Jan	Orientation; Pre-quiz; Orders of birds	ANS 310
21 Jan	Photo quiz (PQ) 1 ; Binocular sign-out and use (bring personal binoculars); Orders of birds cont.; Bird skeleton; rock dove dissection	ANS 310
28 Jan	PQ 2 ; Audio quiz (AQ) 1 ; Field trip or Bird skeleton; Rock dove dissection; Feathers	ANS 310
4 Feb	PQ 3 ; Field trip or Dissection and skeleton	ANS 310
11 Feb	Field trip or Dissection and skeleton	
18 Feb	PQ 4 ; AQ 2 ; Field trip or Dissection and skeleton completion/review	ANS 310
25 Feb	LAB EXAM 1	ANS 310
4 Mar	PQ 5 ; AQ 3 ; Winter bird exam or Study skins	ANS 310

6-9 March	Aransas NWR and Gulf Coast field trip (Optional)	
11 March	PQ 6 ; Study skins or rain date for winter bird exam	ANS 310
25 March	PQ 7; AQ 4 ; Field Trip	ANS 310
1 April	LAB EXAM 2	ANS 310
8 April	PQ 8; AQ 5 ; Field Trip	ANS 310
15 April	Field Trip	ANS 310
22 April	Post quiz; Field Trip	ANS 310
27 or 29 April	FINAL LAB EXAM (field practical)	ANS 310

Labs will always meet in ANS 310 unless you are told otherwise. Expect changes to the lab schedule to accommodate weather and other factors.

Field trips:

Field trips are a very important part of the laboratory portion of this class. Please dress for the weather conditions and be sure to wear sturdy and comfortable footwear as we will be hiking across rugged terrain. If the weather is hot, bring water, sunscreen, and a hat. Be sure that you have your field guide, a pair of binoculars (a limited number of binoculars can be checked out from me before field trips – if you are a wildlife major you should consider purchasing a decent pair – available for about \$100), and a field notebook of some sort. If you arrive late for lab there is a good chance that you will be left behind. Please do not request that we return early from a field trip – keep the entire lab period free in your calendar!

Packing lists and additional trip information will be provided prior to optional field trips.

Students with Disabilities:

WTAMU seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified persons with disabilities. This University will adhere to all applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to register with Disability Support Services and to contact the faculty member in a timely fashion to arrange for suitable accommodations.

Copyright:

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Safety:

Safety is everyone's responsibility. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) are provided for all chemicals used in this class. MSDSs provide information about physical properties, health risks, fire and explosion data, and other important information associated with these chemicals. Before handling or using a chemical, you should refer to the MSDS for that chemical. It is your responsibility to inform the instructor in writing of any health conditions that may prevent you from safely using a chemical (pregnancy, auto immune deficiency, etc.). It is also the responsibility of the student to report any spills or problems found while storing or using a chemical. If you are unsure about a chemical, always ask. If you see any unsafe condition, notify your instructor immediately. If you

are unsure about the proper and safe operation of any piece of equipment, ask your instructor for proper instruction. All injuries, spills of materials and unsafe conditions must be reported to the instructor immediately.

Evacuation:

When you receive notice to evacuate the building, please evacuate promptly but in an orderly manner. Evacuation routes are posted in various locations indicating all exits, outside assembly area, location of fire extinguishers, fire alarm pull stations, and emergency telephone numbers (651-5000 or 911). In the event an evacuation is necessary, evacuate immediately; do not use elevators; take all personal belongings with you; report to outside assembly area and wait for further information; students needing assistance in the evacuation process should bring this to the attention of the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

Scholastic Dishonesty:

It is the responsibility of students and instructors to help maintain scholastic integrity at the University by refusing to participate in or tolerate scholastic dishonesty. Commission of any of the following acts shall constitute scholastic dishonesty. This listing is not exclusive of any other acts that may reasonably be said to constitute scholastic dishonesty: acquiring or providing information for any assigned work or examination from any unauthorized source; informing any person or persons of the contents of any examination prior to the time the examination is given in subsequent sections of the course or as a makeup; plagiarism, submission of a paper or project that is substantially the same for two courses unless expressly authorized by the instructor to do so. (2008-2009, CODE OF STUDENT LIFE, Rules and Procedures for Students, West Texas A&M University).

A complete statement regarding scholastic dishonesty can be found in the Student Code of Life at <http://www.wtamu.edu/administrative/ss/code/code.html#procedures>.