WILD 2200: Ecology of Our Changing World

This is an online course and as such is self motivated! The information presented in this class is exciting, fun, and hopefully interesting and there is a fair amount so don't wait until Saturday night to start the assignments! The modules are available a week before they are due.

Course Overview

This course introduces you to the study of ecology which, at it's simplest, is the study of interactions between organisms in the environment. In addition, this course will explore how ecologists describe and study the natural world. Ecology is the investigation of the patterns and processes among organisms and can occur at many different levels, from individual species (i.e., what a species consumes), to populations (i.e., which influences the number of individuals in a population more - births or death?), to communities (i.e., how does the predator community influence the prey community), to ecosystems (i.e., how does the water regime influence the western United States). We'll also look at the way these concepts can be applied to the “real world”.

During this course, students will…

1. Apply the "scientific method" as a way of understanding nature
2. Gain an understanding of basic ecological principals and concepts
3. Practice reading, writing, and critical thinking in a scientific context

Course Requirements

This is a three semester credit class. A three credit class should correspond (roughly) to a student effort of 9 hours per week.

Books & Materials

All materials will be provided online through Canvas. No book purchase is required.

Class Attendance

You should log on to the class a few times a week to stay current with assignments. Frequent, shorter sessions are more effective than infrequent, long sessions.

Class Outline

The class is organized into 15 modules. Each module presents a main theme via an introductory lecture, readings, and assignments. Some module are broken up into two parts, each with its own lecture and assignment. Some assignments are questions based on the lecture and/or reading material while others are writing assignments based on the lecture and/or reading materials.
Assignments

Several assignments will be due each week. **All assignments are due no later than midnight (Utah time. Mountain Standard Time), Sunday of the week of the assignment.** Assignments can be submitted early - you don't have to wait until Sunday night! Assignments turned in 24 hours late will be worth 50% and those turned in after **24 hours** will receive **ZERO** points unless you have contacted me prior to the assignments due date. Over the semester, we will be completing a lot of assignments so I suggest you organize the weekly/module assignments by creating a directory for each week/module. You can keep track of assignments you've turned in and your grades by checking the "Grades" tool in Canvas.

Writing Assignments

The writing assignments, either short answer or essay, should convey to me that you have thoroughly thought through the question or essay. As such, short cuts in grammar (i.e., "u" for you, "r" for are, "2" for too, or to) or spelling (i.e., not using capital letters for the start of a sentence are not acceptable. Also, use proper sentence structure to convey your answers. Points will be deducted from assignments for improper grammar or sentence structure.
UNIVERSITY POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibilities

Academic freedom is the right to teach, study, discuss, investigate, discover, create, and publish freely. Academic freedom protects the rights of faculty members in teaching and of students in learning. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Faculty members are entitled to full freedom in teaching, research, and creative activities, subject to the limitations imposed by professional responsibility. Faculty Code Policy #403 further defines academic freedom and professional responsibilities.

Academic Integrity – "The Honor System"

Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. The Honor System is designed to establish the higher level of conduct expected and required of all Utah State University students.

The Honor Pledge: To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge:

"I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity."

A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge:

- Espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community;
- Understands that each act of academic dishonesty devalues every degree that is awarded by this institution; and
- Is a welcomed and valued member of Utah State University.

Academic Dishonesty

The instructor of this course will take appropriate actions in response to Academic Dishonesty, as defined the University's Student Code. Acts of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- **Cheating**: using, attempting to use, or providing others with any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or in any other academic exercise or activity. Unauthorized assistance includes:
  - Working in a group when the instructor has designated that the quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity be done “individually;”
  - Depending on the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
  - Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in taking an examination or preparing academic work;
  - Acquiring tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty member, staff member, or another student without express permission;
Continuing to write after time has been called on a quiz, test, examination, or any other academic exercise or activity;

- Submitting substantially the same work for credit in more than one class, except with prior approval of the instructor; or engaging in any form of research fraud.

- **Falsification**: altering or fabricating any information or citation in an academic exercise or activity.

- **Plagiarism**: representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes using materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the sale of term papers or other academic materials.

**Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is defined by the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as any "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature." If you feel you are a victim of sexual harassment, you may talk to or file a complaint with the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Office located in Old Main, Room 161, or call the AA/EEO Office at (435) 797-1266.

**Withdrawal Policy and "I" Grade Policy**

Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances, but not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term 'extenuating' circumstances includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by an employer, or (5) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.

**Students with Disabilities**

Students with ADA-documented physical, sensory, emotional or medical impairments may be eligible for reasonable accommodations. Veterans may also be eligible for services. All accommodations are coordinated through the Disability Resource Center (DRC) in Room 101 of the University Inn, (435)797-2444. Please contact the DRC as early in the semester as possible. Alternate format materials (Braille, large print, digital, or audio) are available with advance notice.

Contacting the Disability Resource Center (DRC):

- On Campus: Room 101 of the University Inn
- Phone: 435-797-2444
- Website: [http://www.usu.edu/drc/](http://www.usu.edu/drc/)

**Diversity Statement**
Regardless of intent, careless or ill-informed remarks can be offensive and hurtful to others and detract from the learning climate. If you feel uncomfortable in a classroom due to offensive language or actions by an instructor or student(s) regarding ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, contact:

- Student Services: [http://www.usu.edu/studentservices/](http://www.usu.edu/studentservices/), 435.797.1712, studentservices@usu.edu, TSC 220
- Access and Diversity: [http://www.usu.edu/accesscenter/](http://www.usu.edu/accesscenter/), 435.797.1728, access@usu.edu; TSC 315
- LGBTQA Programs: [http://www.usu.edu/accesscenter/lgbtqa/](http://www.usu.edu/accesscenter/lgbtqa/), 435-797-GAYS, TSC 314

You can learn about your student rights by visiting:

**Grievance Process**

Students who feel they have been unfairly treated may file a grievance through the channels and procedures described in the Student Code: Article VII. Grievances.

Full details for USU Academic Policies and Procedures can be found at:

- Student Conduct
- Student Code
- Academic Integrity
- USU Academic Policies and Procedures
- Academic Freedom and Professional Responsibility Policy

**Emergency Procedures**

In the case of a drill or real emergency, classes will be notified to evacuate the building by the sound of the fire/emergency alarm system or by a building representative. In the event of a disaster that may interfere with either notification, evacuate as the situation dictates (i.e., in an earthquake when shaking ceases or immediately when a fire is discovered). Turn off computers and take any personal items with you. Elevators should not be used; instead, use the closest stairs.