

University of Guelph - Department of Geography, Environment & Geomatics

Course Description – Winter 2020

GEOG * 6330 – Biotic Processes and Biophysical Systems (0.5 Credits)

Class Meetings: Thursdays 11:30 –2:20 HUTT 348

Instructor: Ze'ev Gedalof (zgedalof@uoguelph.ca)

Office Hours: Hutt 356, by appointment or by chance.

Therapy Dog: Probably None ☹

PREREQUISITE

None

OVERVIEW

In this course we will critically evaluate concepts used for the analysis and management of biophysical systems. In particular we will look at the links between biological and physical systems, theoretical concepts used to explain ecosystem behaviour and organization, and management strategies based on those concepts.

OBJECTIVES

- To learn fundamental principles of biogeography.
- To develop analytical and critical thinking skills.
- To assess the resource management implications of biogeographic paradigms in natural resource science.

APPROACH

The course will be conducted mainly as a discussion course on readings jointly selected by the professor and the students. In the first half of the course we will read a seminal (but now dated) text in the discipline - *The Structure and Dynamics of Geographic Ranges*, by Kevin Gaston. In the second half of the course we will read papers that either apply the concepts covered by Gaston, or address questions raised during the early class discussions.

EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to be active, thoughtful and prepared participants in discussion every class. The assigned readings are to be completed prior to each class meeting, as they provide the basis for in-class discussions and activities. Because the topics build on each other, regular attendance is essential for informed discussion.

COURSE EVALUATION

- *Participation.* A participation grade out of 3 will be assigned for each class. 1 = you showed up but didn't do the reading; 2 = you showed up, did the readings, but hadn't really thought about them. 3 = you might be hung over, but you still dragged your ass out of bed and had a few good thoughts about the readings.
- *Reflection Pieces* – Each week you will submit (either in hard copy or by email) a short document in which you identify what you think are the 3 key messages from the assigned reading(s), 3 questions that you would like to discuss in class, and 3 thoughts on what

more you would like to know about the subject. We will try to address these questions as the course progresses.

- *Debate* – toward the end of the class we will identify a topic for debate relevant to student interests. You will each be randomly assigned to a side..
- *Final Exam*. The format of the final exam will be jointly agreed upon by the students and the professor, but it will be an open-book, take-home exam. You will have one week to complete it. In previous years the final exam has been of the format “answer three of the following four questions.” If that seems appropriate that will be the default; otherwise I will assign a single essay-style question based on the readings we have done during the semester. In either case, no additional research or reading is expected.

GRADING:

Component	Value
Participation	30%
Reflections	30%
Debate	15 %
Final Exam	25 %

Late assignments (without prior approval) will be penalized at a rate of 10 percent of the value of the assignment per day.

Required Text:

Gaston, K. J. (2004). *The Structure and Dynamics of Geographic Ranges*, Oxford University Press.

Remaining readings to be provided as pdf files or in hardcopy.

University of Guelph Policy Statements:

E-mail Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the graduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration:

https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/2014-2015/genreg/sec_d0e1493.shtml

Drop Date

The last date to drop Winter 2020 courses without academic penalty is Friday, April 3, 2020. . For regulations and procedures for Dropping Courses, see the graduate calendar.

Copies of out-of-class assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be

asked to resubmit work at any time.

Accessibility

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community's shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact the Centre for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible.

For more information, contact CSD at [519-824-4120](tel:519-824-4120) ext. 56208 or email csd@uoguelph.ca or see the website: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/csd/>

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection. Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor. The Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Graduate Calendar: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/graduatestudies/gchandbook/academicmisconduct>

Recording of Materials

Presentations made in relation to course work—including lectures—cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

Resources

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies and regulations which apply to undergraduate, graduate and diploma programs:

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/index.cfm?index>