



# **BSC 597 Wildlife Habitat Ecology**

## **Fall 2014**

**Instructor:** Dean Ransom, Jr., PhD; Assistant Professor

**Office Location:** 212 STM

**Office Hours:** 9:00 AM-12:00PM M

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## **COURSE INFORMATION**

### **Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings**

No textbook for this class. Notes and readings will disseminated at the beginning of each week and can be found on this class's e-college page.

### **Textbook(s) Required**

None.

### **Course Description**

This class is designed to acquaint students with the theory, concepts, and techniques used to manage habitat for wildlife inhabiting forest, rangeland, and wetland ecosystems. Natural processes that influence secondary plant succession will be discussed in context to local or small scale applications with respect to single or targeted wildlife species and then extrapolated to larger scales of resolution to incorporate concepts of community ecology, conservation biology, and landscape ecology. Relevant readings from the peer reviewed literature will be used to illustrate concepts and reinforce the lecture notes.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

1. The student will be able to explain and discuss the origin of and current concept of wildlife habitat.
2. The student will be able to explain the role historic and current ecological disturbance regimes (such as fire and grazing) have had on wildlife habitat.

3. The student will be able to describe the characteristics of forest, rangeland, and wetland systems and the current management strategies used to manage wildlife associated with such systems.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

This course will be conducted as if it were a classroom lecture. Rather than actually lecturing, I will instead provide lecture notes and supplemental readings from the scientific literature. These readings may enhance a lecture topic, or they may be used as a writing exercise to gauge comprehension of a debatable or controversial aspect of a lecture topic. All aspects of the class will be administrated via the e-college platform.

## **GRADING**

Your grade in this class will be based upon 4 exams worth 100 pts each, 2 writing exercises based upon scientific journal articles that will be worth 50 pts each, and 10 short weekly quizzes worth 10 pts each. The final exam will simply be the last lecture exam, and will not be comprehensive. Your letter grade will be based on the percentage of total points earned divided by total points possible where an A =  $\geq 90\%$ ; B=80-89%, C=70-79%; etc.

## **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

Students will need access to a modern computer with internet access and the ability to read pdf documents (e.g., Adobe reader).

### **Interaction with Instructor Statement**

If you have questions regarding the lecture material or assigned readings you can communicate with me via e-mail directly, e-mail via the e-college platform, or by phone. If you are able to pilgrimage to campus, I will make every effort to set aside time to meet with you when and where possible. We are all on some type of learning curve, so I will do my best to address your questions and concerns.

### **Course Policies**

Since this is a distance, online class with no one to proctor the exam, I will allow the use of your lecture notes and assigned readings to use on the exams. For the same reason, I will expect exams back by 5:00 PM the day following the posting of the exam on the e-college web page. Quizzes will be used to determine your participation and required census reporting to the university. They will also provide a means to review and study for the exams. They should be completed and returned by end of the day they were assigned. I have planned for 2 writing exercises which will be the critical evaluation of several (<4) scientific journal articles on a current subject covered in the lecture notes. These exercises will require you to summarize each paper findings, critique their findings on the basis of their objectives and scientific validity, and if they represent opposing viewpoints or findings, choose and defend a side. You should be able to do this with a 5 page maximum double spaced paper. You do not have to use a journal format for this paper, and the due

date will posted with the assigned readings, probably within 7-10 days. Finally, as the instructor of record, I reserve the right to change or modify these policies should the need arise with advance notice to you the student.

## University Specific Procedures

### ADA Statement

#### Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

#### Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Gee Library- Room 132  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)

### Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

## COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

- Week 1. Introduction, Origins, The Central Thesis, and Ecological Succession.
- Week 2. The Definition of Habitat, Assumptions & Attributes, Carrying Capacity (K)
- Week 3. Edge, Interspersion, Redundant Edge, Useable Space, Generalist and Specialists.
- Week 4. **EXAM I**, Forest Systems and Silviculture Practices.
- Week 5. Important Legislation, Snags, Old growth, SMZ's, Corridors
- Week 6. Fragmentation, Variegation, and Island Biogeography
- Week 7. **EXAM II**, Rangelands, Definition, Prescribed fire
- Week 8. Grazing Systems, Mechanical brush control
- Week 9. Supplemental Feeding, Competition
- Week 10. **Exam III**, Wetland Systems, Water Manipulation
- Week 11. Vegetation Management, Green tree reservoirs
- Week 12. Moist soil management, Nest boxes
- Week 13. Specific examples from Texas
- Week 14. Finish what's left, **EXAM IV**.
- Week 15. Vail, Snowmass, or where ever.