

ECOLOGY -- BIOL 317
Spring 2017 – MCALC rm. 1107

Instructor: Spencer Bissett

Office: Room 125 Life Sciences

Phone: 827-0562

electromail: bissettsn@vcu.edu (please contact me in my office or by phone, if possible) Office hours: [removed], or by appointment & when my door is open

SI Leader: [removed]

SI review sessions: [removed]

- Sessions capped at 30 students
- Collaborative and group-work-based
- Not intended to replace independent study

Preceptors: [removed]

TEXT: Molles, M.C. 2016. Ecology: concepts and applications [7th edition]. McGraw-Hill: NY. (Purchase the electronic version with “Connect” from either the VCU Bookstore or McGraw Hill). McGraw Hill “Connect for Ecology” will be required for this class.

ELECTRONIC SUPPLEMENT: TopHat software; course code [removed] (see below)

Course Objectives

1. To develop an understanding of basic ecological principles.
2. To develop an appreciation of the complexity, diversity and structure of ecological systems.
3. To apply our growing knowledge of ecology to situations in everyday life.
4. To recognize ourselves as a part of our ecosystems -- and to explore how humankind impacts nature, and how nature impacts us.

Course Policies

1. Please read this section thoroughly.
2. Please arrive on time; class will start promptly at 4:00 PM.
3. This should not be solely a lecture class; it should be an interactive educational experience. I expect questions and class discussions.

4. Prerequisites for this course are BIOL 151, 151L, 152 and 152L, (218?) and UNIV 200.
5. There is a strong correlation between class attendance and performance. I may administratively withdraw students that do not regularly attend this course.
6. You will take four scheduled lecture tests (100 pts each) during the semester that cover both lecture and text material. A fifth exam, the final (also 100 pts), will be cumulative over the entire course.
7. Your lowest grade from the four lecture exams will be dropped. If you do not take a lecture test you will receive a score of zero regardless of reason.
8. You will have occasional in-class assessments, graded assignments, and spontaneous question sets, using "Connect," "TopHat," or via "Blackboard." In-class assessments will occur randomly throughout the semester. You will have a minimum of 48 hours to complete "Connect" assignments. No make-up tests, in-class assignments or "Connect" assignments will be allowed (you can drop your lowest test score). There will be no extra credit points.
9. There will be 450 (+?) total possible (tests/exam/assessments) points for the semester including in-class assignments and "Connect" online assessments. Final grades will be determined with a 10 point scale (i.e. 90, 80, 70, 60) based on the percentage of total possible points.

Important Dates*

February 13	1 st exam
March 13	2 nd exam
April 10	3 rd exam
May 1	4 th exam
May 8	Final Exam (4-6:50 pm)

January 23rd: last day of add / drop.

January 27th: last day to notify instructor of special observances / conflicts.

March 24th: last day to withdraw with a "W".

You will have a total of 4 lecture exams and 1 final exam.

NO MAKE-UP EXAMS, IN-CLASS OR BLACKBOARD / "Connect" ASSESSMENTS WILL BE GIVEN!!! YOU MAY DROP YOUR LOWEST LECTURE TEST SCORE.

ALL STUDENTS MUST TAKE THE FINAL EXAM.

Summary of Lecture Exam policies:

Failure to comply with any of these policies may result in the forfeit (0%) of the exam or the involvement of the honor system – this depends on the infraction*

- Memorize your V# prior to your first exam.
- Bring a photo ID for each exam.
- No cell phones during the exam... for any reason.
- No hats
- No ear devices or any other electronic devices
- No bags/purses at your feet; place them at the front of the room or along the walls
- No clipboards
- No highlighters
- You may leave the class during an exam with permission from the instructor
- Do not look at any exam but your own
- Do not speak to your classmates once the exam has commenced
- Turn in all exam materials to the Instructor (this includes extra exams)
- No duplication of exams or exam questions in any way (prior to, during, or after the exam)

Quizzes/Assignments: Some quizzes/assignments are on the reading and may be given via Blackboard prior to when we cover the material in lecture. Assignments will be announced in class and by email and students will be given at least one day to complete the assignment (the goal is open on Monday, close on Sunday). Assignments may also be due electronically or on paper in class.

DSS

If you require accommodations approved by Disability Support Services, you must meet with me to discuss how your accommodations will be met in this class. This may require a “contract” outlining what the expectations are for you and for me. If you require testing accommodations, you must notify me at least a week in advance for testing at the DSS office or testing center. You must take your test on the same day as the rest of the class (given availability with DSS) as close to the class time as possible. You must also send a reminder at least 24 hours in advance of the test.

Blackboard/E-mail/Top Hat

All students are expected to utilize blackboard (primarily) and / or e-mail (backup / emergency) on a daily basis to keep up with required readings, changes to the schedule and other announcements. Blackboard will regularly be updated with reading assignments and other materials relevant to the course. Students may also periodically receive e-mails, but are expected to check both blackboard and e-mail, as information may not always be made available through both platforms. Feel free to email with questions, but I will not guarantee that I will check my mail after 5pm on weekdays or anytime on the weekends (you may get lucky). Otherwise, I am pretty prompt on responding to email (with 24 hours). This could change during busy advising times, and around test / exams.

We will be using the Top Hat (www.tophat.com) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones / tablets, laptops, or through text message.

You can visit the Top Hat Overview (<https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide>) within the Top Hat Success Center which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account, as well as providing a brief overview to get you up and running on the system.

An email invitation will be sent to you by email, but if don't receive this email, you can register by simply visiting our course website: [removed]

Note: our Course Join Code is [removed]

Top Hat will require a paid subscription, and a full breakdown of all subscription options available can be found here: www.tophat.com/pricing.

Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time, due to the fact that they require specific user information to troubleshoot these issues, please contact their Support Team directly by way of email (support@tophat.com), the in app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491.

TENTATIVE* LECTURE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

**subject to change*

TOPIC	CHAPTERS Molles
I. Introduction	
A. The “e” words	1
B. Natural history	2, 3
II. Individuals	
A. Temperature relations	5
B. Water relations	6
C. Energy and nutrient relations	7
III. Populations	
A. Selection	4,8
B. Distribution and abundance	9
C. Dynamics	10
D. Growth	11
E. Life histories	12
IV. Biotic interactions	
A. Competition	13
B. Exploitation	14
C. Mutualism	15
V. Community and ecosystem processes	
A. Biodiversity	16
B. Food webs	17
C. Production and E ^o -flow	18
D. Nutrient cycling	19
VI. Integrated processes	
A. Succession	20
B. Landscape ecology	21
C. Biogeography	22
D. Global ecology	23

What to Know and Do To Be Prepared for Emergencies at VCU

1. Sign up to receive VCU text messaging alerts (<http://www.vcu.edu/alert/notify>). Keep your information up-to-date.
2. Know the safe evacuation route from each of your classrooms. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in on-campus classrooms.
3. Listen for and follow instructions from VCU or other designated authorities.
4. Know where to go for additional emergency information (<http://www.vcu.edu/alert>).
5. Know the emergency phone number for the VCU Police (828-1234). Report suspicious activities and objects.

NOTE: It is against the VCU Honor Code to sell, solicit or purchase any reproductions or facsimiles of course content on-line without authorized consent from The McGraw-Hill publishing companies or the course instructor. This includes any and all lecture notes, figures, pictures or supplemental instructional materials supplied by the instructor during lecture or via Blackboard.

**<http://www.provost.vcu.edu/faculty-resources/academic-affairs/syllabus-statements/>
VCU Email Policy**

Email is considered an official method for communication at VCU because it delivers information in a convenient, timely, cost-effective, and environmentally aware manner. Students are expected to check their official VCU email on a frequent and consistent basis in order to remain informed of university-related communications. The university recommends checking email daily. Students are responsible for the consequences of not reading, in a timely fashion, university-related communications sent to their official VCU student email account. This policy ensures that all students have access to this important form of communication. It ensures students can be reached through a standardized channel by faculty and other staff of the university as needed. Mail sent to the VCU email address may include notification of university-related actions, including disciplinary action. Please [read the policy](#) in its entirety.

VCU Honor System: Upholding Academic Integrity

The VCU Honor System policy describes the responsibilities of students, faculty and administration in upholding academic integrity, while at the same time respecting the rights of individuals to the due process offered by administrative hearings and appeals. According to this policy, "Members of the academic community are required to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity." In addition, "All members of the VCU community are presumed to have an understanding of the VCU Honor System and are required to:

- Agree to be bound by the Honor System policy and its procedures;
- Report suspicion or knowledge of possible violations of the Honor System;
- Support an environment that reflects a commitment to academic integrity;
- Answer truthfully when called upon to do so regarding Honor System cases;

- Maintain confidentiality regarding specific information in Honor System cases."

More information can be found at in the [VCU policy library](#).

Student Conduct in the Classroom

According to the [Faculty Guide to Student Conduct in Instructional Settings](#), "The university is a community of learners. Students, as well as faculty, have a responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment that supports effective instruction. In order for faculty members (including graduate teaching assistants) to provide and students to receive effective instruction in classrooms, laboratories, studios, online courses, and other learning areas, the university expects students to conduct themselves in an orderly and cooperative manner." Among other things, cell phones and beepers should be turned off while in the classroom. The Student Code of Conduct also prohibits the possession of or carrying of any weapon. For more information see <http://register.dls.virginia.gov/details.aspx?id=3436>.

Students with Disabilities

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, require that VCU provide "academic adjustments" or "reasonable accommodations" to any student who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity. To receive accommodations, students must request them by contacting the Disability Support Services Office on the Monroe Park Campus (828-2253) or the Division for Academic Success on the MCV campus (828-9782). Please also visit the [Disability Support Services website](#) and/or the [Division for Academic Success website](#) for additional information.

Any student who has a disability that requires an accommodation should schedule a meeting with the instructor at the student's earliest convenience. Additionally, if coursework requires the student to work in a lab environment, the student should advise the instructor or a department chairperson of any concerns that the student may have regarding safety issues related to a disability. Students should follow this procedure for all courses in the academic semester.

Statement on Military Short-Term Training or Deployment

If military students receive orders for short-term training or for deployment/mobilization, they should inform and present their orders to Military Student Services and to their professor(s). For further information on policies and procedures contact Military Services at 828-5993 or access the corresponding policies.

Excused Absences for Students Representing the University

Students who represent the university (athletes and others) do not choose their schedules. Student athletes are required to attend games and/or meets. All student athletes should provide their schedules to their instructors at the beginning of the semester. The Intercollegiate Athletic Council strongly encourages faculty to treat missed classes or exams (because of a scheduling conflict) as excused absences and urges faculty to work with the students to make up the work or exam.

Campus Emergency Information

What to Know and Do to Be Prepared for Emergencies at VCU:

- Sign up to receive [VCU text messaging alerts](#). Keep your information up-to-date. Within the classroom, the professor will keep his or her phone on to receive any emergency transmissions.
- Know the safe evacuation route from each of your classrooms. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in on-campus classrooms.

- Listen for and follow instructions from VCU or other designated authorities. Within the classroom, follow your professor's instructions.
- Know where to go for [additional emergency information](#).
- Know the emergency phone number for the VCU Police (828-1234).
- Report suspicious activities and objects.
- Keep your permanent address and emergency contact information current in eServices.

Important Dates

You can view important dates for the Spring 2017 semester in the [university calendar](#).

VCU Mobile

The VCU Mobile application is a valuable tool to get the latest VCU information on the go. The application contains helpful information including the VCU directory, events, course schedules, campus maps, athletics and general VCU news, emergency information, library resources, Blackboard and more. To download the application on your smart phone or for more information, please visit <http://m.vcu.edu>.

Class Registration Required for Attendance

Students may attend only those classes for which they have registered. Faculty may not add students to class rosters or Blackboard. Therefore, if students are attending a class for which they have not registered, they must stop attending.

Withdrawal from Classes

Before withdrawing from classes, students should consult their instructor as well as other appropriate university offices. Withdrawing from classes may negatively impact a student's financial aid award and his or her semester charges. To discuss financial aid and the student bill, visit the [Student Services Center](#) at 1015 Floyd Avenue (Harris Hall) and/or contact your financial aid counselor regarding the impact on your financial aid. Contact information for the [University Financial Aid Office](#) is available online.

Student Financial Responsibility

Students assume the responsibility of full payment of tuition and fees generated from their registration and all charges for housing and dining services, and other applicable miscellaneous charges. Students are ultimately responsible for any unpaid balance on their account as a result of the University Financial Aid Office or their third party sponsor canceling or reducing their award(s).