

ECOLOGY -- BIOL 317
Fall 2019 – [Removed]

Instructor: Spencer Bissett

Office: [Removed]

Phone: [Removed]

electromail: bissettsn@vcu.edu (please contact me in my office or by phone, if possible)

Office hours: [Removed]

SI Leader:

SI review sessions: Will be announced via e-mail by our SI Leader

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

Preceptors:

[Removed]

TEXT:

Molles, M.C. 2018. Ecology: concepts and applications [8th edition]. McGraw-Hill: NY.
(You may 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.

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 [Removed]
3. This should not be solely a lecture class; it should be an interactive educational experience. I expect questions and class discussions.
4. Prerequisites: BIOL and BIOZ 151 and BIOL and BIOZ 152, each with a minimum grade of C; and BIOL 200, MATH 200, MATH 201, STAT 210, STAT 212, STAT 314 or satisfactory score on the VCU Mathematics Placement Test within the one-year period immediately preceding the beginning of the course. Biology majors must have completed BIOL 200.

5. There is a strong correlation between class attendance and performance. Students who do not regularly attend class meetings may be administratively withdrawn from the course.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 comprehensive, incorporating material from the entire course. **The final exam is required.**
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 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 a minimum of 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

Test Dates:

- [Removed] -- 1st exam
- [Removed] -- 2nd exam
- [Removed] -- 3rd exam
- [Removed] -- 4th exam
- [Removed]: Final Exam ([Removed])**

[Removed]: last day of add / drop.

[Removed]: last day to notify instructor of special observances / conflicts.

[Removed]: no class / university closed.

[Removed]: last day to withdraw with a "W".

[Removed]: Fall break.

[Removed]: Last day of classes

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.

To request a letter of recommendation, you must have worked personally with me in research, independent / directed study, or as a preceptor.

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: Unique Course URL

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)
Introduction	
The "e" words	
B. Natural history	2, 3
Individuals	
Temperature relations	5
Water relations	6
C. Energy and nutrient relations	7
Populations	
Selection	4,8
Distribution and abundance	9
Dynamics	10
Growth	11
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
Integrated processes	
A. Succession	20
B. Landscape ecology	21
C. Biogeography	22
D. Global ecology	23

VCU syllabus statement

The required syllabus statements originally included here are maintained by the Office of the Provost and are regularly updated. To prevent the dissemination of information which may no longer be accurate or complete, the full text of the required syllabus statements have been removed from this document.

Students should visit <http://go.vcu.edu/syllabus> and review all syllabus statement information. The full university syllabus statement includes information on safety, registration, the VCU Honor Code, student conduct, withdrawal and more.