



FALL 2018
BIOLOGY 4A03 - ADVANCED TOPICS IN ECOLOGY

PROFESSOR

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Advanced Topics in Ecology course is focused upon the examination of current topics in ecology, including ecosystem & landscape ecology, evolutionary ecology, and behavioural ecology. This course instructs collaborative research teams of students. Students conduct projects designed to enhance their knowledge of advanced areas of ecology. Course assignments and projects involve compiling and summarizing an extensive literature review, development of oral presentations skills, reflective journals, formulation of critiques (constructive feedback), and writing inquiry guided in-depth integrated reports using a fusion of both problem based learning PBL and Inquiry learning approaches. This course is multidisciplinary and holistic with the emphasis on face-to-face in-lecture discussions and is application-based. Students will develop their analytical, critical thinking, problem solving, presentation, ecological research literacy, and collaborative research skills.

Prerequisites - One of Biology 3DD3 (or Life Sciences 3DD3), 3FF3, 3SS3, and registration in Level III or above of any Honours academic program.

BIO 4A03 COURSE GOALS & OBJECTIVES

To facilitate the development of self-directed learning skills required to explore the diverse concepts of ecology. Upon completion of Biology 4A03, students will be able to:

- Effectively discuss the fundamental concepts and underlying processes related to advanced topics in ecology.
- Implement research skills necessary for ecological studies.
- Work independently and in collaboration with others to compile, analyze, interpret, and present scientific findings using oral, written, and online formats.

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BIOLOGY 4A03 LECTURES

Please refer to the Fall/ Winter 2018-2019 McMaster University Undergraduate Course Timetables.

Lectures will be held on **Mondays (3:30 - 4:20pm) and Wednesdays (3:30 - 5:20pm) in Building T-13, Room 107.**

The 4A03 lectures will be a synthesis of several sources (journal articles, textbooks, online research resources, and current research). Lecture outlines and supplementary information will be posted on the Biology 4A03 Avenue site.

ACADEMIC PROPERTY STATEMENT

NO part of the Biology 4A03 lectures or in-class discussions may be reproduced, in any form or by any means, without permission in writing from Dr. L. Kajiura.

NO visual media (voice recordings, overheads, photos, Powerpoint, MP3 media) may be reproduced or communicated by any means.

USAGE OF VOICE RECORDERS, CAMERAS OR VIDEO / CAMERA-CAPABLE CELLPHONES or SMARTPHONES ARE NOT PERMITTED TO BE USED DURING LECTURES.

HOW TO LOG INTO THE BIOLOGY 4A03 AVENUE SITE

1. Start your web browser and go to: <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>
2. **USER ID:** Type in the first part (in lower case letters) of your McMaster e-mail address (Your MAC ID).

 For example: If your McMaster e-mail address is janedoe@mcmaster.ca, then your Avenue User ID is janedoe.
3. **PASSWORD:** Type in your McMaster password.
4. Then click on the Login button.

You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader (this is freeware) to read the *pdf* files. Most computers have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed as standard software. If your computer does not have it, you may download it from the Adobe website: <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

Note:

In this course, we will be using Avenue (Online Learning Platform) and audio-visual recordings for some assessments. Students should be aware that when they access the electronic components of this course, private information, including first and last names, user names for the McMaster University e-mail accounts, and program affiliations may become apparent to others participating in the course. Continuation in this Biology 4A03 course will be deemed as consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss them with the course's professor, Dr. Kajiura at the start of the course during the 1st week of lectures.

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COURSE POLICIES

It is the responsibility of the student to attend all lecture sections to which he or she has been assigned. If a lecture is missed, students are responsible for the covered material. The professor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster e-mail inbox and the Biology 4A03 course website daily during the term and to note changes or updates.

REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK:

For absences from classes lasting up to 3 days: Using the McMaster student absence form (MSAF) on-line, self-reporting tool, undergraduate students may report absences lasting up to 3 days and may also request relief for missed academic work. The submission of medical or other types of supporting documentation is normally not required. Students may use this tool to submit a maximum of one request for relief of missed academic work per term. Students must immediately follow up with the course instructor regarding the nature of the relief. Failure to do so may negate the opportunity for relief. It is the prerogative of the instructor of the course to determine the appropriate relief for missed term work in his/her course.

For absences from classes lasting more than 3 days: Students who are absent more than three days cannot use the on-line, self-reporting tool to request relief. They MUST report to their Faculty Office to discuss their situation and may be required to provide appropriate supporting documentation. If warranted, students will be approved to use a discretionary version of the MSAF on-line, self-reporting tool.

For the reporting of more than two requests for relief per term: Students who wish to submit more than two requests for relief of missed academic work per term cannot use the on-line, self-reporting tool to request relief. They MUST report to their Faculty Office to discuss their situation and may be required to provide supporting documentation. If warranted, students will be approved to use a discretionary version of the MSAF on-line, self-reporting tool.

For absences from classes lasting more than 3 days or for the reporting of more than requests for relief per term: If the reason was medical, the approved McMaster University Medical Form covering the relevant dates must be submitted. The student must be seen by a doctor at the earliest possible date, normally on or before the date of the missed work and the doctor must verify the duration of the illness. Relief will not be considered for minor illnesses. If the reason is non-medical, appropriate documentation with verifiable origin covering the relevant dates must be submitted, normally within five working days. In some circumstances, students may be advised to submit a Petition for Special Consideration (Form A) seeking relief for missed academic work. In deciding whether or not to grant a petition, adequacy of the supporting documentation, including the timing in relation to the due date of the missed work and the degree of the student's incapacitation, may be taken into account. If the petition is approved the Faculty Office will notify the instructor(s) recommending relief. The student must contact the instructor promptly to discuss the appropriate relief. Failure to do so may negate the opportunity for relief. It is the prerogative of the instructor of the course to determine the appropriate relief for missed term work in his/her course. The MSAF on-line, self-reporting tool cannot be used to apply for any final examination or its equivalent (for Final Integrated Report). See *Petitions for Special Consideration* in this section of the Calendar.

Students should expect to have academic commitments Monday through Saturday but not on Sunday or statutory holidays. Students who require accommodations to meet a religious obligation or to celebrate an important religious holiday should make their requests within three weeks of the start of term to their Faculty office. With a valid MSAF report, missed course work's percent worth will be added to the percent worth of the Final Integrated Report.. Without a valid MSAF report, a missed course work will be given a mark of zero. There will be no discretionary approvals given by the Professor.

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GRADING

Final BIOLOGY 4A03 Grades will be determined by the following evaluations:

<u>Components</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Value</u>
Individual Lecture Participation Activities	Throughout the term	2%
Weekly Team Log Postings on Avenue Discussion Forum	Throughout the term	2%
Proposal Presentation	Wednesday October 3 rd	20%
Individual/Team Assessment for Proposal Presentation	Wednesday October 3 rd	3%
Constructive Feedback for Other Proposal Presentations	Wednesday October 17 th	5%
Peer Critiques of Other Teams' Constructive Feedback	Wednesday October 24 th	5%
Individual / Team Assessment Meetings with Dr. Kajiura	Oct 31 st , Nov 1 st , Nov 2 nd	10%
Final Integrated Presentation	Wednesday November 14 th	20%
Constructive Feedback for Final Integrated Presentations	Wednesday November 21 st	5%
Final Integrated Report	Wednesday December 5 th	25%
Individual/Team Assessment for Final Integrated Report	Wednesday December 5 th	3%

Final marks for the course are based on a total assessment of each student's record. It is a student's responsibility to make sure that his/her marks are complete and correct. Grade adjustment techniques may be used. However, marks will NOT be bell-curved at any point in the term. The Professor reserves the right to change or revise information contained in this course outline. The professor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, students will be given reasonable notice via the Biology 4A03 Avenue online course website with an explanation and an opportunity to comment on changes.

It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course website daily during the term and to note any changes. Marks will be calculated according to the above grading scheme in order to be consistent with previous years. The Faculty does not approve of altering marks arbitrarily at a student's request.

McMASTER UNIVERSITY GRADING SCHEME

Grades obtained for Biology 4A03 will be converted according to the following scheme, which is the one in general use at McMaster University.

90 - 100%	A+	12
85 - 89%	A	11
80 - 84%	A-	10
77 - 79%	B+	9
73 - 76%	B	8
70 - 72%	B-	7
67 - 69%	C+	6
63 - 66%	C	5
60 - 62%	C-	4
57 - 59%	D+	3
53 - 56%	D	2
50 - 52%	D-	1
0 - 49%	F	0

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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials students earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

The students are responsible to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty, please refer to the *Academic Integrity Policy*, located at www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained
- Improper collaboration in group work
- Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

Any student who infringes one of these resolutions will be treated according to published policy.

To deter acts of academic dishonesty in Biology 4A03, there will be multiple versions of assessments.

In addition, marked student course work will be randomly scanned and photocopied.

In order to uphold the integrity of McMaster University, please consult the Statement on Academic Ethics and the Senate Resolutions on Academic Dishonesty stipulated in the Senate Policy Statements, presented at registration in the Senate Office, and also accessible on the web, <http://www.mcmaster.ca/univsec/policy/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

AUTHENTICITY/PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Students who do not wish to submit their work through A2L and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or A2L. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g. on-line search, other software, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

In Biology 4A03, we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to evaluate plagiarism. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically to Turnitin.com and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work to Turnitin.com must still submit a copy to the professor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact the Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905 525-9140, Ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities policy.

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-StudentWithDisabilitiespdf>

Students who are registered with SAS must ensure that they meet with Dr. Kajiura at the start of the course in order to discuss their academic accommodations.

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REQUESTS FOR RELIEF OF MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for the Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

Instructors cannot ask or require medical notes from students. A student may be allowed modifications to academic obligations, including deadlines under the following circumstances:

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS, OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

- a) Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar’s Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments and tests.

RELIEF FROM THE CONSEQUENCES OF MISSED TERM WORK OR EXAMINATIONS BASED ON COMPELLING PERSONAL FAMILY OR MEDICAL CIRCUMSTANCES:

- b) A student may self-declare an illness or other personal situation granting themselves relief from academic work under certain circumstances using the McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF).
- c) For all other compelling circumstances, the student is required to request relief from their Faculty Office. If the petition is granted, the faculty office will notify the instructor of the time period for which the student has been granted an approved absence.
- d) It is at the discretion of the instructor to determine the nature of the relief, bearing in mind re-weighing one component of the grade to 75% of the final grade or more is discouraged without approval from Department Chair or Associate Dean’s office.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

As a student enrolled in this course you have been granted permission to access an online learning management system, Avenue to Learn. Avenue to Learn course pages are considered an extension of the classroom and usage is provided as a privilege subject to the same code of conduct expected in a lecture hall (see relevant section of the student code of conduct below). This privilege allows participation in course discussion forums and access to supplementary course materials. Please be advised that all areas of Avenue to Learn, including discussion forums, are owned and operated by McMaster University. Any content or communications deemed inappropriate by the course instructor (or designated individual) may be removed at his/her discretion. Per the University Technology Services Code of Conduct, all members of the McMaster community are obligated to use computing resources in ways that are responsible, ethical and professional. Avenue to Learn Terms of Use are available at <http://avenue.mcmaster.ca>.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT - APPENDIX D

Major Offences include, but are not limited to: (h) engaging in disruptive behaviour. Disruptive behaviour is behaviour in class or out of class which involves substantial disorder and/or disrupts the operation of the University (j) engaging in verbal or non-verbal behaviour or communication toward an individual or group which is considered to be intimidating, harassing and/or discriminatory.

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COURSE MODIFICATIONS

At certain points in the course, it may make sense to modify the schedule. The instructor may modify elements of the course and will notify students accordingly in class or on Avenue to Learn or course website. Any changes related to evaluations will be made in consultation with the Department Chair.

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g. severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

ACADEMIC SKILLS

The upper 3rd and 4th years of university are often very challenging for undergraduate students. For students who wish to improve their academic skills, study habits, time management, or for students who require specialized services and English as a second language (ESL) services, assistance is available at the Student Success Centre in Gilmour Hall, Room 110 and the Student Accessibility Services located the lower level (basement) of the McMaster University Student Centre B107.