

Biology 4AA3 - Conservation Biology - Course Outline
Biology Department, McMaster University – Winter Term, 2015

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Instructor

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Teaching Assistants

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Course Learning Objectives

The objectives of this course are to explore and learn the theory and practice of conservation biology and biodiversity issues, develop an ability to interpret primary scientific literature and effectively communicate information on topics in conservation biology in presentations and writing. We will also gain familiarity with practical aspects of conservation projects.

Lectures

Lectures will examine a subset of conservation topics to illustrate how various approaches can be applied to conserving diversity in the natural world. Students are responsible for all content discussed or assigned in readings and lectures (regular or guest). Attendance on all field trips and all laboratories is mandatory. We will be using the Avenue to Learn course tools of McMaster University.

Laboratory Sessions

Laboratory sessions will include some field trips, presentations by visitors or the instructor, and student presentations. Content covered in laboratory sessions will be included in examinations.

Time Slot

Lectures: Twice a week, times to be announced

Labs: Once a week, times to be announced

Tutorial: Used as needed

Readings

Readings will be assigned and distributed as PDF files or URLs through Avenue.

Evaluations

Grades per component

Topic Pitch	5
Seminar Progress I&II	10
Newspaper article*	10
Personal action	5
Group Presentation	20
Individual contribution to group	10
Class Participation	10
Final Paper**	15
Final Exam	15

* **Bonus of 2.5% if the letter is published.**

** **Bonus of up to 2.5% for exchanging and editing final papers**

The final exam will consist of short-answer conceptual questions that test student understanding of course material.

Individual final papers will synthesize information from political or scientific publications related to conservation biology. If possible, topics that have divergent or controversial positions, results, or perspectives are encouraged whenever possible. The course paper should (1) provide pertinent background information, (2) summarize different sides of any controversial issues or alternative hypotheses, and (3) develop a synthesis of the topic presented. Papers should attempt to provide a **novel synthesis of a topic** and in some cases **teach or present a topic from a unique perspective**. The final paper is due on the last day of classes.

Prerequisites

2C03 (Genetics) or MOLBIOL 2C03; and one of BIOL 3DD3 (Communities and Ecosystems), BIOL 3FF3 (Evolution), or BIOL 3SS3 (Population Ecology).

Expression of Grades

Percentage marks will be used throughout this course. The final grade will be reported to the University as a Letter Grade using McMaster University's standard scale for the conversion of percentages to letters.

Changes To This Outline

The instructor reserves the right to change the means by which our course objectives are to be achieved, but this will not occur either precipitously or without reasonable notice to the students enrolled in the course. Such changes could result, for example, from new ideas emerging as the course develops and/or from particular arrangements discussed between instructor and students.

Calculator Requirements

The McMaster Standard Calculator may be used in exams for this course.

Policy Reminders

We refer all students to the McMaster University Senate Policies for the standards of honesty expected for this course, including:

- Senate Resolutions on Academic Dishonesty
- Statement of Academic Ethics
- Absence/Missed Academic Work Policy

Academic Missed Work Procedure

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF) - <https://www.mcmaster.ca/msaf/index.html>

This is a self reporting tool for Undergraduate Students to report absences that last up to 5 days and provides the ability to request relief for any missed academic work. Please note, this tool cannot be used during any final examination period.

You may submit a maximum of ONE Academic Work Missed requests per term. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your Instructor immediately regarding the nature of the relief.

If you are absent more than 5 days or exceed 1 request per term you MUST visit the Associate Dean's Office (BSB 129). You may be required to provide supporting documentation.

The form should be filled out immediately when you are about to return to class after your absence.