# COURSE SYLLABUS OUTLINE

**Course Title and Number:** Herpetology BSC 406/506

Semester and Year: Spring 2014

Days/Time: Lecture: Tuesday and Thursday 11:00-12:15, room S-374

Lab: Wednesday 10:00-11:50, room S-207

**Instructor:**

Name: Dr. Jayme L. Waldron

Office: S-386

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 9:00-10:00, or by appointment.

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**Course Description**: A survey of the reptiles and amphibians of the world with special emphasis placed on forms resident to West Virginia aspects of zoogeography, anatomy, taxonomy, and behavior.

**Credit:** 4 hours in biological sciences

**Prerequisites:** BSC 121 with a grade of *C* or better.

**University Policies**: By enrolling in this course, you agree to the University Policies listed below. Please read the full text of each policy be going to [www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs](http://www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs) and clicking on “Marshall University Policies.” Or, you can access the policies directly by going to <http://www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs/?page_id=802>

Academic Dishonesty/ Excused Absence Policy for Undergraduates/ Computing Services Acceptable Use/ Inclement Weather/ Dead Week/ Students with Disabilities/ Academic Forgiveness/ Academic Probation and Suspension/ Academic Rights and Responsibilities of Students/ Affirmative Action/ Sexual Harassment

**Text Information**:

Required Text: Vitt & Caldwell (2008): Herpetology (4rd Edition), An Introductory Biology of Amphibians and Reptiles. Academic Press.

A Field Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles of North America; by R. Conant and J. Collins

\*Additional Study Aids: Extra readings will be assigned.

**\*Computer Requirements:** Microsoft Word and internet

**Desired Learner Outcomes/Objectives:**

(1) Understand basic concepts of herpetofaunal ecology and conservation.

(2) Understand the roles of amphibians and reptiles in ecosystems.

(3) Learn to recognize important herpetofaunal habitats in West Virginia.

(4) Acquire skills necessary for identifying herpetofaunal species.

(5) Understand the natural history of herpetofaunal species.

(6) Be familiar with current threats to habitats and species of concern in West Virginia.

Expected-learning-outcomes-rubric: how learning outcomes will be practiced and assessed.

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| **Student Learning Outcomes** | **How students will practice each outcome** | **How student achievement of each outcome will be assessed** |
| Understand basic concepts of herpetofaunal ecology and conservation | Reading assignments, homework, and classroom discussions  Regular attendance to lecture and laboratory | 1) Effective classroom discourse will depend on completion of reading assignments. Students must effectively relate reading assignments in classroom discussions. Students will be assessed based on their a) willingness to participate (e.g., ask questions and answer questions), and b) their ability to incorporate reading material into classroom discussions.  2) Student attendance.  3) I will evaluate homework using criteria outlined handouts. |
| Learn to recognize important herpetofaunal habitats in West Virginia | Reading assignments  Classroom discussion  Lecture and Laboratory Exams | 1) Students will be assessed based on their willingness to participate (e.g., ask questions and answer questions) in discussions pertaining to herpetofaunal habitats  3) Students will be evaluated based on their ability to answer lecture and laboratory exam questions about herpetofaunal habitats in West Virginia. |
| Acquire skills necessary for identifying herpetofaunal species | Homework assignments will give students exposure to key identifying characters (using keys and research), and this information will be used in the development of species accounts of non-North American herpetofauna.  Lecture and laboratory exams | 1) I will evaluate the students’ ability to complete homework assignments correctly and on time.  2) I will evaluate students’ ability to work together in the development of species accounts.  3) I will evaluate the accuracy of lecture and laboratory exam questions pertaining to herpetofaunal identification. |
| Understand natural history of WV herpetofaunal species | Lecture and Laboratory Exams | 1) I will evaluate student performance based on accuracy of answers to lecture and laboratory exam questions about herpetofaunal life history. |
| Understand the roles of amphibians and reptiles in ecosystems | Classroom discussion  Homework  Lecture Exams | 1) Students will be assessed based on their knowledge and insight during classroom discussions about this concept.  2) Lecture exams will assess students’ ability to articulate, in writing, current threats to herpetofaunal habitats, herpetofaunal diversity, and global declines. |
| Be familiar with current threats to habitats and species of concern in West Virginia | Classroom discussion  Homework  Lecture Exams | 1) Students will be assessed based on their knowledge and insight during classroom discussions about this concept.  2) Lecture exams will assess students’ ability to articulate, in writing, current threats to herpetofaunal habitats, herpetofaunal diversity, and global declines. |

**Grading Policy:** Grading scale will be as follows:

90-100% = A 80-89% = B 70-79% = C 60-69% = D ≤ 59% = F

**Lecture Exam 1 11%**

**Lecture Exam 2 11%**

**Lecture Exam 3 11%**

**Lab Exam 1 11%**

**Lab Exam 2 11%**

**Lab Exam 3 11%**

**Final Lecture Exam 11%**

**Final Lab Exam 11%**

**Home Work 6%**

**Participation/Discussion 6%**

**Home Work**

Read the assigned chapters and papers prior to the lecture. I will assign homework periodically throughout the semester. When assignments are not turned in on time, a letter grade will be deducted for every day the assignment is late.

Graduate students will be required to write a species account for non-North American herpetofauna using information gathered by everyone enrolled in this class. The species account will cover all aspects of species life history (e.g., growth and reproduction) and morphology. Results should be submitted in a scientific manuscript format. Due date is April 17, 2014.

# Lecture and Laboratory Exams

There will be three lecture exams and three laboratory exams that will not be cumulative. Exam dates on the syllabus may change, but exams will be announced at least one week in advance. Lecture exams will include questions from lectures AND reading assignments. Lecture exams will be matching, short answer, and essay. Laboratory exams will be short answer or matching. IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO BRING A BLACK OR BLUE INK PEN OR A PENCIL TO THE EXAMS. **All exams are expected to be taken as scheduled**. Exams will not be curved. Make-up exams will not be given without an excuse from the university.

**Final Exam**

The final exam will include lecture and laboratory material and will be cumulative.

**Field Trips:** Fields trips will be scheduled as weather permits. All field trips are optional.

**Participation:** Attendance is MANDATORY. You will have to sign-in during every class period. Please consult the university policy on excessive absences (see link at beginning of syllabus). You can miss three classes (i.e., 10% of lectures). After the third absence, 3% will be deducted from your final grade for EVERY missed class.

**Cell phones/texting:** Mobile phones are not permitted in class. You will be dismissed from class if you are caught texting or if your phone rings. You will be given an absence for the day.

**Laptops/ipads/notebooks/etc:** Computers cannot be used during class. Notes must be taken using paper and writing utensils.

**COURSE OUTLINE/DAILY/WEEKLY SCHEDULE:**

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| **Week (Dates)** | **Topic** | **Reading** |
| Week 1 (Jan 14-16) | Lecture: Course Introduction; Systematics & Evolution  Lab: Introduction to laboratory procedures; Salamanders | Ch. 1 |
| Week 2 (Jan 21-23) | Lecture: Amphibian Evolution & Salamanders  Note: “W” withdrawal period begins | Ch. 3 pgs 83-92  Ch. 4 pgs 123-133, 149-150 |
| Week 3 (Jan 28-30) | Lecture: Salamanders  Lab: Salamanders | Ch. 5 pgs 157-167  Ch. 9 pgs 256-259; 275-276  Ch. 16 |
| Week 4 (Feb 4-6) | Lecture: Salamanders  **Exam (Thurs Feb 6)**  Lab: **Salamander Exam** |  |
| Week 5 (Feb 11-13) | Lecture: Frog ecology and natural history  Lab: Frogs | Ch. 9 pgs 259-265; 276-278 |
| Week 6 (Feb 18-20) | Lecture: Frogs  Lab: Frogs | Ch. 17 |
| Week 7 (Feb 25-27) | Lecture: Frogs  **Exam (Thurs Feb 27)**  Lab: **Frog Exam** |  |
| Week 8 (Mar 4-6) | Lecture: Reptile introduction; Turtle ecology and natural history  Lab: Turtles | Ch. 4 pgs 133-146, 150-153  Ch. 5 pgs 167-171  Ch. 7 |
| Week 9 (Mar 11-13) | Lecture: turtles  Lab: turtles  Note: mid-term | Ch. 9 pgs 265-267  Ch. 18 |
| Week 10 (Mar 18-20) | Spring Break |  |
| Week 11 (Mar 25-27) | Lecture: Squamata ecology and natural history  Lab: Lizards Note: Mar 28 last day to drop class | Ch. 9 pgs 267-272; 279-281  Ch. 20  Ch. 21 part I |
| Week 12 (Apr 1-3) | Lecture: Lizards  **Exam (Thurs Apr 3)**  Lab: **Lizard & Turtle Exam** | Ch. 11 pgs 337-341 |
| Week 13 (Apr 8-10) | Lecture: Snake ecology and natural history  Lab: snakes | Ch. 9 pgs 272; 278-279 |
| Week 14 (Apr 15-17) | Lecture: snakes  Lab: snakes  **Note: Graduate student species accounts due April 17** |  |
| Week 15 (Apr 22-24) | Lecture: Snakes  Lab: Snakes | Ch. 21, part II |
| Week 16 (Apr 28-May 2) | Lecture: Conservation & Review for Final  Lab: **Final Exam**  Note: Dead week | Ch. 14 |
| **FINAL EXAM** | **(Thursday May 8): Time: 10:15-12:15**  **Note: Final Exam will include be cumulative, including comprehensive questions about the entire course and laboratory material.** |  |