**HERPETOLOGY (BIO 437)**  
**SPRING 2016**

**Instructor:** DR. MATTHEW KWIAKTOWSKI (it’s easier than it looks: *kwee-aht-kow-skee*)  
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Phone: (936) 468-5986  
Office: Miller Science 241

**Office Hours:** MW 9:30 – 11:00 AM, Th 1:00 – 3:00 PM  
Or by appointment.  
*Do not freak out if office hours get cancelled once in a while. Dr. Kwiatkowski will find a time to meet with you.*

**Lecture:** TTh 9:30 – 10:45 AM, Mathematics 213  
**Laboratory:** Tues 12:30 – 3:20 PM, S 218

**Course Description:** A survey of the classification, distribution, ecology, evolution, and conservation of amphibians and reptiles. Emphasis on natural history and identification of regional species in lab. Field trips are required (detail below). Requires outside readings, papers and/or research projects.

**Course Objectives:**
- To familiarize students with the diversity and evolutionary relationships within and among major amphibian and reptile taxa.
- To familiarize students with behavioral, ecological, physiological, and morphological adaptations unique to amphibians and reptiles.
- To familiarize students with conservation concerns regarding amphibians and reptiles.
- To familiarize students with local species of amphibians and reptiles.

**Student Learning Outcomes (Course Competencies):**
- Student performance will be assessed with lecture exams during the semester, a cumulative final exam, article reviews, and laboratory practicals.
- Students should be familiar with evolutionary relationships within and among major amphibian and reptile taxa.
- Students should be familiar with diagnostic traits of major amphibian taxa.
- Students should be familiar with diagnostic traits of major reptile taxa.
- Students should be with behavioral, morphological, and physiological adaptations of amphibians and reptiles and their function in an ecological context.
- Students should be familiar with the majority of local amphibian and reptile species.

**Prerequisite:** A “C” or better in BIO 133.

**Required Course Materials:**


**Attendance:** Attendance at all lectures is essential to performing well in this course. Even though lectures will be posted to WebCT, details that are discussed in class may not appear in the PowerPoint slides. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain information from missed lectures. Exams cannot be made up except for emergencies, either medical or personal (e.g., death in the family). Pop quizzes cannot be made up no matter what the reason for the absence.
Withdrawal Policy: It is the student’s responsibility to withdraw from the course if necessary. The deadline to withdraw from a course is 23 March 2016. More information about add/drop policies can be found at http://www.sfasu.edu/upp/pap/academic_affairs/add_drop.html

Assignments and Grading: Final grades will be based on student performance on exams and will be assigned according to the following scale:

- 100 – 90%: A (Exceptional)
- 89.9 – 80%: B (Above Average)
- 79.9 – 70%: C (Average)
- 69.9 – 60%: D (Below Average)
- < 59.9%: F (Failing)

The following weights will be used to calculate an overall grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Exams (4 @ 100 points each)</td>
<td>400 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Quizzes</td>
<td>50 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory Mini-Exams (4 @ 50 points each)</td>
<td>200 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Sessions (2 @ 25 pts)</td>
<td>50 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory/Field Notes/Project Participation</td>
<td>100 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>800 pts</td>
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Lecture Exams: Lecture exams will include a variety of question types, which may include multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and essay. A make-up exam will only be given in cases of excused absences (medical or personal emergency) with adequate documentation. Only ONE make-up exam is allowed. The optional cumulative final exam will act as the make-up exam and will be given on Thursday, 12 May 2016, 8:00 – 10:00 AM. If you are late to an exam, you will be allowed to take the exam as long as no one has turned it in yet. However, the class tardiness policy will still apply (see below), and you will have no extra time to finish the exam. If you are late to an exam and someone has already turned in the exam, you will not be allowed to take the exam.

Optional Cumulative Final Exam: The final exam is optional and will replace a student’s lowest regular exam score if they decide to take it. It will be a cumulative exam where students will be expected to synthesize material presented throughout the semester. If a student missed a regular exam, the cumulative final exam will act as the make-up exam. The optional cumulative exam is Thursday, 12 May 2016, 8:00 – 10:00 AM.

Discussion Sessions: We will discuss scientific articles during the semester related to two projects to be conducted this semester. Students must come prepared to answer questions about the articles and therefore must read the articles thoroughly before coming to class. Questions will be asked randomly, so students must be present in order to get credit. **There will be no make up given for discussion sessions.**

Lecture Quizzes: Pop quizzes will be given during lecture throughout the semester. These are pop quizzes so students must attend lecture to ensure that they are present to take the quizzes. Quizzes will cover material from both the text book and lecture notes. Dr. Kwiatkowski will explain in lecture which material will be covered on the different quizzes. **Absolutely no make up quizzes will be given.**

Laboratory Mini-Exams: Lab exams will be in practical form. **Absolutely no make up lab exams will be given.** Students will be responsible for any material covered in lab.

Laboratory/Field Notes: Lab & field notes will be kept throughout the semester. Students will keep field notes any time the class is in the field. The notes should be a record of field conditions (weather, habitat, etc.), species seen during the trip, and data for the projects. **No lab/field notes can be made up** if a student is absent from a lab. Students must participate in at least 3 field trips and **at least one of these must be a day trip and one a night trip.** If a student misses a field trip, 50 points will be deducted from each field trip missed and any points from the field notes will be lost as well.
**Course Evaluations:** A course evaluation during dead week is considered a **mandatory** part of course participation. If you do not participate in the evaluation, one percentage point will be deducted from your lecture grade.

**Class Disruptions:** Class disruptions will not be tolerated because they detract from other students’ learning. As adults, students should be able to sit through a 50 minute class without disturbing others. It is recommended that students regard lecture as practice for future professional meetings; they may be fun, interesting, or as boring as watching grass grow. Regardless, the student has to get through lectures acting like an adult.

**Acceptable Student Behavior**

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

Dr. Kwiatkowski will NOT give you a warning or make an announcement that you are disrupting class. Instead, points will simply be deducted in the grade book. Students are free to inquire at any time whether they have had points deducted during office hours.

**Tardiness:** Tardiness to lecture will not be tolerated; it disrupts the lesson and the concentration of fellow students. Reasonable accommodations will be made in cases of emergency situations if documentation is provided. It is the student’s responsibility to provide the instructor with documentation of emergencies. **(10 points deducted each time)**

**Sleeping:** Sleeping during class can be distracting to other students and the instructor. If a student is so tired that they cannot stay awake for a lecture, as boring as it may be, the student should not be in class. **(10 points deducted each time)**

**Cell Phones:** Cell phones must be turned off during lecture. If a cell phone goes off, the student may be asked to leave lecture for that day. In cases of family health (pregnant spouse, hospitalized family member, etc.), the student must inform the instructor of the situation BEFORE class begins. In these cases, the cell phone ringer must remain off (i.e., phone set to vibrate). **(10 points deducted each time)**

**Texting:** Given that cell phones should be turned off during lecture (see above), there should be no texting in class. Texting may distract other students and the instructor. **(10 points deducted each time)**

**Leaving Class:** Leaving class is disruptive to other students who are trying to pay attention. Leaving the class for any reason will count against you. Hence, be sure to use the restroom before coming to class (a 5 minute break is given during lecture during the long summer lectures). If a student knows they will need to leave class early, notify the instructor well ahead of time. Points will not be deducted if the student has a legitimate excuse for leaving early. **(20 points deducted each time)**

**Talking/Disruptive Behaviors:** Dr. Kwiatkowski highly encourages students to ask questions or make relevant comments during a lecture. However, talking to a neighbor or other disruptive behaviors will not be tolerated because, again, it disrupts the learning environment of other students. **(25 points deducted each time)**

**Laptop computers:** Laptop computers are not allowed in lecture. In the past, too many students have used them for surfing the internet or working on other projects during lecture, which distracts other students. **(15 points deducted each time)**
Lab Safety and Behavior: Herpetology lab will include field trips. With any field trip, regardless of the course, students must observe certain safety and behavior guidelines. The safety and behavioral guidelines can be found at the end of this syllabus. Students must read through these policies and return a signed copy to the instructor before being allowed to participate in lab.

Academic Integrity: Cheating will absolutely not be tolerated. Cheating on an exam can result in a failing grade for that exam, a failing grade for the course, or even expulsion from the university. Be sure to review the university’s academic integrity policy which can be found at:
http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

Below is SFA’s statement regarding academic integrity.

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit.

Students with Disabilities. To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004/468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.
Lab Schedule: This schedule is even more **tentative**. Field trips are at the mercy of the weather and may be rescheduled. Attendance on three field trips is required and at least one of those must be a night trip for frog choruses (night trips are not listed below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 19</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 26</td>
<td>Winter Amphibians; Field?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb  2</td>
<td>Winter Amphibians cont.; Field?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb  9</td>
<td><strong>Mini-exam 1; Early Spring Herps</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 16</td>
<td>Early Spring Herps cont.; Field?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 23</td>
<td>Early Spring Herps cont.; Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar  1</td>
<td>Early/Mid Spring Herps; Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar  8</td>
<td><strong>Mini-exam 2; Mid Spring Herps</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 15</td>
<td><strong>Spring Break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 22</td>
<td>Mid Spring Herps; Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 29</td>
<td>Mid Spring Herps; Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr  5</td>
<td>Mid Spring Herps cont.; Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 12</td>
<td><strong>Mini-exam 3; Late Spring Herps</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 19</td>
<td>Late Spring Herps; Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 26</td>
<td>Late Spring Herps.; Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May  3</td>
<td><strong>Mini-exam 4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Herpetology Safety and Conduct Policies
Student Copy

Reptiles and amphibians are fascinating and Dr. Kwiatkowski wants students to have fun during the lab and field trips. However, some important responsibilities have to meet during class activities.

Read through the policies below. Sign the copy titled “Signed Copy” and return it to Dr. Kwiatkowski. Students must return the signed copy to Dr. Kwiatkowski before they will be allowed on any field trips. Failure to return the signed copy will result in the loss of all points associated with field trips.

Safety
Like any field that studies wildlife, there are potential safety concerns when studying Herpetology, especially since it includes the study of venomous reptiles. Please follow the safety guidelines below during class activities.

- In the field, always wear shoes that cover the entire foot. This means no sandals in the field!
- Wearing work gloves in the field is a good idea
- ALWAYS watch where you step and where you put your hands
- If you see a snake, do NOT try to catch it. Keep a safe distance from the snake; keep an eye on it and call to Dr. Kwiatkowski. Whatever you do, STAY CALM
- Any student found handling a venomous snake in a manner not approved by Dr. Kwiatkowski will be removed from the class and assigned a failing grade.

Treatment of Wildlife
People have many preconceived biases against some herpetofauna, especially snakes. While a fear of venomous snakes is understandable, students are expected to conduct themselves as students of science and advocates for wildlife. Accordingly, the following conduct policies apply to all students:

- Students are not to purposely harm any wildlife during the lab or during field trips
- If Dr. Kwiatkowski learns of any intentional harm coming to wildlife during the lab or during field trips, the student in question may be removed from the class and assigned a failing grade
- If a student exhibits a hostile attitude towards reptiles and amphibians during the class, the student may be excluded from field trips due to disruptive behavior. The student will lose all points associated with that activity.

I have read through the policies above and understand the consequences of violating these policies.

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