



Contact Information

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It is easy to feel isolated from your classmates, TAs, and instructor with a distance studies course. We will do our best to create an online community throughout the duration of the course. Contributing to Forum posts via OWL is a great way to achieve this.

For all inquiries regarding the course, materials, and assessments, use the Forums on OWL to ask questions and interact with your classmates, TAs, and instructor. *Only personal matters should be dealt with via email with your instructor.*

Course Information

Course Description:

An introduction to ecology, the scientific study of the interactions that determine the distribution and abundance of plants, animals, and microorganisms. Ecological concepts at the organism, population and ecosystem levels will be considered, including tolerance limits, life history evolution, competition, predation, population growth and control, and ecosystem dynamics.

Prerequisite:

A minimum mark of 60% in either Biology 1001A or Biology 1201A and a minimum mark of 60% in either Biology 1002B or Biology 1202B or Integrated Science 1001X.

Course Lectures:

Lecture recordings will be posted on OWL in an asynchronous format. I highly recommend following the lecture schedule (posted below) so you do not fall behind on course material. It can otherwise be difficult to self-discipline in an online asynchronous course.

Materials Required

Strong Internet Connection

A strong internet connection is mandatory for completion of this course. All exams, assignments, and lecture downloads will require a strong internet connection. Failure to have access to dependable internet is not considered a legitimate reason for not being able to complete exams or assignments.

Proctortrack Access

In addition to materials listed below, completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. Information about the technical requirements for Proctortrack is available at:

<https://www.proctortrack.com/tech-requirements/>

SimBio Software

Supplemental learning exercises will be drawn from the software package SimBio which is also used during the Fall/Winter terms in this course. This software is required for completion of the

tutorials. The software can be purchased from the SimBio website for \$46US with a credit card. Midterm and exam questions may come from material presented in these sections. Your grade for each exercise will be calculated by both completion of feedback questions and graded questions. Additional information about software will be posted on the OWL website, but our course registration link can be found at: <https://www.simutextca2.com/student/register.html#/key/CMDr-bJTk-uUy4-VtMy-Hdb3>

Our course-specific access key is: **CMDr-bJTk-uUy4-VtMy-Hdb3**

If you experience technical difficulty with SimBio software, Dr. Butnari is unable to assist with this. You can submit a support request at: <http://simutext.zendesk.com>

Requests are monitored daily, including evenings and weekends.

Textbook

Lectures will draw on materials from Ecology 5th edition by Bowman and Hacker, Oxford University Press. Note that there is a 6th edition of this text but we are using the 5th. The ebook is considerably less expensive than the print copy. The textbook is available on reserve from the UWO library and website. Midterm and exam questions will pull from material and examples presented in the textbook so I highly recommend using the textbook. **The highest chance of success in this course will require reading chapters in addition to simply watching lectures.** Other versions of the textbook will suffice, though some examples, figures, and chapter numbers differ.

Evaluation and Grading

This course is assessed via tutorial quizzes, assignments, a midterm, and final exam. All assessments, including exams, will be completed online. Contributions to online Forums and Discussion posts is highly encouraged and will help create a community within an online classroom.

20%	SimBio tutorial exercises
10%	Assignments
35%	Midterm (July 5 10am-12pm)
35%	Final exam (date TBA by Registrar's Office)

SimBio Tutorial Exercises (20%)

On weeks when there are no tests (weeks 1, 2, 4, and 5), there is an interactive SimBio tutorial exercise (see more about technical requirements above). These tutorials replace the 3-hour tutorials that students do during the fall term, so you should be prepared to spend a few hours on each assignment. The four tutorials are worth a total of 20% (5% each). Each tutorial has a quiz at the end and your mark on that quiz **plus a participatory component for non-graded questions** will be your grade for the tutorial. These tutorials must be completed by 11:50pm Sunday of that week (see schedule below). Given the short nature of the course, there are no exemptions to the due date. If you are unable to complete a tutorial due to a legitimate reason that has been approved by academic counselling, the weight of a missed assignment will be shifted to other tutorials. Failure to complete the tutorial will result in a grade of zero.

Assignments (10%)

There are three short writing assignments during the course of the semester (weeks 2, 4, and 6). All assignments must be completed by the Sunday due date (with the exception of the last week of classes wherein the deadline is Friday of that week – see schedule below). An assignment that is not submitted by the due date without academic accommodation from your academic counsellor will be assessed a score of zero with *no exceptions*.

Exams (70%)

Exams in this course will be conducted using the remote proctoring service, Proctortrack. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide **personal information** (including some biometric data) and the session will be **recorded**. More information about this remote proctoring service is available in the Online Proctoring Guidelines at the following link:

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/onlineproctorguidelines.pdf>

Midterm

The midterm is on July 5 from 10:00am-12:00pm and is worth 35% of your final mark. The test will draw on the first 12 lectures (3 weeks of material). Further details will be posted on the OWL course website.

Final Exam

The final exam will be scheduled by the Registrar's Office and the date will be announced after the beginning of term. It is worth 35% of your final mark. The test will draw on the material from the entire course, with a stronger emphasis on material from the second half of the course. Some questions will test your ability to integrate information from the first and second halves of the course. The test will be run online through Proctortrack on OWL. Further details will be posted on the OWL course website.

Course Schedule

I recommend separating each week's material into two separate days. Sticking to a set schedule each week will help you to stay on track throughout the course.

	Day 1 Topics & Readings	Day 2 Topics & Readings	Assessments
Week 1 (June 17-23)	Welcome! 1. Ecology Introduction (Ch. 1) 2. The Biosphere (Ch. 3)	3. Environmental Variation: Temperature & Water (Ch. 4) 4. Environmental Variation: Energy (Ch. 5)	Due June 23: • SimBio Exercise 1: Physiological Ecology
Week 2 (June 24-30)	5. Ecology & Evolution (Ch. 6) 6. Life History (Ch. 7)	7. Behavioural Ecology (Ch. 8) 8. Population Distribution and Abundance (Ch. 9)	Due June 30: • SimBio Exercise 2: Behavioural Ecology • Assignment 1
Week 3 (July 2-7)	9. Population Growth and Regulation (Ch. 11) 10. Population Dynamics (Ch. 10)	11. Competition (Ch. 14) 12. Predation & Herbivory (Ch. 12)	Midterm: July 5 from 10am-12pm
Week 4 (July 8-14)	13. Parasitism (Ch. 13) 14. Mutualism & Commensalism (Ch. 15)	15. Nature of Communities (Ch. 16) 16. Change in Communities (Ch. 17)	Due July 14: • SimBio Exercise 3: Community Dynamics • Assignment 2
Week 5 (July 15-21)	17. Biogeography (Ch. 18) 18. Species Diversity in Communities (Ch. 19)	19. Production (Ch. 20) 20. Energy Flow & Food Webs (Ch. 21)	Due July 21: • SimBio Exercise 4: Biogeography
Week 6 (July 22-26)	21. Nutrient Supply & Cycling (Ch. 22) 22. Conservation Biology (Ch. 23)	23. Landscape Ecology (Ch. 24) 24. Global Biology (Ch. 25)	Due July 26: • Assignment 3 Final exam: date TBA

Accommodation and Accessibility

Accessible Education

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities policy can be found at:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Accommodation_disabilities.pdf

Please contact the course instructor if you require lecture or printed material in an alternate format or if any other arrangements can make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 519-661-2147 if you have any questions regarding accommodations.

Accommodation for Medical Illness or Other Serious Circumstances

If you are unable to meet ANY course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstance, you must provide valid medical documentation or other supporting documentation to the Dean's office as soon as possible and contact the course coordinator instructor immediately. It is your responsibility to make alternative arrangements with the instructor once the accommodation has been approved by the Dean's office and the instructor has been informed.

Students requiring academic accommodation due to illness for any assignment/exam should use the Student Medical Certificate when visiting an off-campus medical facility or request a Record's Release Form (located in the Dean's Office) if you visit Student Health Services.

The Student Medical Certification form can be downloaded from this link:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform_15JUN.pdf

Make-up Midterm Exams

If a student misses a midterm exam for any legitimate reason, a make-up exam may be provided upon a recommendation from academic counseling. The makeup exam will have to be rewritten almost immediately (within less than one week) given the short time frame of the course. If the make-up date is still not met because of a valid reason, then the weighting of the missed exam will be redistributed to other evaluation components.

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

Students are allowed a maximum of two self-reported absences between September and April and one self-reported absence between May and August. Students can use an online portal to self-report an absence during the semester, provided the following conditions are met: the absence is no more than 48 hours in duration, and the assessment for which consideration is being sought is worth 30% or less of the student's final grade. Students must contact their course coordinator instructor within 24 hours of the end of the period of the self-reported absence. Students are not able to use the self-reporting option in the following circumstances:

- For exams scheduled by the Office of the Registrar (e.g., December and April exams)
- Absence of a duration greater than 48 hours,
- Assessments worth more than 30% of the student's final grade,
- If a student has already used the self-reporting portal twice during the academic year

If the conditions for a Self-Reported Absence are *not* met, students will need to provide a Student Medical Certificate if the absence is medical, or provide appropriate documentation if there are compassionate grounds for the absence in question. Students should contact their Faculty academic counselling office to obtain more information about the relevant documentation.

All documentation required for absences that are not covered by the Self-Reported Absence Policy must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty.

For policy on Academic Consideration for Student Absences - Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs, see:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Consideration_for_absences.pdf

and for the Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar:

<https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a "Multiple Exam Situation" (see http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/exam_schedule.html).

Managing academics and well-being

Western University is committed to a thriving campus as we deliver our courses in the mixed model of both virtual and face-to-face formats. We encourage you to check out the Digital Student Experience website to manage your academics and well-being: <https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/>.

Academic Policies

Electronic Submission of Assignments

All required assignments will be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>). See further details regarding the University's plagiarism rules below.

Plagiarism Rules and Academic Integrity

All assignments must be written in your own words. Changing the word or sentence order or changing words using a thesaurus **does not** constitute original work. If you use an idea or excerpt from another author, regardless of source type, you **MUST** reference it in the appropriate fashion as requested on the assignment. Details of how to do this will be provided to you.

The following guide will help you avoid committing an academic offence

<http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/student/cheating.html>

Available Support Services

Academic Matters: Please visit the Science & Basic Medical Sciences Academic Counselling webpage for information on add/drop courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters: <https://www.uwo.ca/sci/counselling/>

Learning-skills Services: Learning-skills counsellors at the Student Development Centre

<http://www.sdc.uwo.ca>) are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

Emotional/mental distress Services: Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Writing Support Center: The *Writing Support Centre* can help students to improve their writing skills. Writing resources and/or expert writing counsellors are available to you. (<http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing>).

Other Services: Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <http://westernusc.ca/services>.