

Herpetology (BSC 417 and 417L) – Spring 2003

Class Policy and Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Carl Qualls

Walker Science Building 144

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Office Hours: MWF 10:00 – 11:00 am or any other time by appointment

Class Time:

Lecture – Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 1:00 to 1:50 pm

Lab – Fridays 2:00 to 4:50 pm

Class Location:

Lecture: Walker Science Building 150

Lab: Walker Science Building 150

Required Textbooks: (available in Textbook Center)

Zug, G.R., L.J. Vitt, and J.P. Caldwell. 2001. *Herpetology: an Introductory Biology of Amphibians and Reptiles*, 2nd edition, Academic Press.

Conant, R and J.T. Collins. 1998. *A Field Guide to Reptiles and Amphibians of Eastern and Central North America*. 3rd edition, expanded, Houghton Mifflin, New York.

Powell, R., J.T. Collins, and E.D. Hooper, Jr. 1998. *A Key to Amphibians and Reptiles of the Continental United States and Canada*. University Press of Canada.

Required Lab Supplies:

Field Notebook (pocket size notebook)

Hand Lens or Magnifying Glass

Cloth Specimen Bag (old pillow cases work well)

Gardening Gloves or Work Gloves (optional)

Surgical Gloves (optional)

Field Trips

This course will include numerous field trips. Most field trips will take place during the scheduled lab period, but there will be at least one field trip on a Saturday. Field trips will be scheduled in advance, but will be rescheduled in the event of inclement weather. We will travel to several nearby habitats to observe and collect amphibian and reptile specimens. Collecting reptiles and amphibians requires that you go where they live. We will have to deal with tangles of briars, mud, water, mosquitos, and bad weather, so be prepared and dress accordingly when we go into the field. Prior to the first field trip you will receive, and we will discuss, the safety rules for field trips. These rules are in place to ensure everyone's safety, and all students are required to follow them.

Exams, Assignments, and Grades:

The lecture component of this course will include three examinations during the semester, and a *comprehensive* final exam, each of which will contribute 15% of your final grade. The laboratory component of this course will include two practical exams, that will each contribute 15% of your final grade. There will also be several assignments and lab reports that will be graded.

You will receive the same final grade in both the lecture (BSC 417) and laboratory (BSC 417L) components of this course. This final grade will be based on your scores on all exams, lab practicals, graded assignments, and lab reports, as detailed below.

Lecture exams	60%
Practical exams	30%
<u>Assignments and Reports</u>	<u>10%</u>
Final Score	100%

All grades will be on a scale of 0 to 100 points. Letter grades will be assigned as follows:

- 90 to 100 = A
- 80 to 89 = B
- 70 to 79 = C
- 60 to 69 = D
- Below 60 = F

Final Exam:

The final examination for this course is scheduled for Monday May 5th, from 11:00 am to 1:30 pm. This schedule can not be changed and all students are expected to take the exam at this time. The final examination *is comprehensive*.

Attendance:

There is no formal attendance requirement for the lecture or lab sessions. You are strongly encouraged to attend all lectures and lab sessions, but it is your responsibility to make the most of your educational opportunities. No special arrangements will be made to cover material you missed because of an absence. If you do not attend class, you will simply miss the material covered that day, and it will be very difficult to catch up if you fall behind. Do not expect to get by copying others' notes from class; it will not work.

If you miss an examination or practical because of absence, you will not necessarily be allowed to take a make-up exam. If you are unable to take an exam at the scheduled time, you must contact me as soon as possible *before* the exam. If you have a valid reason that you can not make the exam time, I may make arrangements for you to take the exam at another time. Do not count on being allowed to take an exam at an alternate time; there are very few circumstances that I consider valid for this purpose. If you have not made prior arrangements with me, you will receive a score of zero on any exam that you miss. In the event of a last minute emergency, you should contact me

before the exam, by telephone (leave a message if I am not in the office) or by e-mail. As a last resort, you can get a message to me by phoning the Department of Biological Sciences office (266-4748).

Dropping the Course:

February 18th is the last day to drop a course without academic penalty. We will try to grade and return your first exam and first lab practical before this date, so that you will know how you are doing in the course.

Cheating and Plagiarism:

Cheating and plagiarism are violations of the Code of Student Conduct (in your Student Handbook) and will not be tolerated. Anyone caught cheating will be penalized as proscribed by University Policy. The *minimum* academic penalty for any infractions will be a grade of zero on the assignment or exam associated with the violation.

Questions and Problems:

Students are encouraged to actively participate in class activities and to ask questions during class. If you do not understand something, ask a question. If the issue can not be clarified during class, make arrangements with the instructor to discuss the material later. We are here to help you learn, and will do our best to help resolve any difficulties you have with the course material. However, we can not help if we do not know that a problem exists.

Classroom Conduct:

While interaction with the instructor and with your fellow students is a valuable part of the learning process, disruptive behavior in the classroom is not acceptable. Show respect for your fellow students, and do not hinder their ability to participate and learn. The use of cellular phones, pagers, or other electronic devices during class is not allowed.

Students With Disabilities:

If a student has a disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act and requires accommodations, he/she should contact the Office for Disability Accommodations for information on the appropriate policies and procedures. USM Box 8586; Tel: 266-5024; TTY: 266-6837; Fax: 266-6035.