

**NRM 4303 – Range Ecology**  
**Dept. of Natural Resource Management, Sul Ross State University**  
**Spring 2021 – Course Syllabus**

**Instructor:** Dr. Carlos E. Gonzalez

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**Office:** 116 RAS

**Office hours:** Tuesday and Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

**Lecture location:** RAS 128

**Time:** Tuesday & Thursday, 12:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

### **Course Description**

Ecology is the study of how organisms interact with each other and their environment at the population, community, and ecosystem levels. *Rangelands* are described as “land on which the indigenous vegetation is predominantly grasses, grass-like plants, forbs, or shrubs and is managed as a natural ecosystem.” *Rangeland Ecology and Management* is a field of study devoted to understanding and managing these crucial ecosystems.

Rangelands are a dynamic landscape, composed of many resources, which produce many products. The rangeland landscape and its resources are continually modified by a suite of non-human forces, including grazing, fire, and climate or weather.

Humans also modify rangelands directly through development (e.g., energy, mining, transportation, and communications infrastructure) and recreation. People also affect the other forces of change by introducing invasive species, controlling or igniting fires, managing grazing, and potentially impacting the climate and weather patterns through human caused changes in atmospheric chemistry.

Managers need to predict how management practices or natural disturbance will impact the vegetation on rangelands, so a better understanding of how the system of interest functions is required. The goal of this course is to familiarize the student with ecological theory and its applications.

### **Course Objectives**

- Provide an understanding of the ecological theory, which is useful for improving the range resources and facilitate their use by domestic animals and wildlife.
- To gain an understanding of the broad biological significance of ecological theory.
- To advance an understanding of the questions that ecologists study, the methods they use, and the problems that remain unanswered.

**Course Outline. *Tentative and subject to change***

1. Introduction to class and syllabus
2. Range ecology and grasslands
3. Range ecology and grasslands
4. Multiple-use of Rangelands
5. Rangeland types
6. Ecoregions of Texas
7. Terrestrial Environment - Describing what makes Rangelands
8. Climate  
Exam 1
9. Soils and water
10. Plants and People
11. Plant Development Morphology
12. Plants - Cells, Tissues, and Organs
13. Whole plants & Plant Physiological Differences
14. Leaf and Photosynthesis  
Exam 2  
Spring Break  
Spring Break
15. Range models and Resilience
16. Plant competition and coexistence
17. Woody Plant Encroachment
18. Non-native Plants
19. Animal Adaptations  
Exam 3  
Dead Day  
Final Exam

**Grading.** The grading scale will be A = 90-100%, B = 80-89.9%, C = 70-79.9%, D = 60-69.9%.

Three comprehensive one-hour exams will be given during the semester. Additionally, one final comprehensive one-hour exam will be given at the end of the semester.

- Only the top three grades of the four exams will be used for your final grade.
- All exams will be done through blackboard.
  - You will have 75 minutes.
  - Exams will be open on the day of the exam from 8:00 a.m. to 11:59 p.m.
  - You will only have one opportunity to take each exam.

- No makeup exams. If you miss an exam for any reason, you will be given a 0. These exams are done online. Which means you can do them from anywhere.
- Make sure you have a proper internet connection. Internet connection problems are not a valid justification to miss an exam.
- The material tested on the exam covers all the information from the entire semester.

<u>Grading</u>	<u>Points</u>
Exam 1	100
Exam 2	100
Exam 3	100
Final Exam	100

Grades will be assigned based on student performance in the three categories outlined below.

**Attendance.** Attendance in lecture is not required but strongly encouraged, as we will cover material in class that students will not be able to get from any other source.

**Course material.** Lecture presentations and PDF files with the PowerPoint slides will be uploaded weekly to blackboard.

**Class etiquette.** Please turn cell phones off at the beginning of each class. Put away all computers during lectures and do not web surf or email during class.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

Academic dishonesty includes copying, sharing, or obtaining information from an unauthorized source, attempting to take credit for the intellectual work of another person, falsifying information, and giving or receiving information about a test, quiz, or assignment to other students. Any student involved in academic dishonesty will receive no credit (0) for work done and/or may be penalized in accordance with published University Rules.

**Counseling and Accessibility Services:**

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Mary Schwartze, M. Ed., L.P.C., in Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Telephone: 432-837-8691. Email: mschwartz@sulross.edu.

**Students with Special Needs:**

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is a SRSU policy to provide reasonable

accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request. Please contact me, Ms. Rebecca Greathouse Wren, M.Ed., LPC-S, Director/Counselor, Accessibility Services Coordinator, Ferguson Hall (Suite 112) at 432.837.8203; mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Students should then contact the instructor as soon as possible to initiate the recommended accommodations.