

**NRM 4302 – Advanced Topics in Conservation Biology**  
**Course Syllabus – Spring 2023**

**Instructor**

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Office Hours: Tu/Th, 1:30-4:30pm – or by appointment, or anytime my door is open!

**Class Meeting Time/Place**

Tuesday & Thursday, 11:00 am - 12:15 pm, NRM 128

**Course Description**

Examines the major areas in conservation research including patterns of biodiversity, extinction, conservation genetics, conservation of populations, communities and landscapes, and natural resource sustainability.

**Course Objectives**

Students will examine various advanced topics in Conservation Biology. On completion of the course, students will:

1. Understand how to research key topics and present the information to an audience,
2. Think critically about different conservation topics and consider different approaches and opinions related to a conservation issue, and
3. Have a broader understanding of the most current and pressing issues in the field of conservation biology.

**Additional Outcome Objectives**

As required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for the B.S. in Natural Resource Management are:

1. Students will be able to identify species of wildland plants and wildlife common to the western United States and describe their natural history.
2. Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the elements of an ecosystem.
3. Students will be able to communicate about natural resources and conservation both verbally and in writing.

**Marketable Skills**

As required by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), Marketable Skills for the B.S. in Natural Resource Management are:

1. Students will demonstrate public speaking skills.
2. Students will demonstrate writing skills.
3. Students will be able to apply course knowledge through a research project.

## Course Design and Organization

This course will focus on a different conservation biology topic each week, allowing us to delve more deeply into each than is possible in an introductory course. Topics for the first two weeks and the last week are pre-selected and will be led by Dr. Frank. Topics for the remainder of the course will be selected (via vote) during Week 1 by the students, according to their interests. Next, each student will choose a topic for which he or she will serve as “Topic Facilitator” to prepare and lead that week’s lessons and discussions.

## Text and Supplies

No textbook required. All required and recommended reading materials will be provided to students.

## Grading

Topic Week Facilitation and Deliverables	240 points
Weekly Discussion Participation	140 points
Weekly Quizzes	70 points
Final Exam	200 points

## Grade Assignment

100-90: A, 89-80: B, 79-70: C, 69-60: D, <60: F

## Major Assignments and Examinations

### *Topic Week Facilitation*

- **At least 1 week before Tuesday of your Topic Week**, you must meet with Dr. Frank to choose materials for your topic. Materials must include: 1 video, 1 news or popular press article, and 2 peer-reviewed journal articles (10 points).
- **Due 5:00pm on the Thursday before your Topic Week**, you must upload or link your chosen materials in Blackboard and send 2 Quizizz and 2 quiz questions to Dr. Frank (10 points).
- On **Tuesday of your Topic Week**, you will give a 20-minute presentation to the class about your chosen topic, based on the materials you submitted (40 points). You will then lead a class discussion of the topic for the remainder of class. This may include questions that you may have, questions you want the class to consider, future research needs, and debate over the topic (20 points).
- On **Thursday of your Topic Week**, the class will take a quiz with 2 questions written by you and 3 questions written by Dr. Frank. You will then give an “elevator speech” on your topic (20 points) followed by a 10-minute presentation that is designed for a public audience (no public will be present; 40 points).
- **Due at 5pm the Thursday after your Topic Week**, you must submit a written scientific report about your topic (4-5 pages, 1.5 space, Calibri 12-point font; 60 points) and a factsheet that is designed to be readable by the public (1-2 pages, may incorporate pictures, graphs, callout boxes, etc; 40 points).

### *Weekly Discussion Participation*

Active participation is expected in this class daily, and each day is worth 5 points. To earn full discussion points, you must:

- Have watched/read the materials shared by the topic lead,
- Ask questions after each topic overview,
- Contribute thoughts and questions during each topic discussion,
- Complete evaluation rubrics for your peers after each topic discussion.
- **If you are absent**, you may receive discussion participation points by writing a 1-page summary (1.5 space, Calibri 12-point font) about the topic.

### *Weekly Quizzes*

- There will be a short quiz at the beginning of class each Thursday. The quiz will consist of 2 questions written by the student who facilitated that week's topic, and 3 questions written by Dr. Frank that may be about any topic previously covered.
- Each quiz is worth 5 points.

### *Final Exam*

- A comprehensive final exam will be held on the university-scheduled final exam day.
- Questions will be a mix of multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay, and will cover the major points from each week of the course. The exam is worth 200 points.

### **Extra Credit**

Each Tuesday, we will begin class with a Quizizz quiz. These will consist of 3-5 questions, each worth half a point. Questions may cover any material that you should have learned during your degree so far! All correct questions will earn you bonus points. These quizzes cannot be made up if missed.

### **Attendance**

- Students are expected to make every effort to attend class. Your participation grade depends on your regular attendance. **Please communicate with me in advance if you will miss class.**
- Students are expected to arrive to class on time. Quizzes and Quizizz will be given at the beginning of class and cannot be made up if you arrive after they are turned in. They also cannot be made up if you are absent.

### **Due Dates and Extensions**

All graded work is expected to be on-time. **No due dates for ANY graded work will be extended without PRIOR e-mail arrangements initiated by the student**, and only for valid reasons.

- **Due to the nature of this course, late products expected during a student's facilitation week cannot and will not be accepted.** It is imperative that conflicts with your topic week are identified **before** you are assigned to that topic and its week. Once scheduled, changes will be made only if the student finds another student with whom to switch topic weeks, or in the case of emergency.

- Late topic reports will be accepted at the discretion of the instructor, with a **10% penalty for each day late** (i.e., 10% for 0-24 hours late, 20% for 24-48 hours late, etc.) Late topic reports are not accepted after 7 days. Extended due dates on topic reports may be allowed due to college-related conflicts **ONLY WITH** the instructor's approval **PRIOR** to the due date. In case of emergency, arrangements for completing assignments should be made immediately upon return to SRSU.

### **Academic Integrity**

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared, and focused; meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: Turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden.

### **Communication**

You are required to check your ***Sul Ross e-mail and Blackboard announcements several times per week***. I do not use the personal or preferred e-mail addresses that you may have on record with the University.

### **Electronics in the Classroom**

The use of personal laptops, cell phones, tablets, and other electronic devices can create distractions for learning, both for yourself and others. However, such devices can also be great tools to aid learning. Therefore, using electronic devices for class purposes (e.g. taking notes, working out problems, searching the internet) is allowed in silent mode. If you choose to use electronic devices in class, do so in a professional manner that does not impede others' learning. **The use of internet-capable devices (e.g., smartphones) is not allowed for exams. Headphones will not be allowed in class for any reason.**

Each Tuesday, we will use Quizizz, which can be accessed through an app on your smartphone or tablet, or through your laptop internet browser. If you do not have one of these devices, please let me know in advance and I will make arrangements so you can still participate and earn bonus points.

## Tentative Course Schedule

Week 1	1/19	Course Overview, Topic Selections	
Week 2	1/24, 26	Private Land Conservation	Dr. Frank
Week 3	1/31, 2/2	Urban Wildlife	Dr. Frank
Week 4	2/7, 9		Student
Week 5	2/14, 16		Student
Week 6	2/21		Dr. Frank
Week 7	2/28, 3/2		Student
Week 8	3/7, 9		Student
Week 9	3/14, 16	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES	
Week 10	3/21, 23		Dr. Frank
Week 11	3/28, 30		Student
Week 12	4/4, 6		Student
Week 13	4/11, 13		All
Week 14	4/18, 20		All
Week 15	4/25, 27		All
Week 16	5/2, 4	Ecosystem Services	Dr. Frank
Week 17	5/9	Final Exam Review	
Finals Week – Check University Schedule			

## RESOURCES

### ADA Statement

SRSU Disability Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Alpine Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mary Schwartz, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203, or email [mschwartz@sulross.edu](mailto:mschwartz@sulross.edu). Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall – room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

### Library Information

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, [library.sulross.edu](http://library.sulross.edu). Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email ([srsulibrary@sulross.edu](mailto:srsulibrary@sulross.edu)), or phone (432-837-8123).