

**Biology 5329.001 – Readings in Ecology – Conservation Biology Syllabus**  
**Fall 2024: TR 9:30 – 10:45 WSB 107**

**Instructor:** Dr. Chris M. Ritzi

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Office hours: MW 9:00-11:00, TR 3:00-5:00, or appt.

**Class Website:** <http://sulross.blackboard.edu> & <http://faculty.sulross.edu/critzi/>

**Text:** Hunter et al. 2021. Fundamentals of Conservation Biology. Wiley Blackwell Press. You will also be responsible for acquiring supplemental materials and articles from Blackboard.

**Course Description:** In this course we will read and discuss a variety of papers and topics that helped to shape our current understanding of conservation ecology. The goal for each week is to understand what theory or idea is being presented at the time, and how it affects ideas, policy, and beliefs in conservation. It is everyone's responsibility to read for each week, and to be prepared to discuss the topics. While no one will be designated the "moderator" each week, plan on providing a detailed discussion about each topic. Discussions are meant to be insightful and intelligent, as well as passionate and from the heart.

**Program Learning Outcomes**

The biology student graduating with a MS in Biology should be able to:

- 1) Understanding and implementation of scientific methodology.
- 2) Utilization of field techniques toward addressing scientific questions.
- 3) Be able to utilize statistics toward the analysis of data within the discipline.
- 4) Be able to effectively disseminate scientific findings using both written and oral communication.

**Student Learning Objectives for this Course:**

- 1) Demonstrate and understanding of evolution in how it relates to conservation biology
- 2) Compare and contrast the differences in land management practices.
- 3) Identify the primary threats to conservation, and propose suggested solutions.
- 4) Identify the facts that shape ones environmental focus.

**Tests:** There will not be any tests throughout the course, as such. Instead, the course will be graded on participation, preparedness, and the presentation of a class project toward the end of term. The project is to be a 20-30 minute presentation about the conservation issue of your choice (animal, plant, ecosystem, behaviour, etc.). The only exam will be a final essay exam over the core concepts covered in this course.

**Grading:** You will be assessed 300 points based on your participation and preparedness for each week's class, as well as 100 points on your presentation. The presentation grade will be determined by myself and your peers (in part). The Final Exam will be a 100 pt essay exam.

**Attendance:** Students missing 20% of lectures (6 class periods) shall be dropped from the class with an F per the SRSU catalog. Please notify your instructor BEFORE missing class for authorized activities, death in the family, or illness.

**Lecture courtesy:** The general rules of classroom etiquette are below.

- 1) This is a graduate class, so feel free to talk about the material as a group. This doesn't mean you should talk about other things for the hour.
- 2) No eating, chewing, dipping, etc. (unless it is a brown bag session)
- 3) Please turn cell phones and pagers to silent while in class. They are disruptive to the entire class, and detract from learning.

**Students with disabilities will be provided reasonable accommodations. If you would like to request such accommodations because of physical, mental, or learning disability, please contact the ADA Coordinator for Program Accessibility at 837-8203, FH 112.**

#### Tentative Lecture Outline

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lecture topic</u>	<u>Chapter</u>
Jan 18	Introduction	Ch 1
Jan 23	What is Conservation Biology?	Ch 1
Jan 25	Global Biodiversity	Ch 2-4
Jan 30	Threats to Biodiversity	Ch 6-7
Feb 1	Discussion on Biodiversity	Ch 6-7
Feb 6	Conservation Values and Ethics	Ch 15-17
Feb 8	Discussion of Values and Ethics	Ch 15-17
Feb 13	Habitat Degradation	Ch 8
Feb 15	Habitat Fragmentation	Ch 8
Feb 20	Discussion over Habitat Change	Ch 8
Feb 22	Overexploitation	Ch 9
Feb 27	Discussion on Overexploitation	Ch 9
Feb 29	Invasive Species	Ch 10
Mar 5	Discussion on Invasive Species	Ch 10
Mar 7	Climate Change	Ch 6
Mar 12	Spring Break	
Mar 14	Spring Break	
Mar 19	Discussion on Climate Change	Ch 6
Mar 21	Conservation Genetics	Ch 5
Mar 26	Discussion on Conservation Genetics	Ch 5
Mar 28	Protecting Ecosystems	Ch 11
Apr 2	Sustaining Ecosystems	Ch 12
Apr 4	Discussion on Ecosystem Management	Ch 11-12
Apr 9	Managing Populations	Ch 13

Apr 11	Discussion on Managing Populations	Ch 13
Apr 16	Conservation Near People	Ch 14
Apr 18	Discussion on Conservation Near People	Ch 14
Apr 23	Discussion on Presentations	
Apr 25	Student presentations	
Apr 30	Student presentations	
May 2	Dead Day	
May 6 – 8:00am	<b>Final Exam for TR 9:30-10:45</b>	

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Note – This outline is subject to change for reasons of course interest, time constraint, or instructor whim. The exams will be administered on the dates given, unless material relevant for a given exam has not been covered. Under such cases, an exam may be moved a class period or two to aid in the clarity and understanding of the material.

**SRSU Disability Services:** SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the 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. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mrs. Mary Schwartz Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director at 432-837-8203 or email [mschwartz@sulross.edu](mailto:mschwartz@sulross.edu) or contact Alejandra Valdez, at 830-758-5006 or email [alejandra.valdez@sulross.edu](mailto:alejandra.valdez@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.

**SRSU Distance Education Statement:** Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

**Libraries:** 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 LobolD 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).

**Academic Integrity:** Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students should submit work that is their own and avoid the temptation to engage in behaviors that violate

academic integrity, such as 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. Students should also avoid using open AI sources *unless permission is expressly given* for an assignment or course. Violations of academic integrity can result in failing assignments, failing a class, and/or more serious university consequences. These behaviors also erode the value of college degrees and higher education overall.

**Classroom Climate of Respect:** Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still, we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

**Supportive Statement:** I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports various perspectives and experiences. I understand that the recent pandemic, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events may impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create a supportive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.