

NRM 2303 – Principles of Conservation Biology
Course Syllabus – Spring 2025

Course Information

Instructor

Name: Dr. Maureen Frank
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Office Hours: Tu/Th, 9:00-10:00am, by appointment, or anytime my door is open!

Class Meeting Time/Place

Tuesday & Thursday, 11:00am - 12:15 pm, RAS 129

Course Description

This is an introductory course covering the fundamental knowledge and theories of conservation biology, including: biodiversity, how it is measured, and how it informs conservation work; ethics, goals, and the role of humans in conservation; and situation-dependent applied conservation through maintaining, managing, restoring, and adapting.

Expanded Course Description

Conservation biology is fundamental to natural resource management. Whether you hope to work with endangered species or game species, private or public lands, for a state agency or a non-governmental organization, the concepts covered in this class will give you a foundation for understanding and applying current topics in conservation science.

This course will require you to complete and critically evaluate readings from a variety of sources, including *A Sand County Almanac*, scientific abstracts, scientific reports, news releases, and essays. We will learn about critical analysis of empirical and quantitative data and practice using these concepts to inform conservation work. As a core curriculum course, we will also be learning about teamwork. You will be expected to evaluate your own strengths and weaknesses as part of a team and to contribute meaningfully to a group project.

Course Objectives

Students will learn the principles of conservation biology and how to apply these concepts to natural resource management. Specifically, upon course completion, students shall understand:

1. Biodiversity and its role in conservation,
2. Applying principles of conservation biology in diverse ecosystems to maintain, manage, restore, or adapt biodiversity, and
3. The impact of humans and human systems on biodiversity and conservation efforts.

As this course is a Core Course, students will also:

1. Develop empirical and quantitative skills to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions, and
2. Develop teamwork skills to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.

Program Learning Outcomes for the B.S. in Natural Resource Management

The graduating student will demonstrate that he/she is able to:

1. Identify species of wildland plants and wildlife common to the western United States and describe their natural history.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of the elements of an ecosystem.
3. Communicate about natural resources and conservation both verbally and in writing.
4. Conduct range and wildlife inventories in a team setting.
5. Apply knowledge about elements of an ecosystem into an appropriate conservation management plan.

Marketable Skills for the B.S. in Natural Resource Management (THECB requirement)

As part of attaining a B.S. in Natural Resource Management, students will develop the following Marketable Skills:

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 Materials and Policies

Required Text

A Sand County Almanac by Aldo Leopold

Other readings will be assigned; these will be provided by the instructor.

Grading

| | |
|--|------------|
| In-class work/quizzes | 150 points |
| Unit exams (4) | 600 points |
| Reflection on <i>A Sand County Almanac</i> | 50 points |
| Group Project | 200 points |

Grade Scale

89.5 – 100: A

79.5 – 89.4: B

69.5 – 79.4: C

59.5 – 69.4: D

0 – 59.4: F

Major Assignments and Examinations

In-class Work and Quizzes

Every class will have a quiz or other in-class assignment that cannot be completed or made up outside of class. Quizzes will typically cover material from the reading(s). Assignments or discussions will relate to what was learned in class that day. Each day is worth 5 points.

Unit Exams

At the end of each unit, students will be given an exam to evaluate their understanding of the concepts learned in that unit. Exams are not cumulative, but given the complex nature of conservation, concepts will build across the semester. Each exam is worth 100 points and will contain a mixture of multiple choice and short answer questions.

Reflection on A Sand County Almanac readings

Key readings from *A Sand County Almanac* will be assigned during each unit. Students will synthesize and reflect upon concepts from each reading in an essay. This assignment will be worth 50 points and more details will be given in class.

Group Project

As this is a small class, students will work together as a single group to complete a project about a conservation biology case study. This project is worth 200 points. Deadlines for this project will be throughout the semester to ensure that students are on track to complete the assignment. These are listed on the course schedule at the end of the syllabus. The components of the project will include:

- Skill evaluation exercise (10 points)
- Choosing a topic (10 points)
- Turning in a draft report and a draft presentation (20 points each)
- Writing a report (70 points)
- Presenting to the instructor (70 points)

Each student is expected to contribute meaningfully to the project. Grades assigned for each component will be individual to each student to reflect the level of contribution to the assignment.

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. Late work will only 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 work will not be accepted after 7 days.

Extra Credit

There are 2 opportunities to receive extra credit in this class. **No other extra credit or grade adjustments will be given or considered.**

1. The SRSU Invitational 4-H/FFA Judging Event will be held all day on April 2. Students can earn up to 20 extra points for volunteering to help with this event. More details will be given when they are available.

2. A student may read any additional essay from *A Sand County Almanac* (beyond what is required) and write a second reflection paper on that topic for up to 20 extra points. A rubric for this extra credit assignment will be provided.

Attendance

Students are expected to make every effort to attend class. Your 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 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.

Required Student Responsibilities

All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the [Student Handbook](#) and the [Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog](#) and for abiding by the [University rules and regulations](#). Additionally, students are responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all federal, state and local laws and is expected to familiarize themselves with the requirements of such laws.

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.

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. **Generative AI may not be used to write reports.**

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 except when designated by the professor. 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.**

Connecting with Students for Success

This is a “Connecting with Students for Success” course. In addition to the items listed in the graphic below, you will be asked to take a survey about this course. I am excited to make this course a good experience for you!



RESOURCES

SRSU Disability Services (ADA Statement)

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. 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.

Counseling Services

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) has partnered with TimelyCare, which is an online mental health support platform, and all SRSU students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. These can be accessed by visiting <https://timelycare.com/srsu>. Counseling is also offered in Ferguson Hall Room 112 in Alpine, and via telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students.

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. 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), or phone (432-837-8123).

Tutoring

The [Lobo Den Tutoring Center](#) offers FREE tutoring support to help you excel in your courses.

- Drop-in and scheduled appointments offered, Monday–Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
- Location: BWML Room 128
- Regularly hosted academic workshops on STEM topics and professional development,

For more information or to book an appointment, email tutoring@sulross.edu or call (432) 837-8726.

Tutor.com offers FREE 24/7 online tutoring in over 200 subjects, including specialized support for ESL and ELL learners with native Spanish-speaking tutors. Log in through your Blackboard account.

Blackboard Support Desk

If you have any technical issues with Blackboard itself, the Blackboard Support Desk is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can reach the support desk by calling (888) 837-6055, emailing blackboardsupport@sulross.edu, using resources from the Technology Support tab within Blackboard, or clicking the Support Desk graphic on the course homepage.

Course Schedule

| Week | Dates | Tuesday | Thursday |
|------|------------|---|---|
| 1 | 1/16 only | | Course Overview |
| 2 | 1/21, 1/23 | Core assessment, Unit 1 lesson | Unit 1 lesson |
| 3 | 1/28, 1/30 | Unit 1 lesson | Unit 1 lesson |
| 4 | 2/4, 2/6 | Unit 1 exam | Unit 2 lesson, project topic due |
| 5 | 2/11, 2/13 | Unit 2 lesson | Unit 2 lesson |
| 6 | 2/18, 2/20 | TCTWS – NO CLASS | TCTWS – NO CLASS |
| 7 | 2/25, 2/27 | Unit 2 lesson | Unit 2 lesson |
| 8 | 3/4, 3/6 | Unit 2 exam | Unit 3 lesson |
| 9 | 3/11, 3/13 | Unit 3 lesson | Unit 3 lesson, project draft due |
| | | SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS | SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS |
| 10 | 3/25, 3/27 | Unit 3 lesson | Unit 3 lesson |
| 11 | 4/1, 4/3 | Unit 3 exam | Unit 4 lesson |
| 12 | 4/8, 4/10 | Unit 4 lesson | Unit 4 lesson |
| 13 | 4/15 only | Unit 4 lesson | NO CLASS |
| 14 | 4/22, 4/24 | Unit 4 lesson, core assessment | Unit 4 exam, SCA reflection due |
| 15 | 4/29 only | Project presentation, final report due | |