

## **COURSE SYLLABUS\***

### **BIOL 5384.01/BIOL 4096.03 – Ornithology**

Spring Semester, 2018

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- Instructor:** Dr. Diane Neudorf  
Lee Drain Bldg. 115C  
Tel: 294-1548, Email: Neudorf@shsu.edu  
Office hours: by appointment
- Location & time:** Mon. 2:00-4:00 (lecture), Thurs. \*\*8:00 to 11:00 (lab)  
\*\*some labs may start earlier or later depending on activity  
Locations will alternate between the field station classroom and the museum classroom.
- Evaluation:**
- |                             |         |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| 2 Lecture Exams:            | 100 pts |
| Midterm Lab Exam:           | 25 pts  |
| Final Lab Exam:             | 50 pts  |
| Bird survey project         | 25 pts  |
| ACE Assignment 1            | 25 pts. |
| ACE Assignment 2            | 15 pts  |
| ACE Reflection              | 5 pts   |
| Class Presentation          | 20 pts  |
| Bird observation assignment | 10 pts  |
| Participation               | 25 pts  |
- Grading Scheme:** A=270-300, B=240–269, C=210-239, D=180-209, F <180
- Books & Supplies:** A field guide of your choice (e.g. National Geographic, Peterson, Sibley etc.)  
  
Ibird or another similar phone app (optional but recommended)  
Good quality binoculars (7 x 35 or 8 x 40)  
Field notebooks (write-in-the-rain)/clipboard  
Optional resources: Manual of Ornithology  
Ornithology, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition by Frank Gill
- Attendance:** In accordance with University Policy, regular attendance is required.  
Regular attendance will be considered part of the participation grade.
- Missed Exams:** Make-up exams will be offered only to students with written verification of illness, family emergency, religious event or required participation in an organized college event. In the latter two cases please notify me within the first 15 days of the semester.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail [disability@shsu.edu](mailto:disability@shsu.edu)). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/811006.pdf>

**Classroom rules:** Cellular phones and pagers must be turned off during class time. Rude or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in, minimally, a directive to leave class or being reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy. Visitors to the classroom will be permitted only with prior approval by me and if they do not present a disruption to the class.

**A note on Academic Dishonesty:** Academic dishonesty includes cheating, collusion and plagiarism. It is a serious offense that at the very least will result in a failing grade on the assignment in question. Examples include: (1) Receiving or providing unauthorized assistance on an exam; (2) Using notes or other forms of unauthorized materials during an exam; (3) Submitting an assignment as one's own work that has been written in whole or in part by another; (4) Failing to properly indicate sources of borrowed words or ideas. For more information refer to "Code of Student Conduct and Discipline" in your SHSU student guidelines handbook.

## **Course Description and Objectives:**

This class will give you both a theoretical and practical background to Ornithology, the scientific study of birds. After successfully completing the lecture portion of this course students should be able to understand and discuss the following:

- 1) the anatomical and physiological characteristics that separate birds from other animals
- 2) hypotheses on the origin of birds and flight
- 3) how birds communicate with one another both vocally and visually
- 4) the breeding biology and ecology of birds
- 5) the annual cycle of birds and the biology of migration and navigation
- 6) conservation issues involving both tropical and temperate bird species.

**By the end of the laboratory/field portion of this course students will know how to:**

- 1) Identify common species found in east Texas and the Gulf Coast by sight and sound
- 2) Recognize and identify select orders of birds of the world
- 3) Capture and handle birds in the field
- 4) Identify morphological and anatomical features of birds
- 5) Make observations of bird behavior in the field
- 6) Conduct bird surveys

### **ACE- Academic Community Engagement:**

In this course you will not only learn knowledge and skills in the field of Ornithology, but also actively use them to make a difference in our community by exposing school children and others to the wonderment, beauty and importance of birds. You will serve as positive role models to children in our community.

#### **ACE Assignment 1**

In groups of 2-3 do a presentation on birds to children at the Boys and Girls club of Walker county (after school program) OR Forest Fest at Huntsville State Park (Saturday, Apr. 7, 2018) OR design a educational bird display for the LDB cabinet to replace the old one.

#### **ACE Assignment 2**

Volunteer in some capacity at the Biology Departments First Annual Earth Day Bio Blitz (Apr. 19-21, 2018).

#### **Bird Survey Project:**

The best way to learn to recognize birds is to regularly “go birding”. This project will help hone your ID skills. Each pair of students will survey a small area for birds 1-2 times per week throughout the semester and create a report and bird list for their area. Areas may include: campus, the field station, Eastham-Thomasson Park and others.

#### **Field Trips:**

Field trips will focus on bird identification. You will have an opportunity to observe birds in their natural habitats, and to see how birds are captured using mist nets. Field trips will take place during lab or on weekends. Field trips are a compulsory part of the course and attendance counts toward your participation grade. Destinations will be dependent on weather conditions and bird activity. Please be advised that dates and location of trips are tentative.

#### **Possible Weekend Field Trips:**

Rockport Whooping Crane Trip – Feb. 17 and 18, 2018  
Brazos Bend State Park – March 24, 2018

#### **Lecture Topics:**

Origins and Evolution  
Feathers and Flight

Bird Brains and Senses  
Breeding Biology  
Communication  
Systems and Physiology  
Migration, Navigation, and Annual Cycles  
Conservation

- Please note that the course syllabus is tentative. Topics covered, exam dates, assignments and grading scheme are subject to change at my discretion.