

Biology 2336: General Ecology Lab

Tentative syllabus

Fall, 2006

Instructors / TAs: Dr. Lock Rogers
 331 Cherry Emerson Building
 tel: 404-385-0539
 email: lock.rogers@biology.gatech.edu

 Dr. Anne Marie Hoskinson
 A104 Cherry Emerson Building
 tel: 404-385-6517
 email: annemarie.hoskinson@biology.gatech.edu

 Jan Drexel
 email: gtg112v@mail.gatech.edu

 Brendan Hunt
 C122 Cherry Emerson Building
 email: brendan.hunt@gatech.edu

Course Overview: Ecology lab is the companion laboratory for Ecology (Biology 2335). This course will emphasize an understanding of ecological concepts through lab, field and computer exercises with the goal that you be able to design, execute and analyze ecological experiments on population dynamics, competition, predation, community structure and biodiversity. Note that while Biology 2335 is a co-requisite, 2336 is a stand alone course having its own assignments, presentations and examinations; your evaluation / grade in the two courses will be independent. The computer programs we will use are EcoBeaker (EB), which is proprietary and cannot be loaded onto students' computers, and Populus (P), which is public domain. We encourage students to visit Don Alstad's Populus site (see below) and download the program for themselves (Populus is written for Windows, Linux and Mac OS X) – in addition to helping you visualize many of the models discussed in 2336 and 2335, there is an abundance of background material built into Populus. www.cbs.umn.edu/populus/

Grading: Your grade for the course will be determined by your scores on ten lab reports (50%), two exams (worth 15% and 20%), and two in-class presentations (15%). Students will work in pairs on lab exercises, and on the reports which will be turned in at the beginning of lab the following week. For the reports, each student will receive the same grade. If you feel that your partner is not contributing his or her fair share, see me – hopefully before the report is due – and either the TAs or the instructors will talk to that person. We are not going to assign partners, and you may work with whomever you wish. In the second week, we will describe our expectations for the reports, as well as an example report you should use as a guide. The lab examinations will be non-multiple choice: short answer, essay, fill-in-the-blank, etc., testing your comprehension of the theory and applications of ecology; particularly, the design and analysis of ecological experiments. The first presentation will be of the pollination biology project, and the second will be on the longitudinal pond study or the stream / forest biodiversity studies. Our expectations for the projects and presentations will be described in detail later in the semester.

Attendance: is mandatory. While missing a lecture is to be avoided, missing a lab causes real problems. Any unexcused absence will cost you 5% off your final grade. If you miss a lab session, you must convince either Dr. Rogers or Dr. Hoskinson that the absence was excusable. Examples of excusable absences include documented illness, death in family, or accident. If you know that you are going to be absent from lab, you need to notify either the instructors or the TAs beforehand. Unexcused absences from presentations or exams will result in a grade of 0.

Honor issues: Your conduct in this course is expected to conform to the GT Student Honor Code (<http://www.registrar.gatech.edu/rules/18.php>). Cheating stinks – don't do it.

Schedule:

Aug. 22, 23:	Introduction to course and to probability thinking	
Aug. 29, 30:	Pollination biology / observations	[Handout]
Sept. 5, 6:	Isle Royale – population growth, predator-prey cycles	[EB, P]
Sept. 12, 13:	Limiting nutrients and competition	[EB]
Sept. 19, 20:	Drosophila oviposition choice: niche partitioning	[Handout]
Sept. 26, 27:	Mother Nature's supermarket (optimal foraging)	[EB]
Oct. 3, 4:	Herbivory: rotifer grazing	[Handout]
Oct. 10, 11:	Midterm exam	
Oct. 17, 18:	Fall Break	
Oct. 24, 25:	Review test, presentations	
Nov. 0, 1:	Stream / Forest Biodiversity lab; assessing ecosystem integrity	[Handout]
Nov. 7, 8:	Corridors, stepping stones, and butterflies	[EB]
Nov. 14, 15:	Pond analysis	[Handout]
Nov. 21, 22:	Sick fish: ecoepidemiology	[EB]
Nov. 28, 29:	Stream / Forest presentations	[Handout]
Dec. 5, 6:	Final exam	