

PCB 3044: Principles of Ecology

Department of Biology, College of Science

3 Credit Hours

Instructor Information

- Instructor: Dr. Melinda Donnelly
 - Office Location: [Biological Sciences \(BIO\) Building](#), room 401A
 - Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 11 AM to 1 PM
 - Appointments outside of posted office hours are available and scheduled by email
- Email: Melinda.Donnelly@ucf.edu
- All emails will receive a response within 24-48 hours, excluding weekends and holidays
 - - Email must include the following information...
 - Salutation
 - Your name
 - Include that you are enrolled in Ecology
 - **Before emailing me with a question about course policies, read the lecture syllabus to find the answer.**
- Grades must be discussed with the instructor during office hours and can not be given over email.
- All e-mail communications must be from your official UCF email address, any other emails will not receive a response per UCF policy.

Course Information

- Term: Fall 2023
- Course Number & Section: PCB 3044.0001 and PCB 3044.0002
- Course Name: Principles of Ecology
- Credit Hours: 3
- Class Meeting Times and Locations

- Section 1: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:30 pm to 2:45 pm, Location: [HS1 112](#)
 - Section 2: Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:00 pm to 4:15 pm, Location: [CB2 207](#)
- Course Modality: Face-to-Face (P)

Enrollment Requirements

Course Prerequisites: C or better in Biology II (BSC 2011C) and Chemistry Fundamentals 1 (CHM 2045C).

Course Description

This 3-credit course will examine the structure and function of ecological systems, including populations, communities, and ecosystems. Objectives for students include:

- (a) master major concepts and basic terminology of ecology
- (b) understand how evolution and ecology complement each other
- (c) understand approaches of ecological study, including theory, observations, and experiments

Course Materials and Resources

Textbook: Ecology 6th Edition by William D. Bowman; Sally D. Hacker; Publisher: Sinauer Associates , Sunderland, MA. Multiple versions and options for purchase and rent are available- purchasing the access code for the publisher site is recommended due to additional on-line content to support the virtual nature of this course.

- - eTextbook option ISBN: 9780197614082, 0197614086
 - Print option ISBN 13 : 9780197614044, 0197614043

Internet Access and Webcourses

- Webcourses will be used for aspects of this class, including class related material and communication:
 - Course Syllabus
 - Weekly Modules
 - Lecture Slides
 - Exam review material
 - Weekly Quizzes, Participation Assignments
 - Announcements

- To ensure that you receive important announcements, you are required to have your announcements setting turned on. You are responsible for information sent to students via Webcourses Announcements.
- Grades for all course components

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Understand the basic principles of ecology as a cornerstone of a broad background in biology.
2. Learn some of the basic ecological terminology.
3. Appreciate and apply the theoretical concepts of ecology and the experimental evidence supporting them.
4. Become familiar with the scientific method as applied to ecological studies.
5. Gain an appreciation of ecology as a science and its role in understanding the man-nature interaction.

Assessment and Grading Procedures

Assessment	Percentage of Grade
Participation	6%
Weekly Quizzes	6%
4 Exams (22% each)	88%
Total	100%

Final Course Grade Rounding Policy:

If your final total across all grading components is less than or equal to one percent below a higher grade, rounding up to the higher grade will occur only if you scored at the higher grade on 3 of the 4 exams. For example, if your overall course grade was an 89% and your exam scores were 84, 91, 92, and 93, your final grade will be rounded up to an A because three of the tests scored at 90 or above. If, however your exam grades were

85, 88, 92, and 94, the grade would remain a B+ because only 2 of your 4 exam grades were 90 or above. As there are many students in this class I strive for consistency and fairness. For this reason, there will be no exceptions to this policy and no other adjustments will be made. In other words, unless the above criteria are met, a 79.99 is still a 'C+' and no additional curving or extra credit will be offered.

Grading Scale:

A	90-100%
B+	87-89%
B	80-86%
C+	77-79%
C	70-76%
D+	67-69%
D	60-66%
F	<60%

*In compliance with FERPA, no grades will be given via email or phone

- - Students wishing to discuss their grades must request an appointment with Dr. Donnelly by email.
 - Grades will not be discussed with any individual (even parents) other than the student

Course Activity Details

Attendance Verification for Financial Aid Students

- Faculty are required to document student attendance/participation in this course so that financial aid monies are disbursed appropriately and in a timely manner.
- To document your attendance and participation in this course you are required to complete the [Academic Engagement Activity - Syllabus Quiz](#) in Webcourses no later than Friday, August 25th.
 - Failure to complete this quiz will result in the delay of your financial aid funds
 - This quiz is related to the lecture syllabus. Your score on this quiz will count as 1 pt towards your general participation grade (described below).

General Participation Grade (6% of semester grade)

- Your Participation grade will be evaluated based on completion of both on-line activities related to weekly modules **and** in-class participation questions administered using quizzes in Webcourses.
- On-Line Participation Activities will be included in each module when it opens on Mondays and the On-Line Participation Quiz is due each week by Friday, 11:59 pm. On-Line Participation Quizzes will be untimed and you will have two attempts.
- For in-class participation questions, a passcode will be given during in-class lectures to access the quiz. If you do not have access to electronic devices during lecture, please contact Dr. Donnelly for alternative arrangements.
 - Please note sharing the passcode with students not attending will be considered cheating and both students will be subjected to penalties as described in Academic Integrity section below.
- Participation quizzes (on-line and in-class) can not be redone once they are completed.
- At the end of the semester, the lowest two participation grades will be dropped. Contact Dr. Donnelly if additional participation activities are missed; documentation may be required at the discretion of instructor for additional excused participations.
- **Important: There are NO makeups or excused absences for missed on-line participation quizzes** (unless a student can provide documentation affecting them longer than 1 week, e.g. extended hospitalization, sequestered jury duty, etc. that prevented computer access).
- Extra Credit: It is not necessary to respond correctly to in-class participation questions to receive participation credit for a particular day, *but* correct responses will benefit your grade via extra credit added to your overall exam average at end of semester. The maximum possible extra credit is 2%, based on the number of in-class participation questions answered correctly during entire semester. Extra credit points missed for any reason cannot be made up under any circumstances.

Weekly Quizzes (6% of semester grade)

- There will be eleven online quizzes given through Webcourses, one per week except for any week an exam is being given.
- Each quiz will be based on module content, including lectures and textbook readings.
- These quizzes are intended to help you learn along the way. The quizzes are open-book/open-note and you will have 30 minutes to complete each quiz. Quizzes are open book but require prior preparation to successfully complete the quiz in the time allotted. If you are not satisfied with your grade on a quiz

it may be taken a second time prior to the due date and the best score of the two will count.

- Your **lowest (1) quiz grade will be dropped** from your final grade.
- Quizzes will be open on **Mondays** and close at **11:59PM on Friday**.
- **Important: There are NO makeups or excused absences for missed quizzes** (unless a student can provide documentation affecting them longer than 1 week, e.g. extended hospitalization, sequestered jury duty, etc. that prevented computer access).
- If you miss taking a quiz, you will receive a zero (0) for that quiz's grade. Therefore, do NOT wait until the last minute to take the quiz.
- Technical or internet difficulties will NOT be accepted as an excuse for missing quizzes.
- Students are responsible for knowing the quiz due dates which can be found on Webcourses
- Final submission of the quiz must occur prior to the 30-minute deadline or Webcourses will not accept it.

Exams (88% of semester grade)

- **All Exams will be give electronically through Webcourses using Lockdown Browser during the scheduled lecture time for your section.**
- Four exams will be given throughout the semester on-line during class times on following dates:
 - Exam 1: Monday, Sept. 18th
 - Exam 2: Monday, October 9th
 - Exam 3: Monday, Nov. 6th
 - Exam 4 (non-cumulative): Final exam week, based on section number
 - Section 1: Monday, December 4th, 1:00 PM – 3:50 PM
 - Section 2: Wednesday, December 6th, 1:00 PM – 3:50 PM
- Each exam is worth 22% of final grade- **all exams count towards final grade.**
- Exam content is based on material covered in book chapters, lectures, and modules.
- Exams are open notes and open book, however, Lockdown browser will be required when taking the exam.
 - - We are **not** using the webcam monitoring feature and **no** webcam is needed for exams in this course.
 - Review the information about LockDown Browser and download the UCF version: [Lockdown Browser Download](#)

- For assistance with the lockdown browser, visit the LockDown browser [Student Support Page](#)
- Once installed, test your browser with this practice quiz: [LockDown Browser Practice Quiz](#)
 - The practice quiz is not graded and can be opened as many times as needed.
 - Tip: Make sure you close all programs on your computer first and then open the lockdown browser first from the shortcut on your desktop or your program menu- it will take you to the sign-in page for Webcourses and the quiz. You will need to know your NID and password to log-in.

- Exams will start on Webcourses promptly at your scheduled class time and you will have 75 minutes to complete.
 - Students must take lecture exams during the scheduled lecture section in which they are enrolled
 - Failure to take the exam in the correct section during the scheduled time will result in a zero (0) grade for the exam
 - See your schedule in myUCF to determine your registered section number
 - Any students logging in late to the exam must complete the exam in the time remaining

- Exams can be reviewed during office hours after make-up exams have been completed until the date of the following exam.
 - Exams can not be retaken once completed.

Make-up Exams and Assignments

Per university policy, you are allowed to submit make-up work (or an equivalent, alternate assignment) for authorized university-sponsored activities, religious observances, or legal obligations (such as jury duty). If this participation conflicts with your course assignments, I will offer a reasonable opportunity for you to complete missed assignments and/or exams. The make-up assignment and grading scale will be equivalent to the missed assignment and its grading scale. In the case of an authorized university activity, it is your responsibility to show me a signed copy of the Program Verification Form for which you will be absent, prior to the class in which the absence occurs. Other absences may require documentation to be excused at the instructor's

discretion. In any of these cases, please contact me ahead of time to notify me of upcoming needs.

For a missed excused exam, the make-up exam must be completed by the date of the next exam. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the instructor to schedule a date and time for the make-up exam. All make-up and late assignments must be completed or submitted to Webcourses by the last Friday of the semester on Friday, December 1st, 2023. No assignments or make-up exams will be accepted after this date.

Consult the latest Undergraduate or Graduate [catalog](#) for regulations and procedures regarding grading such as Incomplete grades, grade changes, and grade forgiveness.

Course Schedule

See the complete [Course Schedule](#) for dates and deadlines.

Weekly modules will open on Mondays and include lecture files and links to on-line resources associated with the topics included in the textbook. The modules are designed for you to complete at your own pace over the course of the week. On all weeks except exam weeks, quizzes will open on Monday with the module information and be due by 11:59 pm on the following Friday. Quizzes will test knowledge of material presented in the weekly module and associated textbook readings.

Any changes to the schedule will be announced to the class through Webcourses.

Study suggestions:

This is a fast-paced class covering multiple chapters each week. To succeed it is essential that you stay caught up by reading, attending lectures, and studying the material. Students who prepare for the exams by simply attending lectures and reading their notes several times are unlikely to succeed on the exams. Although the final exam is not cumulative, concepts build on each other and understanding one chapter is essential to understanding later chapters in this course. To succeed it is best to make your learning more active and focused. Active learning involves practicing the same skills you must perform on exams. In other words, quick recall of the appropriate information and applying it. To do this you should:

1. Treat studying like it's a job. Set a schedule, show up for work, pay attention (i.e. no multitasking) while on the job. A general rule of thumb is 2-3 hours for every hour of class.
2. Practice by Self-Testing. Make your own study questions: If you are like most people, you do not remember what you read/hear in sufficient detail to then be tested. However, it may be unclear which details you remember/understand and which you do not. The point in study questions is to figure out prior to an exam what you don't understand or have trouble remembering and work on that material. You do not want to realize during an

exam that you don't understand something as well as you thought you did as it is now too late!

University Services and Resources

Academic Services and Resources

A list of available academic support and learning services is available at [UCF Student Services](#). Click on "Academic Support and Learning Services" on the right-hand side to filter.

Non-Academic Services and Resources

A list of non-academic support and services is also available at [UCF Student Services](#). Click on "Support" on the right-hand side to filter.

If you are a UCF Online student, please consult the [UCF Online Student Guidelines](#) for more information about your access to non-academic services.

Policy Statements

[Academic Integrity](#)

[Course Accessibility Statement](#)

[Campus Safety Statement](#)

[Deployed Active Duty Military Students](#)

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