

College of DuPage: Prairie Ecology, Fall 2009

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Office Hours:
Mon. 10 am – 10:50 am
Wed. 11 am – 2:50 pm
Tue., Thu. 11 am – 11:50 am
Virtual hours Fri. 10 am – 12:50 pm

Course Description from College Catalog:

The organisms, environments, and ecological processes of the tallgrass prairie ecosystem will be examined through lecture, discussion, and field studies. Identification of prairie plants, with an emphasis on species in northern Illinois, will be included. Students will participate in College of DuPage's prairie reconstructions. Field trips and activities will be required. *2 Lecture Hours, 4 Lab Hours. Prerequisite: Biology 1100 or Biology 1151 recommended*

General Course Objectives:

- Upon successful completion of this course the student should be able to do the following:
1. Demonstrate an understanding of the tallgrass prairie ecosystem and its relationship to other grasslands
 2. Identify prairie flora and fauna
 3. Demonstrate a basic understanding of the climate, geology, and disturbances that shape the prairie
 4. Compare native prairie remnants and restorations
 5. Demonstrate a basic understanding of and effectively participate in ecological studies, restoration, or management activities of prairie

Textbooks (required):

Savage, Candace. 2004. *Prairie: A Natural History*. Greystone Books, Vancouver, British Columbia.
Kirt, Russell R. 1995. *Prairie Plants of the Midwest: Identification and Ecology*. Stipes Publishing, Champaign, USA.
Ecobeaker Custom Laboratory Guide. 2009. Beakerware.

Optional (recommended) text:

Ladd, D. and F. Oberle. 1995. *Tallgrass Prairie Wildflowers*. Falcon Publishing, Inc., Helena, Montana, USA.

Points:

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------|
| Lecture Exams (75 ea.) | = | 225 |
| Final Exam | = | 150 |
| Plant identification exams (75 ea.) | = | 150 |
| Vertebrate identification exam | = | 75 |
| Lab and field activities | = | 250 |
| Quizzes (10 ea.) | = | 90 |
| <u>Ecobeaker labs (30 ea.)</u> | = | <u>60</u> |
| TOTAL | | 1000 |

Grading Scale:

| <u>Grade</u> | <u>Percent</u> | <u>Points</u> |
|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| A | ≥90% | ≥900 |
| B | 80%-89% | 720-809 |
| C | 70%-79% | 630-719 |
| D | 60%-69% | 540-629 |
| F | <60% | <540 |

How to calculate your running average (current grade):

Your cumulative points divided by total possible points to date.

How to calculate what you need to "average" on remaining exams, etc. to receive the grade you desire:

1. Minimum points needed for grade minus your cumulative so far in the class.
2. Answer from (1.) divided by cumulative points remaining for class.

Class Attendance: Class is scheduled Tuesday and Thursday, from 12-2:50 pm; attendance is *expected and required* for success in this course. Students with 6 or more absences prior to midterm will result in instructor withdrawal or a failing grade. (See additional absence penalties below.) There are no excused absences nor credit for partial attendance. Be aware that laboratory and field experiences cannot be replaced through a classmate's notes, nor will credit be given for an activity's journal entry in which the individual was absent.

| <u>Point Deductions:</u> | Number Missed | | Points | |
|--------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| | <u>Classes</u> | <u>Deducted</u> | <u>Classes</u> | <u>Deducted</u> |
| | 1-5 | 0 | 12-13 | 12 |
| | 6-7 | 6 | 14-15 | 14 |
| | 8-9 | 8 | 16-17 | 16 |
| | 10-11 | 10 | ≥18 | 20 |

Exam and Quiz Attendance: Lecture exams and quizzes begin at the start of the scheduled period. Lecture exams will last ca. 75 min., quizzes 10 min. Students must receive *prior* permission from the instructor for an absence from a lecture exam; otherwise, the student will receive a grade of zero for that exam. Students may have up to 6 days from the scheduled lecture exam date to make-up a lecture exam; arrangements must be made with the instructor. Up to 2 lecture exam makeups are allowed. The first lecture make-up exam has a 8% penalty, a second make-up exam has a 16% penalty. The final exam is block scheduled; no makeup is allowed. There are no makeups on quizzes; the lowest quiz score will be dropped. You will have 3 laboratory practicals (identification exams). Because of the difficulty in arranging practicals, there are no makeups for laboratory practicals.

Laboratory and Field Trips: Laboratory will be held in conjunction with class time on Tuesday or Thursday. This course has a moderate emphasis on field-oriented (outdoor) learning activities; there will be field outings on and off campus. Students should *always* dress appropriately for field and weather conditions—sturdy walking shoes (no sandals!) are always required and long pants always strongly recommended; also as appropriate: long sleeves, hats, and rain or cold weather jackets. Students without appropriate attire can be refused participation. Because schedules may change, plan on going outdoors for class. There are no makeup labs!

Lab / Field Journal: Each student will maintain a chronologically organized notebook (journal) on laboratory exercises, field outings, and other activities as part of this course. Required journal notebooks, *Rite in the Rain*, are available for purchase in the bookstore; guidelines will be given in class. Journals will be graded twice during the semester (see Schedule below). There will be a 3-pt deduction for each [calendar] day late; journals will not be graded if submitted more than 7 days from submission deadline. To receive credit for a class activity, attendance and a proper corresponding entry is required—examples leading to point deductions: illegibility, failure to follow proper format, inaccurate or insufficient details. Late inclusion of entries (outside the range of dates for that grading period) will not be accepted, nor will entries be re-graded at a later date. *Hence, seek any assistance prior to submission deadline.* Any late assignments must be submitted directly to and logged in by instructor or personnel in the Health and Sciences Division in the Health and Sciences Center.

Cheating: Students found cheating on any exam/quiz/assignment will receive a score of zero; this includes plagiarism. Academic dishonesty may lead to dismissal from or a grade of F for the course. Students' rights and responsibilities are described in the college catalogue.

Withdrawal: Students may withdraw without instructor permission until 8 days after midterm. After this date, students must receive signed permission from the instructor, and submit this to the Registration Office. Please note: I will not grant permission to withdraw from class after Nov. 19th. *Students must keep track of their own grades and progress in the course.*

Satisfactory/Fail: Request / complete forms by Oct 13th. Satisfactory = 65% cumulative mean.

Incomplete: Incomplete grades are only issued under extenuating circumstances; minimum requirements: signed contract before the last week of the term, regular attendance and all assignments graded through the 13th week of the term, with a minimum cumulative grade of "C."

SYLLABUS--tentative schedule

| <u>Week</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Lecture</u> | <u>Lab</u> | <i>Prairie Nat. His.</i> <u>Ch. Readings; quiz</u> |
|-------------|-----------------|--|--|---|
| 1 | 8/25- 8/27 | Intro to prairies Prairies of the Gr. Plains | Prairie plant structure and intro. to identification | Ch. 1 |
| 2 | 9/1- 9/3 | Origin of N. American grasslands THE NATURAL GARDENS | Intro. to prairie environment | quiz 1 Ch. 2 |
| 3 | 9/8- 9/10 | Tallgrass and Shortgrass Prairies Autecology: plants | Prairie plant identification PLANT I.D. EXAM I | quiz 2 Ch. 3 |
| 4 | 9/15- 9/17 | Autecology: plants MIDEWIN NAT'L TALLGRASS PRAIRIE | | Ch. 3 |
| 5 | 9/22- 9/24 | Community Ecology LECTURE EXAM 1; JOURNALS DUE | Prairie plant sampling | quiz 3 |
| 6 | 9/29- 10/1 | Community Ecology MORTON ARBORETUM | Prairie plant sampling | Ch. 4 |
| 7 | 10/6- 10/8 | Ecobeaker: Intermediate Disturbance Hypothesis WEST CHICAGO PRAIRIE | | quiz 4 |
| 8 | 10/13- 10/15 | ECOBREAKER ASSIGNMENT DUE; Soils and mycorrhizal fungi | PLANT I.D. EXAM 2; Soil Lab 1 | (article) quiz 5 |
| 9 | 10/20- 10/22 | NO CLASS—INSERVICE DAY Autecology: Animals | Soil Lab 2 | Ch. 5; quiz 6 |
| 10 | 10/27- 10/29 | LECTURE EXAM 2 Nutrient Cycling and Disturbance | Mammals of the Prairie Skull Lab | (article) |
| 11 | 11/3- 11/5 | Landscape Ecology Landscape Ecology | Birds of the Prairie | quiz 7 Ch. 6 |
| 12 | 11/10- 11/12 | Prairie Wetlands Prairie Woodlands; JOURNALS DUE | Pre-Settlement Lab GIS Lab | Ch. 7; quiz 8 |
| 13 | 11/17- 11/19 | VERTEBRATE I.D. EXAM Prairie Restoration | | Ch. 8 |
| 14 | 11/24- 11/26 | Prairie Management NO CLASS THURSDAY—HAPPY THANKSGIVING! | Prescribed burn techniques | quiz 9; Ch. 9 |

| <u>Week</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Lecture</u> | <u>Lab</u> | |
|-------------|----------------|---|------------|----------------|
| 15 | 12/1- 12/3 | LECTURE EXAM 3 Ecobeaker: Corridors, Stepping Stones and Butterflies | | (article) |
| 16 | 12/9- 12/11 | Prairie Conservation; ECOBEAKER ASSIGNMENT DUE Ecobeaker Extra Credit: Prairie Sampling | | quiz 10 |
| 17 | 12/15 | FINAL EXAM Tue. 12-1:50 pm; ECOBEAKER EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENT DUE | | |

You are responsible for all information contained in this syllabus and any announcements made in class.