EVR 3013 Ecology of South Florida- Online

Syllabus- Spring 2020

INSTRUCTOR:
Dr. Jesse R Blanchard, Visiting Instructor (Department of Earth and Environment)

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFO:
Email- blanchje@fiu.edu -or- via Canvas Inbox. Phone-305-919-4157

DIGITAL OFFICE HOURS:
Tuesdays 11am-12pm and 2pm-4pm. Appointments preferred with 24hours advanced notice required.
Emails sent M-F from 9am-4pm can usually expect responses within 24 hours.

HOW TO ATTEND DIGITAL OFFICE HOURS:
Contact your instructor ahead of time (minimum 24 hours’ notice preferred). You will be sent a calendar invite and a meeting link via email. At the time of the meeting simply click on the link in the invite/email. This will link you to Zoom and connect you directly to your instructor.

Affordability Counts
This course has been awarded the Affordability Counts Medallion. The Affordability Counts initiative at FIU seeks to make learning more affordable by reducing the cost of course materials to $60 or less. Find out more by visiting the Affordability Counts website at lowcost.fiu.edu (Links to an external site.).

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course introduces students to the diverse ecological systems of southern Florida. Students will learn how to apply ecological principles to explain the processes that have influenced the existence of plants and animals within South Florida from ancient to present times. The main biological and physical features of South Florida and its diverse environments will be described and explained. These areas have been impacted by human activities since the arrival of the first inhabitants. The environmental history of the Everglades region will be explored and impacts of engineering projects that promoted drainage of the freshwater marshes for agriculture and development on water and other natural resources discussed. Finally, students will learn the special challenges for governments, residents and the preservation community imposed by the current sea level rise and explosive growth of the urban landscape in the Everglades region.

WHAT TO EXPECT:
The course consists of five online quizzes, two cumulative exams, and two online discussions. You are expected to complete both textbook readings and additional readings found within the lesson folders in Canvas. See the course calendar for week-to-week expectations.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTBOOK:

Note: both hardcover and ebook options are available for this text. Renting the eBook will save you nearly 50% of the full book cost if you will not need the book outside this course, it’s more eco-friendly and you’ll get it sooner. However, either version will suffice.
COURSE COMMUNICATION:
Communication in this course will take place via Canvas Inbox or Canvas Discussions (when appropriate). Inbox is a private and secure text-based communication that occurs within a course and among course members. Users must log on to Canvas to send/receive/read messages. The Inbox tool is located on the left side Course Menu (Canvas user interface). It is recommended that students check their messages at least once every 24 hours to ensure up-to-date communication. See the DISCUSSION FORUMS section in the syllabus for more information on the Discussions tool.

Visit our writing resources page (Links to an external site.) for more information on professional writing and technical communication skills.

Discussion Forums:
The Discussion tool will be used for class discussions. Everyone can read Discussion Board postings; therefore, do not post private information. Given the public forum of these discussions, please make sure to observe proper net etiquette and be respectful of others. There will be four discussions in this course, each worth a maximum of 62.5 points (6.25% of your final score). Each discussion will contain either reading an article or viewing a video to use as the basis of the discussion. Students will comment on the article/video by following the rubric below and must also respond to each other's comments. You have two weeks to complete each discussion. During the first week, you should focus on reading/viewing the article/video carefully, writing and posting your analysis. During the second week, you must review at least two of your classmates' postings, giving thoughtful feedback on why you agree or disagree with their views.

Participation in the discussions will be monitored and students will receive a grade for their participation based on the quality, quantity, and originality of the content of their responses. See the assignment on Canvas to view the discussion rubric.

ASSESSMENTS:

All assessments will be done digitally through Canvas. You are not required to physically come to campus or arrange a proctor. Rather, we will be using the Respondus Lockdown Browser tool in Canvas to ensure academic integrity. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to make sure your computer meets the minimum hardware requirements for this tool, and that your internet connection is stable enough for up to 2 hours of uninterrupted access. To mitigate any issues with your computer with regards to online assessments, it is very important that you take the “Practice Quiz” on your Canvas course page as soon as possible.

Please note that the Respondus Lockdown Browser may require you to download a plugin or app in order to properly interact with the assessments. Please plan ahead and set this up as soon as possible.

QUIZZES AND EXAMS:
There will be 5 short quizzes, each worth 50 points (5% of your final score), based on textbook
readings and all posted online content. Quizzes will be comprehensive of all material covered since the last quiz (or since the beginning of the semester in the case of the first).

There will be two exams, a midterm and a final, each worth 125 points (12.5% of your final score). Both exams will be cumulative of all content covered to that point in the semester. Each exam will be open for a 24-hour window, and each student will have a maximum of 60 minutes to complete the exam starting from when the exam is accessed. All exams MUST be completed in ONE SITTING. At the conclusion of the 60 minutes, or if the student closes their web browser, the exam will automatically submit, and it will not be possible to continue. PLAN YOUR TIME ACCORDINGLY.

You will have one opportunity to take the exam. No extensions or second attempts will be awarded in lieu of severe extenuating circumstances, or direction from the disability resource center. If you know you will not be able to take an exam at the scheduled time, you must schedule to do so BEFORE the scheduled period. As exam dates are fixed well in advance, it is expected that any anticipated issues (such as weddings, periods of no internet access due to travel, etc.) will be brought to the instructor’s attention more than a week in advance so accommodations can be provided.

Assessments in this course may or may not be compatible with mobile devices. As such, they should NOT be attempted with a mobile device. If you need access to a stable computer with internet connection, the FIU library or your local library can likely provide this service. Plan ahead though to ensure this will work with the Respondus Lockdown Browser.

If you need assistance with your exam, please contact Canvas Support Services by clicking the help button on the left side of your Canvas screen and selecting “chat with a support representative”.

RESPONDUS LOCKDOWN BROWSER:

“LockDown Browser is a custom browser preventing students from going to other URLs, switching applications, taking screenshots, copying questions or printing during an assessment. If an instructor has created an assessment using LockDown Browser, students will not be able to access the assessment with a standard web browser. Students may use a personal computer to complete the assessment requiring LockDown Browser, however our FIU licensed copy must be used. In addition, LockDown Browser is available in various computer labs across campus.” (FIU Ed. Tech. Serv. 2018)

For instructions on how to download and operate this tool, visit: http://ecampus.fiu.edu/students-respondus.html (Links to an external site.).

For technical support regarding this tool, contact Canvas Support (using the Canvas help function) or email the FIU educational Technology Services support team at etshelp@fiu.edu.

ENGAGEMENT QUIZZES:
There will be bi-weekly extra credit quizzes posting on Wednesdays and Fridays at 12am and they will close at 11:59pm the same day. These are purely optional and cannot hurt your class score, only help them. The purpose of these engagement quizzes is to encourage you to look at/think about the material on a regular basis, ideally more frequently than you would otherwise. They will cover the content from that preceding lesson, and will only be accessible to those who have opened the links for all preceding items on canvas. There will be no engagement quizzes during midterms or finals, nor will there be engagement quizzes on the Fridays where a 'true quiz' is assigned.

**ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSIONS:**
All work will be submitted via Canvas in this course. Emailed or physical submissions will not be accepted or reviewed.

**TECHNICAL SUPPORT:**
While your instructor may be able to assist you with some things on Canvas, all technical issues are best taken to the 24-hour Canvas Support Services chat function by clicking the help button on the left side of your Canvas screen and selecting “chat with a support representative”. This will initiate a live chat with support services to resolve your issue much faster than emailing the instructor can.

**GRADING SCHEME:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course requirement of items</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>Assignment weight</th>
<th>Per capita point value</th>
<th>Total available points</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exams</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11 graded items for 1000 total points</td>
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**POINT TO LETTER GRADE CONVERSION:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>Point range</th>
<th>Percent range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>&gt;949</td>
<td>95% or higher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Score Range</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>899-949</td>
<td>90-94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>870-898</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>830-869</td>
<td>83-86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>800-829</td>
<td>80-82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>770-799</td>
<td>77-79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>700-769</td>
<td>70-76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>600-699</td>
<td>60-69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;600</td>
<td>Less than 60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**LATENESS POLICY:**
No late submissions will be accepted for quizzes or exams. If you plan to miss an assessment window, contact your instructor as soon as possible to make arrangements to take it before the rest of the class. In the case of legitimate emergencies/other extenuating circumstances some exceptions can be made. All rescheduling requests must be accompanied with appropriate documentation.

Assignments and discussions submitted late will receive a 10% grade deduction for the first business-week (M-F) of being late. No assignments will be accepted more than one business-week late.

**EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENT:**
There is a semester long extra credit option available in this course, worth a maximum of 100 points (10% of the total points possible for the course). Engage in a **SAFE** extracurricular ecological service activity, take a picture of yourself there as evidence, and write a short essay about the experience. This essay will be due no later than the week before finals. Ask your instructor if you’re unsure if your activity would qualify.

**What activities qualify?**
- The activity must be no less and 4 hours long.
- The activity must provide a service to the local ecosystem or global environment.
- The activity does not need to be an officially sponsored event.

**Examples of qualifying activities:**
- Volunteer at the FIU nature preserve (visit gogreen.fiu.edu to sign up)
- Volunteer at another nature preserve/park
- Do a beach/park cleanup
Essay requirements:

- Paste a picture of yourself at the activity in the first page of the essay.
- Length: 250-500 words
- Font: 12pt, Times New Roman, double spaced, 1” margins, black

Essay subject:

In your essay, address the following questions:

- What did you do?
- Why should it be considered a service to the local ecosystem or global environment?
- What did you learn during the experience?
- How will this experience influence the way you’ll live your life moving forward?

COURSE CALENDAR:

It is your responsibility to keep track of all assignments using this course calendar, and to keep up with all materials without instructor intervention. Please note that where discrete page boundaries are not noted, you are expected to read the whole chapter (don’t worry, they’re usually short with lots of pictures).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Lesson topics</th>
<th>Deadlines/misc. events</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Module 0</td>
<td>Welcome to the course</td>
<td>Classes begin 1/6/2020</td>
<td>Lesson 0: Familiarize yourself with the course layout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1/6-1/12)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment: Read the syllabus in its entirety, secure the textbook, ensure all registration tasks are completed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Module 1: Introduction to the course, history and founding principles

Lesson 1: What is the science and why do we study ecology?

Lesson 2: South Florida’s history

Lesson 3: Physio-graphic regions, Ecosystem overview and the historic Everglades.

Lesson 4: Key ecological concepts and Principles

Lesson 1:
1. Review “what is science” lecture

Lesson 2:
2. Read Lodge Ch.1
3. Review “South Florida’s history” lecture

Lesson 3:
4. Read Lodge Ch.2
5. Review “South Florida’s physio-geography” lecture

Lesson 4:
6. Review “Key ecological principles” Lecture

Assignment- Quiz#1
Lesson 5:
1. Read Lodge Ch. 4, 5 & 6
2. Review “Upland habitats” lecture
3. Explore habitats using provided media on Canvas

Lesson 6:
4. Read Lodge Ch. 13

Assignment: Discussion#1 initial posting due Sunday Feb 9

Lesson 7:

6. Select a minimum of 4 bird species on pages 268-277. Read the sections on those species.

Assignments- Quiz # 2, Discussion #1 reply to classmates due Sunday Feb 16
Module 3: Freshwater habitats of South Florida

Lesson 8: Freshwater habitats of South Florida: Freshwater marshes, Swamps, Sloughs and Lake Okeechobee

Lesson 9: Freshwater fauna

Lesson 10: Freshwater flora

Lesson 8:
1. Read Lodge Ch. 3, 7, 11
2. Review “Freshwater South Florida” lecture
3. Explore habitats using provided media on Canvas

Lesson 9:
4. Read Lodge pages 211-216 & 246-249, Ch. 15 & 17
   Assignment: Discussion#2 initial posting due Sunday March 8

Lesson 10:
6. Read Lodge pages 201-202 & 207-208
   Assignments- Quiz # 3, Discussion #2 reply to classmates due Sunday March 15
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/24-3/1</td>
<td>Spring break, university closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(good time to do that ecological service activity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/9-3/15</td>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(cumulative to date)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Module 4: Coastal & marine habitats of South Florida

Lesson 11: Coastal & Marine habitats of South Florida:
Coral reefs, seagrass beds, estuaries, salt marshes, beaches and dunes

Lesson 12: Coastal & marine fauna

Lesson 13: Coastal & marine flora

Lesson 11:
1. Read Lodge Ch. 8, 10, 12
2. Review “Coastal & Marine South Florida” lecture

Lesson 12:
4. Read Lodge pages 209-210, Ch. 16, pages 253-254
   Assignment: Discussion#3 initial posting due Sunday March 22

Lesson 13:
5. Read Lodge Ch. 9
   Assignments- Quiz # 4, Discussion #3 reply to classmates due Sunday March 29
Lesson 14:

1. Read Lodge Ch. 21

2. Review “Putting it all together: how to make the Everglades work” lecture

   Assignment: Discussion#4 initial posting due Sunday April 5

Lesson 15:

3. Read Lodge pages 362-377

4. Read “Restoration of Everglades National Park.pdf”

5. Review "Everglades restoration lecture by Dr. Paul Julian"

   Assignments- Quiz # 5, Discussion #4 reply to classmates due Sunday April 12
Module 6: Climate change and what it means for South Florida.

Lesson 16:

1. Review “Climate change in SFL” lecture

2. Read NPS website, and Lodge Ch. 9 (if you haven’t already)

Assignments: SPOT surveys, review gradebook for errors with existing grades, all pending work due Sunday by 11:59pm, study for cumulative final exam

4/20-4/26 Final exam (Cumulative exam covering all course content)
**Post finals week**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post finals week</th>
<th>No course content</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Grades submitted to university by 4/28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Grades available to students who did SPOTs before those who did not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The course is officially over.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No new course content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Go relax.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grades will be available on my.fiu.edu.</td>
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**NOTE: Syllabus subject to change at instructors discretion without notice**