**FIELD HERPETOLOGY**

**BIOL 4063 – Sec. 050**

 **Dates TBD each year**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will provide an overview of methods, techniques and standards for the collection, management and analysis of herpetological field data for various applications. On local field trips we will collect amphibians and reptiles while covering the basic diagnostic (morphological, ecological, and behavioral) characteristics of observed species. Students will participate in group research projects in which they will be required to collect summary data on habitat characteristics, species lists, and diversity indices for various field sampling sites. Students will also complete an individual project on a local species of their choosing. Both projects require strict attention to detail in regard to formatting.

**SCHEDULE**

The course activities will be flexible and opportunistic. They will include various sampling techniques, field trips, application of current amphibian sampling methods for the prevention of amphibian infectious diseases, application of environmental DNA techniques for monitoring rare and endangered species, laboratory sessions, group discussions, and several evening herping sessions. Field trips are frequent and mandatory.

**REQUIRED MATERIALS AND READING**

* *The Field Herping Guide* by Mike Pingleton and Joshua Holbrook. Wormsloe Foundation Nature Book Series, University of Georgia Press, 2019. ISBN: 0820354589.
* *A Field Guide to Oklahoma’s Amphibians and Reptiles* by Greg Sievert and Lynette Sievert. Oklahoma Dept. Wildlife Conservation, University Oklahoma Press, 2021. Only available from the following link: <https://license.gooutdoorsoklahoma.com/Shop/Inventory/Detail?groupId=33&inventoryId=136&licenseTypeId=2293&utm_campaign=ceherpbook4821&utm_content=&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery&utm_term=> [Note: Students have the option of borrowing a 2011version of the text from UOBS, but are financially responsible for damage or loss.]
* Students will also be required to keep a field notebook detailing animals collected throughout the duration of the course. **A Rite-in-the-Rain field notebook is required for this purpose**.
* Select research papers and pamphlets on herpetological field techniques will also be distributed to class participants via Canvas.

In Field Herpetology, we will spend most of our time outdoors hunting for reptiles and amphibians. This involves looking under rocks, digging through leaf litter, mucking about in ponds, and hiking around at night, all in the late summer heat! It is just important to remember that this is a true field course and you should expect to get wet, muddy, filthy, and sweaty during various activities of the course. As a result, I strongly recommend the following additional items be added to your packing list:

1. Bug spray or lotion (can be borrowed)
2. Ball cap or sunhat
3. Sunscreen
4. Work or garden gloves (easier to roll logs or dig in dirt if your hands are covered!)
5. Headlamp or flashlight (can be borrowed)
6. Clothing that can get dirty and/or ripped; bring some long pants due to poison ivy
7. Shoes that can go in water (like Keens or Chacos or “muck boots”)
8. Thick socks for wearing inside waders, if you choose to borrow them

**GRADING**

Grades for undergraduate students will be determined using a 100-point grading scale, and will be based upon performance in the following: individual research project and presentation; lab practical and written exam; field notebook; group project; literature discussion; class participation. No student can opt out of a written or presentation assignment. Graduate students will additionally be required to submit a longer written report for their individual research project.

1. Individual Research Project and Presentation (15 points)
2. Lab Practical and Written Exam (20 points)
3. Daily Quizzes (10 points)
4. Field Notebook (10 points)
5. Group Project and Presentation (25 points)
6. iNaturalist Submissions (5 points)
7. Classroom and Field Work Participation\* (15 points)

\* Note: Participation points will be awarded based on active participation and involvement in group research, classroom specimen processing, plus day and nighttime herping. Merely being present is not enough to earn full participation points each day. However, there will be opportunities for extra credit on participation during free time, through the efforts of specimen data entry and post-processing.

**INSTRUCTORS**

Jessa Watters, Instructor, jwatters@ou.edu

**Reasonable accommodation**

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent the full demonstration of his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities.

**Adjustments for pregnancy/childbirth related issues**

Should you need modifications or adjustments to your course requirements because of documented pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss. Generally, modifications will be made where medically necessary and similar in scope to accommodations based on temporary disability. Please see www.ou.edu/content/eoo/pregnancyfaqs.html for commonly asked questions.

**Title IX resources**

For any concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking, or intimate partner violence, the University offers a variety of resources, including advocates on-call 24.7, counseling services, mutual no contact orders, scheduling adjustments and disciplinary sanctions against the perpetrator. Please contact the Sexual Misconduct Office 405-325-2215 (8-5) or the Sexual Assault Response Team 405-615-0013 (24.7) to learn more or to report an incident.

**Religious holidays**

It is the policy of the University to excuse the absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required classwork that may fall on religious holidays.