ONLINE COURSE SYLLABUS

BOTANY 575 / Envir St 400 Special Topics
“Tropical Ecology and Conservation”
Spring 2006

3 credits

READ ME FIRST! This syllabus contains important information about the course including scheduling, grading, participation requirements and policies. A detailed syllabus of topics, assignments and due dates is included. As a student in this course it is your responsibility to know this information including important due dates.

Login URL: http://learnuw.wisc.edu

Professor: Dr. Catherine L. Woodward
319 Birge Hall
262-2593
cwoodwar@wisc.edu

T.A.: Kendra Millam
kcmillam@wisc.edu

Virtual Office Hours: Kendra Millam, T.A. Catherine Woodward
Wednesdays, 3 – 4 p.m. Tuesdays, 11 a.m. - noon

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This online course will introduce you to the major ecosystems of the world's tropical regions, the fundamental ecological principles at work in these systems, the current threats facing each major ecosystem and the prominent conservation approaches for countering these threats. Specific topics are detailed in the schedule below. The course opens with an introduction to the tropics, where tropical habitats are located, the climatic conditions that maintain them, and some of the ecological processes most important in the tropics. We then transition to a series of weeks dedicated to the major ecosystem formations in the tropics. We will study the worldwide distribution, characteristic flora and fauna, and most pressing conservation issues relevant to each ecosystem. Specific topics are detailed in the "schedule", accessible from the link on the course navigation bar.

Navigation

All course materials are accessed and navigated from within the course homepage after you log in to the Learn@UW online course system. Make sure you familiarize
yourself with the Learn@UW system, this document, and the contents of the course homepage before you begin. Lectures are accessed from links in the center section of the course homepage. Other course components, such as grades, readings, and an assignment dropbox, are accessed from the navigation bar at the top of the homepage. Navigation links referred to in this document are shown in quotations.

Organization: With no official meeting time, it is even more important than you take responsibility to stay on schedule. Print a syllabus and keep it with you. Check the “News & Reminders” box on the course home page regularly for updates and special postings. Important reminders may also be sent to you via email, although not receiving a reminder is not an excuse for being unaware of a deadline. You may use the “Checklist” utility as a sort of personal To-Do list to keep track of the material you’ve covered and that which remains to be done.

Lectures: Virtual lectures are organized into approximately 45 units (3/week for the 15 weeks of the semester). Most, but not all lectures, include audio so you will need headphones or speakers attached to your computer to hear them. You will need to have the Flash plug-in installed to view lectures (see System Requirements below). In general, we will spend 3-6 lectures on each ecosystem; You are responsible for reading and learning the material in time for scheduled quizzes, tests and assignments. Whether you create a schedule for yourself to ‘attend’ the course three times per week or employ some other way of organizing your time, we strongly urge you to stay on schedule and pace yourself so that you do not get behind on the material.

Of course you may read ahead at anytime, but homework, quizzes and tests will be available only during specified time periods. Lecture materials are accessed via the Table of Contents box in the middle of the course home page. Lecture materials will be available starting on January 17, 2005.

Assignments: There will be several assignments over the course of the semester. Access the details for each assignment by clicking on the “Assignments” link on the course home page. Due dates are given on the course syllabus, and on the Assignments page of the course website. Assignments vary, but may include a short writing assignment, readings, a web-based activity, or an activity you complete off-line. In all cases, your completed assignment will be submitted to your T.A. using the “DropBox” utility on the course home page. Do not email your assignment directly to your T.A. or professor unless otherwise specified.

Readings: Most sections of the course have related readings that are available online. Sometimes these readings are linked to from lecture or discussion fora, but you may always access them by clicking the link to "Assignments" and then clicking on the relevant reading from the list on the right side of the page. Required and supplemental readings are grouped by the sections that are outlined in the syllabus. Only material from required readings may appear on quizzes or exams.

Discussions: Discussion questions will be posted several times over the course of the semester, and you are required to participate in discussions at minimum ten
times over the course of the semester (see Grading and Evaluation below) by the specified deadline dates. Access the discussion room from the “Discuss” link on the course home page.

Discussions will be organized by topic. Please note that the discussion group should not be used to communicate with your T.A. regarding your specific questions -- rather the discussion is an opportunity for you to communicate with fellow students enrolled in the class on the topics and problems presented as course material. Your T.A. will participate as needed to guide the discussion. Please post your messages under the relevant discussion topic!

We have included "topics" such as Study Groups and Website Issues for you to post messages to other students looking to form a study group or sharing helpful information on using the course website. There is also a Feedback discussion forum where you may share ideas or constructive comments or criticisms with your instructors and fellow students. Anyone found using the discussion group for inappropriate, irrelevant, or personal purposes may be reprimanded and subject to the rules governing academic misconduct.

**Quizzes/Exams:** There will be a quiz every two to three weeks, a midterm exam and a cumulative final exam. The quiz schedule is shown in the syllabus below. Access quizzes and exams using the “Quiz/Exam” link on the course homepage.

*It is your responsibility* to know when quizzes are available to take, and you must take the quiz anytime within that period. If for some reason you will not be able to take a quiz during the specified time period, you must contact your T.A. to schedule a makeup BEFORE the quiz period begins. *If you do not schedule a makeup in advance, you will not be allowed to make up a quiz once the quiz period has passed.* Be aware that logins are automatically registered with the Learn@UW system and login failure cannot be used as an excuse for missing a quiz unless the UW system shows a record of such a failure. Give yourself sufficient time to make sure you have a computer with a working internet connection before taking quizzes and exams. The best way to avoid problems is to not wait until the last minute!

Check the course syllabus often (print this one, or visit the Syllabus link on the course home page) to remind yourself of when quizzes and exams will be given. You will have 30 minutes to complete each quiz, unless otherwise noted. Quizzes will be available for 3-4 days, though you can only take each quiz once. We will post a reminder when on the day a quiz becomes available in the “NEWS & REMINDERS” section on the course home page. *We highly recommend you print out a copy of the course schedule so you can remind yourself of due dates even when you’re not online.*

**Final project:** During the last part of the course students will work in groups of 4 or 5 to create their own web-page on a conservation case study of their choice. Each group will have the option of setting up their own chat room to facilitate communication about the project. An outline of the project, worth 20 points, is due approximately three weeks before the final product and will be returned to you.
promptly with comments and suggestions for improvement. Details on the requirements for the project are available on the assignments page. The final project will be graded on content, completeness, accuracy and creativity.

**TA contact:** You may contact your T.A. with questions on course material, specific details on assignments, special needs, and other issues and information related to course content. This includes any issues, problems, comments or questions related to browser or web-page access, display or function.

The instructor and T.A. will also hold "Virtual Office Hours" at a specified time, one hour per week when she/he will be available online to immediately answer your questions, chat-room style. Access this office hour by clicking on the “Chat” link on the course home page. Please take advantage of this as your T.A. will have limited time available for answering course-related email outside this "virtual office hour”.

**Other Email and Communication:** By enrolling in the course you are automatically part of the course mailing list, and you will need to check your UW email often (at least once every other day). Read the emails your T.A. and instructor send out as you are responsible for the information, updates or reminders given in these emails! You should regularly check the “News & Reminders” section on the main course page for recent announcements.

At the start of the semester, you will be requested to submit your email address and, if desired, a photo of yourself for the class web page. This is optional, but it will allow other students with similar interests to communicate with you.

**Note:** Many hotmail and yahoo accounts will not work properly for the course. Please use your university email account for this course! -- see System Requirements below.

**GRADING AND EVALUATION**

Grades will be based on student performance as evaluated via points accumulated from assignments, quizzes, two exams, the final project, and participation. Specifically, the total number of points available in this course is 520. They are broken down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quizzes (40 points/each)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assignments</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation/Discussion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Midterm exam</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Final exam</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You are encouraged to keep track of your progress and your grades. As you complete various lectures, assignments and quizzes, you can check them off using the “Checklist” tool on the main navigation bar. This is for your own use only and can come in handy for at-a-glance access to what you've done and what you still need to do. You can also access your grades by clicking on the “Grades” link.

Your grades for assignments and quizzes will be posted 1-2 weeks after the due date has passed. At that time, correct answers will also be posted so you may review any errors you made. Grades for participation and the final exam will be posted at the end of the semester.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

You must have an active UW email account to take part in this course. All messages regarding the course schedule and assignments are sent out via email or posted directly on Learn@UW. All UW students have access to a free UW email account. Please make sure it is set up before you begin the semester. Note that all course announcements are sent to your UW email address!

You also must have access to the internet and a computer capable of running a suitable browser, such as Internet Explorer 6.0 or higher, Netscape 7.0 or higher, Mozilla or Firefox. Please make sure your browsers are updated to the newest version, available for free from the homepage of each browser type or from the DoIT website.

Because the course content may contain images, java script, embedded programs, audio, video and links to other internet sites, full access to course materials will require that your computer meets certain minimum performance requirements and browser capabilities. We recommend the following minimum system configuration:

- Windows 2000 or Mac OS9 operating system or more recent
- At least 64 MB of RAM
- Sound and video capabilities
- Headphones or speakers
- A 10 Mbps (LAN) internet connection or faster such as T100, DSL or cable (Note: access will be unacceptably slow with a 56K modem or slower!)
- The course website is optimized for viewing in Internet Explorer 6.0, so we recommend you use this browser. You may also use Netscape 7.0, Mozilla 1.7 or Firefox 1.0, although we do not guarantee full functionality with these browsers. All browsers are available for free download from DoIT.
- Make sure Cookies are enabled in your browser for the Learn@UW website.

The following plug-ins are required for viewing all course content. Most are included with the recommended browsers and others are available for free.
download (see links under System Requirements on the course homepage). Check your browser preferences to make sure these plug-ins are installed and enabled:

- **Java Plug-in** for displaying animations, menus, etc. (make sure you have Java enabled in your browser. To enable Java in Internet Explorer, go to Tools > Internet Options. Select the Advanced tab, and scroll down to the Microsoft VM set of checkboxes. Make sure all three checkboxes below it are checked.)
- **Flash Plug-in** for playing movie clips and sounds.
- **Adobe Acrobat Reader** for viewing PDF files.

Note: UW campus InfoLabs have computers with all of these features and fast connections. If you are on the UW-Madison campus we suggest you use the UW InfoLabs for this course. Your local public library should also have publicly available computers.

**GETTING HELP**

For general help using Learn@UW, your internet browser or operating system, contact the DoIT help desk: **264-HELP**

For help navigating the course homepage, click on the “Help” link on the upper right of the main course page. You may also email your T.A. with questions on how to access course material.

For help on course material, log in to your T.A.’s or Instructor’s virtual office hour, contact them by email or phone, or post your question on the online discussion board.

**ACADEMIC CONDUCT**

As this is a course with a minimum of instructor contact, there is the temptation to obtain your answers from somewhere else. The homework, quizzes, and tests are designed to require your own thought and effort. It is just as easy for us to check the internet for copied material as it is for you to copy it. We will check assignments for use of online source material. If we find that you have submitted plagiarized material, or have otherwise obtained information falsely, we will follow UW Academic Misconduct guidelines in prosecuting the offense. This may range from failure on the assignment, failure in the course, or (in extreme cases) expulsion from UW-Madison.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART I</th>
<th>Diversity and Ecology of Tropical Ecosystems: A Survey</th>
<th>Assigned Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Week 1** (Jan. 17-22) | **Orientation to the Website**  
**Introduction to the Tropics**  
♦ Lecture 1: What is the Tropics? – Intro to Geography and Climate  
♦ Lecture 2: Why are the Tropics so diverse? – Patterns and processes of Biodiversity | **Assignment 1:** Introduce Yourself DUE 1/22 by 10 p.m. - 5 pts.  
**Prequiz** avail. from 7 a.m. 1/17 to 10 p.m. 1/22. |
| **Week 2** (Jan. 23-29) | ♦ Lecture 3: Tropical Soils & Vegetation  
**Biotic Interactions in the Tropics**  
♦ Lecture 4: Ecological Interactions I  
♦ Lecture 5: Ecological Interactions II | **Assignment 2:** Tropical Geography. DUE: 1/29 by 10 p.m. – 20 pts.  
**Readings:** Biodiversity, Deforestation and Climate |
| **Week 3** (Jan. 30-Feb. 5) | ♦ Lecture 6: Intro to Rainforests – structure and diversity  
♦ Lecture 7: Rainforest dynamics I  
♦ Lecture 8: Rainforest dynamics II | **Discussion 1:** The Value of Biodiversity  
**Quiz 1** (Lectures 1-8) avail. 7 a.m. 2/4 to 10 p.m. 2/7 – 40 pts. |
| **Week 4** (Feb. 6-12) | **Lowland Rain Forests (cont’d)**  
♦ Lecture 9: Rainforest fauna  
♦ Lecture 10: Conservation of Rainforests |  |
| **Week 5** (Feb. 13-19) | **Seasonally Deciduous Lowland Forests**  
♦ Lecture 11: Intro to Dry Forests – structure and distribution  
♦ Lecture 12: Biotic adaptations to seasonality  
♦ Lecture 13: Conservation of Dry Forests | **Readings:** Dry Forests  
**Discussion 2:** Rainforest Conservation: The Problem with Parks |
| **Week 6** (Feb. 20-26) | **Tropical Grassland and Savannas**  
♦ Lecture 14: Intro to Grasslands & Savannas  
♦ Lecture 15: Biotic & Abiotic processes in Grasslands and Savannas  
♦ Lecture 16: Conservation of Grasslands and Savannas | **Quiz 2** (Lectures 9-16) avail. 7 a.m. 2/25 to 10 p.m. 2/28 – 40 pts. |
| **Week 7** (Feb. 27-Mar. 5) | **Montane Forests**  
♦ Lecture 17: Intro to Montane Forests  
♦ Lecture 18: Epiphyte Diversity and Ecology  
♦ Lecture 19: Conservation of Montane Forests | **Readings:** Montane Forests |
| **Week 8** (Mar. 6-10) | **The Puna and Páramo**  
♦ Lecture 20: Intro to Puna and Páramo – distribution and abiotic conditions  
♦ Lecture 21: Biotic adaptations to High Altitude Climate  
♦ Lecture 22: Conservation of Puna and Páramo | **MIDTERM EXAM** (Lectures 1-22) 7 a.m. 3/7 to 10 p.m. 3/10 – 100 pts. |

**SPRING BREAK** (Mar. 11-19)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 10  (Mar. 27 – Apr. 2)</td>
<td>Mangroves ♦ Lecture 26: Intro to Mangroves – diversity and environment ♦ Lecture 27: Mangrove Zonation and Biotic Interactions ♦ Lecture 28: Conservation of Mangroves</td>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong> Mangroves <strong>Discussion 3:</strong> Tourism and Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11  (Apr. 3 – 9)</td>
<td>Coral Reefs ♦ Lecture 29: Intro to Coral Reefs – distribution, diversity and structure ♦ Lecture 30: Biotic Interactions on Coral Reefs ♦ Lecture 31: Conservation of Coral Reefs</td>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong> Coral reefs <strong>Quiz 3</strong> (Lectures 23-31) avail. 7 a.m. 4/8 to 10 p.m. 4/11 – 40 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PART II Conservation Issues and Approaches</strong></td>
<td><strong>Week 12  (Apr. 10 – 16)</strong></td>
<td>Human Impacts on Ecosystems ♦ Lecture 32: Causes and Consequences of Deforestation ♦ Lecture 33: Habitat Loss and Fragmentation ♦ Lecture 34: Hunting and Extraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 13  (Apr. 17 – 23)</strong></td>
<td>Habitat Protection Approaches ♦ Lecture 35: Identifying protection priorities ♦ Lecture 36: In-situ vs. Ex-situ conservation ♦ Lecture 37: Tropical Forest Management</td>
<td><strong>Quiz 4</strong> (Lectures 32-37) avail 7 a.m. 4/22 to 10 p.m. 4/25 – 40 pts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 14  (Apr. 24 – 30)</strong></td>
<td>Conservation case studies 1 Study conservation case studies prepared by your classmates</td>
<td><strong>Discussion 5:</strong> Case Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 15  (May 1 – 7)</strong></td>
<td>Conservation case studies 2 Discuss conservation case studies</td>
<td><strong>FINAL EXAM</strong> (Cumulative-including case studies) avail. from 7 a.m. 5/8 to 10 p.m. 5/11 – 100 pts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>