

# Marine Ecological Processes

## Online section

### FAS 4270 (3 credits) Fall 2012

#### Course Description

The course covers the ecology of marine organisms and habitats with focus on how general ecological principles and those unique to the marine environment drive patterns and processes.

**Prerequisite:** Two semesters of Biology (BSC 2010 and 2011) or equivalents

#### Instructor

Dr. Donald C. Behringer, Assistant Professor

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Office: Aquatic Pathology Laboratory, Emerging Pathogens Institute

Telephone: 352-273-3634

Office hours: Tuesday 1 – 2 pm, or by appointment

#### Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, each student will have:

- Examined how ecological processes operate in the marine environment
- Compared how ecological concepts are unique and similar in the marine environment relative to terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems
- Assessed the function of the environment in the ecology of marine systems
- Developed hypotheses for the outcomes of biotic or abiotic perturbations on populations and communities based on understanding of the ecological processes
- Learned the organisms that represent the trophic levels of a marine food web and their interrelationships.
- Examined the role of time and space in marine ecological processes
- Discussed and debated contemporary issues in marine ecology such as conservation, climate change, and disease.

**Course Meeting Times** Asynchronous – web-based

#### Texts/Readings

1. Primary literature (1 - 2 journal articles) will be assigned to supplement the material presented each week. The literature will be drawn from current or classic papers and be made available by at least the Friday prior to its coverage the following week. All assigned papers are required to be read and each student will lead and moderate the online discussion of at least two papers (see below for assignment details).

*Examples include:*

Hutchinson GE. 1961. The paradox of the plankton. *American Naturalist* 88: 137-145.  
Hughes TP, Tanner JE. 2000. Recruitment failure, life histories, and long-term decline of Caribbean corals. *Ecology* 81: 2250-2263.

- Cowen RK, Paris CB, Srinivasan A. 2006. Scaling of connectivity in marine populations. *Science* 311: 522-527.
- Armstrong JB, Schindler DE. 2011. Excess digestive capacity in predators reflects a life of feast and famine. *Nature* 476: 84-88.

2. Readings from the following texts will supplement the material presented in class and be made available to students:
- Valiela I (1995) *Marine Ecological Processes* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Springer-Verlag.
  - Nybakken JW, Bertness MD (2005) *Marine Biology: An Ecological Approach*. Benjamin Cummings.

## **Course Format, Policies on Attendance, and Make-up Exams**

### **Course format:**

This course is intended to provide upper division undergraduate students with a broad overview of ecological principles operating in estuarine, nearshore coastal, and open ocean systems. The principles introduced will become increasingly complex and interwoven, highlighting the multiplicity of processes driving the patterns observed.

Students will initially be introduced to important primary producers and secondary consumers in each of these systems. Insights into physiological and population levels of organization will build on these basics. Environmental factors that influence species-specific and population-level interactions will be discussed as a transition to the concepts of community organization. All of this material will form a foundation for explaining how the structure and function of communities is maintained over different temporal and spatial scales.

The course will incorporate recorded lecture presentation of the subject matter with online discussions. Upon conclusion of each subject the class will critically discuss primary literature provided by the instructor.

### **Course delivery:**

This course is co-taught at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Undergraduate students are expected to interact with the graduate students through web-based discussions and presentations, and are encouraged to seek out graduate students for assistance and guidance. This practice will increase learning for both groups and raise the intellectual caliber of the course.

### **Attendance Policy:**

Lectures will be posted soon after live delivery and will remain accessible for two weeks. Students are responsible for viewing the lectures during this period, participating in online chat sessions while they are active, and for acquiring assignments.

### **Make-up Policy:**

Students must request permission to make-up an exam or assignment *prior* to missing it. If prior permission is not granted the student will receive 0 points for the exam. Late assignments **will not** be accepted without prior consent of the instructor. Extenuating circumstances or situations that fall within university policies (see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>) will be addressed on an individual basis.

## Assignments

### Critical Thinking Questions:

Critical thinking questions will be posted most every other Friday and students will be required to provide an answer to the question by the following Friday (see due dates on schedule below). The questions will be drawn from either the lecture material or the assigned reading from the previous two weeks. The nature of the questions will vary, but will take the materials and concepts covered in class and require the students to adapt and apply that knowledge to solve a problem, plan a research/management approach, or provide a detailed answer, but with a system or problem that is different than discussed in class. The use of creativity and abstract reasoning will be expected. Responses must be submitted via Sakai by 5 pm on the due date. See schedule below for due dates.

### Literature Discussion:

Each week we will have an online chat about the two papers assigned for that week. Students will be expected to have read the literature and participate in discussions. Students will be expected to participate actively (e.g., comment, question, or answer) in at least 10 discussions and will receive 5 points per discussion for a maximum of 50 points. Details on the use of the chat sessions will be provided.

### Exams:

The mid-term exam will cover all of the material presented to that point.

The final exam will cover all of the material presented in the course.

## Evaluation of Student Learning

100 points	Mid-term exam
125 points	Critical thinking questions (5 @ 25 points each)
50 points	Participate in primary literature discussion (10 @ 5 points each)
<u>100 points</u>	<u>Final exam</u>
<b>375 points</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>

## Grading Scale

Grades will be assigned based on the percentage of the total points earned. There will be no plus or minus grades assigned in this course.

**A = 90 – 100% = 337 – 375 points**

**B = 80 – 89% = 300 – 336 points**

**C = 70 – 79% = 262 – 299 points**

**D = 60 – 69% = 225 – 261 points**

**E = < 60% = < 225 points**

For additional information on the university grading policy please see:  
<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

Schedule of Class Topics	Week of:
<b>Week 1:</b> Course introduction, scheduling, and other logistics	Aug 23
<b>Week 2:</b> Ocean properties and primary producers	Aug 28 & 30
<b>Week 3:</b> Primary production	Sep 4 & 6
<b>Week 4:</b> Primary production and introduction to consumers (Dr. Frazer – guest lecture on springs, nutrients, and seagrass) <i>(Weeks 2/3 Question due Sep 13)</i>	Sep 11 & 13
<b>Week 5:</b> Consumers, consumption, and consumer dynamics	Sep 18 & 20
<b>Week 6:</b> Resources and competition <i>(Weeks 4/5 Question due Sep 27)</i>	Sep 25 & 27
<b>Week 7:</b> Feeding, food selection, and responses to food	Oct 2 & 4
<b>Week 8:</b> Energy, production, and energy budgets <i>(Weeks 6/7 Question due Oct 11)</i>	Oct 9 & 11
<b>Week 9:</b> Mid-term exam and student's choice discussion	Oct 16 & 18
<b>Week 10:</b> Larval ecology, recruitment, and succession	Oct 23 & 25
<b>Week 11:</b> Community structure, trophic webs, and biodiversity	Oct 30 & Nov 1
<b>Week 12:</b> Spatial structure and connectivity <i>(Weeks 10/11 Question due Nov 8)</i>	Nov 6 & 8
<b>Week 13:</b> Biological invasions (Dr. Jeffrey Hill - guest lecture)	Nov 13 & 15
<b>Week 14:</b> View graduate student presentations <i>(Weeks 12/13 Question due <u>Nov 20</u>)</i>	Nov 20 <sup>a</sup>
<b>Week 15:</b> Climate change and diseases	Nov 27 & 29
<b>Week 16:</b> Conservation and restoration	Dec 4
<b>Week 17:</b> Final Exam	TBD

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<sup>a</sup> No class November 22<sup>nd</sup> (Thanksgiving)

## Additional References

### Web Sites :

Growth, competition, and predator-prey models  
<http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/townsend/models/index.html>

### Other literature sources:

Web of Knowledge

[http://apps.isiknowledge.com/UA\\_GeneralSearch\\_input.do?product=UA&search\\_mode=GeneralSearch&SID=4C5mNGg@8e3@GGm611N&preferencesSaved=](http://apps.isiknowledge.com/UA_GeneralSearch_input.do?product=UA&search_mode=GeneralSearch&SID=4C5mNGg@8e3@GGm611N&preferencesSaved=)

Townsend CR, Begon M, Harper JL (2003) Essentials of Ecology (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Blackwell Publishing, Oxford.

Real LA, Brown JH (1991) Foundations of Ecology. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

## Other Information

### Academic Honesty, Software Use, UF Counseling Services, Services for Students with Disabilities

In 1995 the UF student body enacted an [honor code](#) and voluntarily committed itself to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. When students enroll at the university, they commit themselves to the standard drafted and enacted by students.

In adopting this honor code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the university community. Students who enroll at the university commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the honor code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the honor code is bound by honor to take corrective action. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon community acceptance and enforcement of the honor code.

**The Honor Pledge: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.**

On all work submitted for credit by students at the university, the following pledge is either required or implied: **"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."**

The university requires all members of its community to be honest in all endeavors. A fundamental principle is that the whole process of learning and pursuit of knowledge is diminished by cheating, plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty. In addition, every dishonest act in the academic environment affects other students adversely, from the skewing of the grading curve to giving unfair advantage for honors or for professional or graduate school admission. Therefore, the university will take severe action against dishonest students. Similarly, measures will be taken against faculty, staff and administrators who practice dishonest or demeaning behavior.

Students should report any condition that facilitates dishonesty to the instructor, department chair, college dean or Student Honor Court.

*(Source: 2010-2011 Undergraduate Catalog)*

It is assumed all work will be completed independently unless the assignment is defined as a group project, in writing by the instructor.

This policy will be vigorously upheld at all times in this course.

### **Software Use:**

All faculty, staff and students of the university are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against university policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

### **Campus Helping Resources**

Students experiencing crises or personal problems that interfere with their general well-being are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling & Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Resources are available on campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career or academic goals, which interfere with their academic performance.

- *University Counseling & Wellness Center, 3190 Radio Road, 352-392-1575, [www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/](http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/)*

Counseling Services

Groups and Workshops

Outreach and Consultation

Self-Help Library

Training Programs

Community Provider Database

- *Career Resource Center, First Floor JWRU, 392-1601, [www.crc.ufl.edu/](http://www.crc.ufl.edu/)*

### **Students with Disabilities**

The Disability Resource Center coordinates the needed accommodations of students with disabilities. This includes registering disabilities, recommending academic accommodations within the classroom, accessing special adaptive computer equipment, providing interpretation services and mediating faculty-student disability related issues. 0001 Reid Hall, 352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)