

# **Seminar in Herpetology: Contemporary Herpetology**

**ZOO 4926, 6927  
Spring 2020**

Department of Biology  
Dr. Marta Wayne, Chair  
220 Bartram Hall, 392-1175

## **Instructor:**

**Dr. Harvey Lillywhite**, Department of Biology

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Office hours: by arrangement with instructor. Office 122 Bartram Hall

## **Credits:** 2

**Class meetings:** Thursday, periods 6 & 7 (12:50 to 2:45 PM), 222 Carr Hall

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## **GENERAL CLASS INFORMATION:**

### ***Course Summary***

The structure of this seminar course will involve critiques and discussions of key, integrative papers published recently on any subject in herpetology. Our examination of literature will focus principally on recent or contemporary literature, with a goal of selecting the better or more influential papers in the field. Papers are to be selected from the primary literature (*i.e.*, publications in reputable scientific journals) and are not limited to any particular taxon, subject, or journal. The instructor will provide a list of (and access to) key papers from which students will choose a topic and respective paper for presentation to the class. Alternatively, graduate students may also propose their own topic based on a single key paper, *pending approval* of the instructors.

Each student is expected to prepare and deliver a presentation on his/her topic, with emphasis on a particular publication, and this should include a summary and critique of the paper, by means of Powerpoint, followed by leading a discussion of the paper and the critique that was presented. If approved in advance, a student may give his/her presentation as a “chalk talk” using the board instead of computer projection. Handouts of information prepared in advance for the class will be welcome, but not required. Each student is expected to have read the paper being presented in advance of the presentation, however.

Some ***potential topics*** in contemporary studies involving amphibians and reptiles include:

*Paleontological studies that provide a perspective on climate and evolution*  
*Patterns of species richness and diversity, and their hypothesized causation*  
*Molecular phylogenetic perspective on climate and evolution*  
*Species distributions as affected by gradients of elevation and latitude*  
*Biophysical ecology and modeling of animal landscapes*  
*How climate, topography, and vegetation interact with distribution, physiology, reproduction, and diseases of amphibians and reptiles*  
*Mechanistic calculations of animal energetics, behaviors and food webs*  
*Extinctions—past, present and future*  
*Evolution and performance of toe pads of lizards*  
*Extratympanic hearing in salamanders*  
*Industrial melanism in sea snakes*  
*Ecoimmunology of amphibians or reptiles*  
*The need for conservation of amphibians and reptiles*  
*Climatic “drivers” of phenotypic and genetic changes in populations*  
*Community or adaptive responses to extreme climatic events*

### ***The goal***

The overall goal of this seminar is for students to experience a relatively informal but in-depth, critical, and spirited examination and discussion of current opinions, hypotheses, and ideas related to various topics, as applicable to amphibians and reptiles. This course should broaden your intellectual experience and growth as a student of science. This course should be interesting, inspiring, and fun! Diversity of opinions, approaches and priorities with respect to both science and conservation will be respected and encouraged.

### ***Required Course Materials***

There is no required textbook or other materials. Students will be expected to obtain respective pdf copies of papers that will be discussed, and the majority of these will be provided by the instructor.

### ***Information about you***

Please deliver on the first, but no later than the second, week of classes a single page document that contains the following information: Name, Department or Program, professional aspiration, major or specialization, Email address, career goals, and a brief statement of what interests you most. As an optional request, please include on the page a picture of yourself, e.g. photocopy of the small photo that is on your driver's license. This will help the instructor get to know students early.

### ***Communications***

Simple communications between students and instructors may be in the form of email. A pdf copy of each paper to be presented on a given week's meeting will be emailed to the class in advance, the week before.

Please be mindful that the instructor receives routinely hundreds of emails each week, so class emailing should be limited to specific questions or exchange of information. Do not expect to continue extensive chatty dialogue via email. An example of an appropriate email is notification to the instructor that you will be absent a particular week (for good reason of course!).

**Grading:** Grades will be based primarily on students' presentation of a topic, participation in discussions, and attendance. There will be no exams.

**Illness:** If you are ill with an infectious or contagious illness such as cold or flu, you should **not** attend class. If you have a fever associated with any illness, you should **not** attend class until you have been free of the fever for at least 24 hours. The instructor reserves the right to ask any student to leave the classroom at any time if there is a reasonable likelihood that the student's presence in the classroom places other students at substantial risk of infection.

### ***UF Counseling Services***

Resources are available on-campus for students having personal problems or lacking clear career and academic goals. The resources include: 1) UF Counseling & Wellness Center, 3190 Radio Rd, 392-1575, psychological and psychiatric services. 2) Career Connections Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career and job search services. Many students experience test anxiety and other stress related problems. Resources to help with such problems are available through the Counseling and Wellness Center (3190 Radio Road, 392-1575) and at their web site: <https://counseling.ufl.edu>.

Students with disabilities are required to register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) if they are requesting accommodations. The DRC may be contacted at (352) 392-8565 or refer to the website at <https://disability.ufl.edu>.

### ***Course Evaluations***

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.