BIOGEOGRAPHY

GRG 366K, Fall 2014
TTh 2 PM, CLA 3.102

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Course description:
This course introduces biogeography, the discipline that attempts to document and explain the changing distributions of plants and animals. Explanations come from the study of current ecological processes and from historical perspectives on past Earth-system changes in relation to evolutionary processes. In addition, there are many applications for biodiversity conservation and natural resource management. We will put equal emphasis on ecological, evolutionary, and conservation biogeography.

Students are expected to read the assigned readings and participate actively in class. The exams will test knowledge, vocabulary, and ability to explain and apply information. The independent essay will be an opportunity to develop technical writing skills.

Prerequisites:
Assumes background from GRG 301C or an equivalent course, for example in the biological or geological sciences.

Required textbook:
Grading and assignments:
Final letter grades for the course are determined using percentages of the 300 possible points, with 200 points from the two exams, and 100 points from an independent final project. Final letter grades for the course are assigned by percentages of the 300 total possible points: >92%=A; 90-91.99%=A-; 88-89.99%=B+; 82-87.99=B; 80-81.99=B-; 78-79.99%=C+; 72-77.99%=C; 70-71.99%=C-; 68-69.99%=D+; 62-67.99%=D; 60-61.99%=D-; <60=F.

The exams will include vocabulary, short answers, and essays. They will be based on the lectures and readings. Note that my lecture notes will not be available if you should miss a lecture. The exams are based on both the assigned textbook chapters and from material covered in class, so taking good notes in class is critical, as is reading and understanding the assigned texts. Attendance is very important---you will not do well if you miss lectures.

The literature review essay is worth 90 points, with 10 additional points from a brief class presentation given in the last week of the semester. It is due on 4 December (any late papers will receive a letter grade penalty for each day late). The goal of this project is to evaluate an important topic in conservation biogeography. Use as inspiration and model the Young (2014) reading: K.R. Young. 2014. Biogeography of the Anthropocene: Novel species assemblages. Progress in Physical Geography, DOI: 10.1177/0309133314540930

The essays will be graded based on the quality of the technical writing, their originality, and their relevance to the discipline of biogeography. Format of any citations used should be given in the text as “Smith (1999) hypothesized that . . .” or “…can be hypothesized (Smith 1999)”. References used should be listed completely at the end of the essay: author, date, title, journal or book chapter, pages, using the style of Progress in Physical Geography. This essay is to be an independently researched and written essay. It should be 8 pages long, double spaced, and should utilize a minimum of five references from the scientific literature. Good journals in which to find those references and relevant studies include Conservation Biology, Diversity & Distributions, Ecological Applications, and Journal of Biogeography. Note that this assignment replaces the final exam, so the essay should demonstrate knowledge of the topics covered during the entire semester.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Lomolino et al. textbook</th>
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<tr>
<td>28 August</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-4 September</td>
<td>Biogeography &amp; Species</td>
<td>1, 4</td>
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<td>9-11 September</td>
<td>Physical environments</td>
<td>3 (pp. 47-69)</td>
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<td>16-18 September</td>
<td>Communities &amp; Dispersal</td>
<td>5 (pp. 121-156), 6</td>
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23-25 September Islands

30 September Review

2 October FIRST EXAM- Ecological Biogeography

7-9 October Evolution 7 (pp. 207-249)

14-16 October Earth history 8 (pp. 259-299), 11

21-23 October Historical biogeography 11, 10 (pp. 361-412)

28-30 October Historical biogeography 10 (pp. 361-412), 14 (pp. 559-593)

4 November Review

6 November SECOND EXAM- Historical Biogeography

11-13 November Quaternary 9 (also the Young (2014) reading)

18-25 November Conservation biogeography 16, 17

2-4 December CLASS PRESENTATIONS

4 December LITERATURE REVIEW ESSAY DUE

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**Course policies:**

**Attendance and Participation:** Students are expected to attend every class and actively participate in discussions and any in-class projects. There will be no make-up exams or assignments. Extreme situations will be considered if brought to the instructor’s attention as early as possible.

**Documented Disability Statement:** The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic adjustments for qualified students with disabilities; for more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 512-471-5017 or deanofstudents@austin.utexas.edu.

**Religious Holy Days:** By UT Austin policy, you must provide notification of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class day for this reason, you will have an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time period.
Honor Code: Students are expected to uphold the University of Texas’ Academic Honor Code: “As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity.”

Intellectual integrity is expected in all work. Collaboration and the use of a wide range of references is encouraged, but any plagiarism, use of un-cited materials, or un-credited project assistance will result in a recommendation of course failure. If you have any questions about what is acceptable and what is not, please ask. Also see: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/

Violations of the UT honor code, including cheating or plagiarism, will result in: 1) a zero for the assignment/exam; 2) an assigned ‘F’ for the final grade; and/or 3) notification to the UT Academic Judiciary Committee for further disciplinary measures.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual’s behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counselling and Mental Health Centre (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and the University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 232-5050 or visit http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal.

Decorum: Computers and phones should be silenced (no vibration or ring). If you take notes on a laptop, the expectation is that you are fully engaged with the class and not reading the news, checking social media sites, doing homework for another class, or otherwise browsing the internet.