Overview
Zol 415, Spring 2002
Behavioral Ecology

Lect: tu & th 10:20-11:10am, room 137 Akers Hall (Link to Schedule)
Disc: Sec 1: tu 11:30-12:20am, “ 139 “
   Sec 2: th “ “ “ “

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The goals of this course are to introduce students to the research literature in behavioral ecology and to practice important skills: critically reading research papers, participating in and leading group analysis of issues, and effectively communicating ideas, both verbally and in writing. I would like the discussion to be as much like a graduate seminar as possible. ZOL313 is a prerequisite and I assume you mastered the basics in that course. There is no text. The text from ZOL 313 (Alcock) is a useful optional reference.

Guest lecturers and I will introduce current research topics in lecture. Occasional quizzes on the lecture material will account for 15% of your grade.

The discussion sections will analyze recent research papers. You must come prepared to contribute to a critical evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of each paper. Note that 15% of your grade is based on our evaluation of your contributions to productive discussions. If you object to being judged on your oral contribution to discussions, you should not take this course!

Each discussion will be lead by a small team of students. Discussion leaders are not expected to lecture. Rather, they will help the class work together to get the most out of each paper. You will need to meet with teammates in advance to plan the discussion.

Each student will be involved in leading one discussion, and 15% of your grade is based on our evaluation of your effectiveness at leading a discussion.
The **term paper** will be a short News & Views style overview and analysis of a target paper on a topic in behavioral ecology that is of interest to you. You should identify two or three prospective papers and then choose one in consultation with us. The target paper must be a recent (within the last year or two) research report (with original results, not a review) from a refereed journal. We will provide examples of **target articles** and **N&V-style reviews**.

You will turn in a good **1st draft** (15% of your grade). The class will divide into teams and edit the drafts (10% of your grade is based on how helpful you are as an editor). You will then make revisions in light of the reviews and resubmit a **final draft** (15% of your grade).

The **final exam** (15%) will be an essay analyzing some issue that we will identify in advance.

It is important that you participate and contribute to class activities. Test your understanding by trying to explain things. If you can’t explain it you don’t understand it. You will learn a lot by asking questions and helping to answer other’s questions.

**Grades:**
(1) 15% Quizzes,
(2) 15% Leading a discussion,
(3) 15% Participation in all discussions,
(4) 15% News & Views paper 1st draft,
(5) 10% Editing classmates' drafts,
(6) 15% Term paper final draft,
(7) 15% Final exam.

**If you have any difficulty with any aspect of the class, please talk to me so I can help you.**