Primate Conservation Biology, ANTH 395
Spring 2010
Tuesday / Thursday 11:00am – 12:15pm
Miller Hall 2102

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Office hrs: Walk-in or by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW:

You read about it everywhere these days – the loss of biodiversity, climate change, extinctions – gloom and doom. Human behaviors are dramatically and quickly altering the nature world. A relatively new discipline, conservation biology, has arisen in response to these changes. The major goal of conservation biology is to preserve biodiversity and biological processes by preventing population extinction. It is a multidisciplinary field that ultimately informs and guides conservation action.

Humans are primates and, yet, our actions threaten the survival of many of our closest living relatives, nearly 50% of which are threatened with extinction. The goal of this course is to provide you with an understanding of the science and ethical debates behind conserving biodiversity. First, you will learn what biodiversity is and why it's important. You will then be introduced to the primates and the major threats to their survival. Following this, you will critically evaluate the strategies used to safeguard primates and their habitats and you will be introduced to the many debates over how best to protect biodiversity. The course will conclude with a four-day symposium in which you will present on a case study of primate conservation.

This is a discussion-based course. It is a mix of traditional lecture, student presentations, and class discussion. You are expected to come to class each week prepared to discuss the information presented in your readings. You need not talk at length at each class session or ask questions/incite discussion just to get "extra points". Simply attend class, come prepared, and contribute to class discussions.

REQUIRED READINGS:

For each class, there will be a core reading that provides you with an overview of the topic and other readings that support the core reading. All of these readings will be posted on Blackboard.

You will also read and write a review of the book *Eating Apes* by Dale Peterson, which is available in the JMU bookstore (but, I recommend buying a used copy of it online).

GRADING:

Assignment	Percentage
Exams	30%
Lead discussant and Article presentation	15% (2 x 7.5%)
Topic summary	15%
Book review	10%
Symposium presentation	25%
Attendance	5%
GRAND TOTAL	100%

Final grades will be determined by the following grading scale:

93% and above = A
90% - 92.9% = A-
87.5% - 89.9% = B+
82.5% -87.4% = B
80% - 82.4% = B-
77.5% - 79.9% = C+
72.5% - 77.4% = C
70% -72.4% = C-
67.5% - 69.9% = D+
62.5% - 67.4% = D
62.4% and below = F

Note that if you get an 89.9% (or even an 89.94%) you get a B+, there will be no rounding up to an A-. Please make sure you understand this.

You can only dispute a question or the grade on exams and assignment within **two weeks** of the exam/assignment.

COURSE MECHANICS:

(1) *Exams*: There will be two in-class exams. The first one will be on Tuesday, Feb. 9 and the second one, which is NOT cumulative, will be on Thursday, March 4. Each exam is worth 15% of your final grade. There is no final exam during exams week at the end of the semester.

There will be no make-up examinations, except under extraordinary circumstances.

(2) *Lead discussant assignments* – For each of two classes, the lead discussant will be responsible for:

(a) *Discussion points*: For the day that you are presenting, you will come to class with (at least) 3-5 discussion points that you may use during class to generate discussion. Obviously, these are not the only things that can be discussed. But, it shows me that you have carefully read the material and that you may have questions or comments. We may not get to all of your discussion points, and that's ok. You are required to e-mail me your discussion points the day before you are the lead discussant.

(b) *Article presentations*: The lead discussant will be required to give a presentation on an article (that I give you) relevant to the topic of that day. I will post all articles on Blackboard and everyone in class is responsible for reading the article. The presentation should be approximately 5-8 minutes long. You should discuss how the article relates to the core reading and you should include a description of the aims of the paper and, when applicable, a description of the study site, methods, and a discussion of major results. You should also discuss your opinions of the article – what you found interesting or surprising, what you liked or disliked, what you might disagree with, etc. You can prepare a very short Powerpoint presentation or you can distribute to the class an outline of what you will be presenting. There will typically be two lead discussants, each presenting one article, for each topic.

(3) *Topic summary* – At the start of each class, I will randomly select one person. That person will be responsible for summarizing all of the material presented in class that day. One week following the class in which you were chosen, you are required to submit an overview of the topic that ***synthesizes*** all the material presented in class. Take good notes on everything discussed. You will then combine all of this information into a brief essay (5-6 double spaced pages, 1 inch margins), that coherently pulls together everything that was presented and discussed in class. You will only be chosen to do this once during the semester. This essay will include brief discussions of:

(i) the articles presented in class
(ii) the relevant material in the core reading material for that day
(iii) information I presented on the topic
(iv) major discussions of the topic we had in class

(4) *Book review*: You will hand in a book review of *Eating Apes* that briefly summarizes the book and includes your opinion and a critique of the material. To facilitate writing, I will provide examples of other book reviews. The book review is due **Tuesday, February 23**.

(5) *Conservation Symposium* - The last four classes there will be a conservation symposium, not unlike those held at many scientific meetings. You will give a 10-12 minute Powerpoint presentation of a conservation topic of your choice. After your presentation, you will field questions from your classmates for 3-5 minutes. Presenting is an important part of being a scientist, especially a conservation biologist. You must be able to coherently and succinctly convey your ideas to a wider audience.

(a) *Conservation case study*: You can study the conservation of a single primate species, conservation of a region, a specific conservation project, or a more detailed look at any of the topics we discussed in class. I'm even open to case studies that don't directly involve primates but that relate to biodiversity conservation. An abstract (summary of your idea) of your topic is due no later than **Tuesday, March 2**. In this summary, you will also include a preliminary list of references (from peer-reviewed, scientific journals). You will then make an appointment to meet with me to discuss your proposed case study and I will help you develop your ideas and locate references.

(b) You will also design a handout to complement your oral presentation. The handout will highlight your topic and can be in the form of a brochure, fact sheet, mock press release – anything, really – I encourage creativity with this assignment. You will be restricted to using one piece of paper (both sides).

(7) *Attendance and participation*: I will take attendance at the beginning of each class and will incorporate attendance in the calculation of your final course grade. Not counting the first week of the course, there are 27 class days. You each get one "Get out of class free" card. In other words, you can miss one class, no excuse needed, and you will not be penalized (as long it's not the day you are supposed to present). For every additional day you miss (without a valid, official excuse), I will reduce your attendance grade by five percentage points.

(8) *Conservation biology in the news* – want **extra credit**? Bring in an article published in a mainstream news publication within the last year. You can choose from articles in the NY Times, The Guardian, Washington Post, BBC News, The Economist, or Newsweek. It can cover any aspect of conservation biology. In class, give a 5 minute summary of the article, why you thought it was pertinent to the class, what you found interesting about it, and, if applicable, whether you agree or disagree with it. You may only receive extra credit for one article. Contact me if and when you find an interesting article. Then, after my approval, you can post a link to the article on **http://jmuprimateconservation.blogspot.com/.** The article must be posted the day before you will present it. Anyone can use the blog to comment on the article and on other people's comments. If you do this assignment, you will receive two percentage points added to one of your exams.

Note: When I have taught this course in the past, I gave students quizzes at the beginning of some of the classes that test them on the core reading material. The quizzes were not difficult so long as the students did the reading. I have decided not to include quizzes this time. However, if it becomes obvious that students are not doing the readings, I will reinstitute the pop quizzes. If this happens, I will restructure the grading mechanics to incorporate the quizzes in your final grade.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations to fully participate in course activities and/or meet course requirements must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) and contact me to discuss access issues. ODS will provide you with an Access Plan Letter that will verify your need for services and make recommendations for accommodations to be used in my classroom. ODS is located in the Wilson Learning Center, Room 107; Phone: 568-6705.

Please do not hesitate to ask questions or make comments. Be engaged, but respectful. *If at any time during the semester you feel overwhelmed with the material presented to you, please come see me immediately – I am here to help!*

JMU Honor Code

By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the JMU Honor Code (www.jmu.edu/honor/code.shtml). Violation of the JMU Honor Code can result in disciplinary action that may affect your academic standing.

Policy for Adding or Withdrawing from Courses

Students are responsible for registering for classes and for verifying their class schedules on e-campus. The deadline for adding a Spring Semester class without instructor and program coordinator signatures is Tuesday, January 19, 2010. After Tuesday, January 19, 2010, instructor and program coordinator signatures are required to add a class for Spring Semester 2010. NO STUDENT WILL BE ALLOWED TO REGISTER FOR A SPRING SEMESTER CLASS AFTER Thursday, January 28, 2010.

COURSE SCHEDULE: Note, there is FLEXIBILITY in this schedule. I may add or move around topics.

Date	Topic	Notes
Tue, Jan. 12	Class introduction	
Thu, Jan. 14	Defining conservation and conservation biology	
Tue, Jan. 19	What is biodiversity?	
Thu, Jan. 21	Conservation values and ethics	
Tue, Jan. 26	Introducing the primates	
Thu, Jan. 28	Primate behavioral ecology	
Tue, Feb. 2	Primate community ecology	
Thu, Feb. 4	Extinction	
Tue, Feb. 9	**EXAM I**	
Thu, Feb. 11	Climate change	
Tue, Feb. 16	Habitat degredation and loss	
Thu, Feb. 18	Habitat degredation and loss	
Tue, Feb. 23	Hunting	**Due: Eating Apes book review**
Thu, Feb. 25	Hunting	
Tue, Mar. 2	Hunting	**Abstract of case study due**
Thu, Mar. 4	**EXAM II**	

Date	Topic	Notes
Tue, Mar. 9	**Spring Break**	
Thu, Mar. 11	**Spring Break**	
Tue, Mar. 16	Identifying conservation units and setting priorities I	
Thu, Mar. 18	Identifying conservation units and setting priorities II	
Tue, Mar. 23	Identifying conservation units and setting priorities III	
Thu, Mar. 25	Protected areas	
Tue, Mar. 30	Protected areas	
Thu, Apr. 1	Conservation, development, and sustainable use	
Tue, Apr. 6	Conservation, development, and sustainable use	
Thu, Apr. 8	Tourism, captive breeding and reintroduction	
Tue, Apr. 13	TBD	
Thu, Apr. 15	POSSIBLY No Class - AAPA	
Tue, Apr. 20	Conservation biology symposium	
Thu, Apr. 22	Conservation biology symposium	
Tue, Apr. 27	Conservation biology symposium	
Thu, Apr. 29	Conservation biology symposium	