



Conservation Biology (WIS 4554)
Fall 2026
3 credits

Prerequisites: WIS 3553; and one of PCB 3601C, PCB 4043C, FOR 3153C or WIS 3404; and WIS 3401

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Office hours: by appointment in 310 Newins-Ziegler or zoom
she/her/hers

Course Description:

Welcome to Conservation biology! Conservation biology is an interdisciplinary science designed to address the causes and consequences of the global biodiversity crisis. This mission-driven field also seeks to provide effective tools to protect biodiversity against mounting threats in the current human-dominated era. Conservation biology is an exciting field because it is constantly evolving and is relevant to current events happening all around us. This course should be enjoyable and it should enrich your passion for contributing to a conservation-related field.

This course seeks to:

1. Explore key concepts that have shaped the evolving field of conservation biology
2. Outline the historical and current threats to biodiversity around the globe
3. Examine the advantages and disadvantages of conservation strategies currently being implemented to reverse biodiversity loss

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Articulate sources of variation in biodiversity at species, community, and ecosystem levels
2. Explain intrinsic and extrinsic factors contributing to extinction risk
3. Construct and interpret concept maps of key biodiversity concepts
4. Outline how biodiversity values vary across different cultures and places
5. Articulate and provide examples of the variety of human threats to biodiversity at local and global scales
6. Evaluate the efficacy of real-world conservation strategies in different socio-ecological contexts
7. Use multimedia tools to effectively explain conservation issues to others

****International Scholars Program:* This course fulfills one of the curriculum requirements of the International Scholars Program. Learn more about how you can obtain a graduation medallion and diploma [here](#)..

This course has an online section and an in-person section. The in-person section will take place Tues and Thurs 9:00-10:25 am. The online section is 100% asynchronous online.

You can follow along in the course by using the [Modules](#) tab where you will find all materials organized by week.

There are suggested times for completion of the major assignments that will allow for optimum pacing of the course, but there are no deductions for 'lateness'.

You do not need any special computing power or specialized software for this course. You should be fine with basic internet and a word processor. You do not need any specialized technical skills for this course. Basic skills in word processing software are sufficient to succeed in the course. Please see the UF Online [recommendations](#) for computing, which are not required for this course, but may promote an optimal learning experience. Please let me know if you need any special accommodations. I am more than happy to accommodate you.

I really want students to succeed and enjoy the course. **Please email me anytime** if you have questions or just want to chat. It is my priority to reply to student emails within 24 hours (barring a family emergency). I can jump on zoom almost any day and am frequently in my office in 310 Newins-Ziegler.

Student mental health and wellness are important to me. Please let me know how I can better

meet your needs in this course. We now have an embedded mental health counselor in CALS who is very reachable. [Philip Daniels](mailto:pdaniels@ufl.edu). - pdaniels@ufl.edu. He said he responds to student emails within 24 hours.

I seek to maintain an environment that is inclusive for all, including racial and ethnic minorities, first-generation students, international students, the LGBTQ+ community, people of all religious faiths, and those with disabilities. I want to maintain a course environment where everyone feels safe to express their views and be themselves. Did you know you can add pronouns to your Canvas profile? You can go to "Account" then "Settings" and then "Edit Settings".

Let's work to maintain kind interactions in our course 'netiquette' during online engagement. The Center for Teaching Excellence offers helpful [guidelines](#) on netiquette.

Participation

This course relies heavily on active student participation. You earn participation points by either appearing for in-person class activities (in-person section) OR by completing the online "participation activities" (online section).

Online people need to do 25 [participation activities](#) by the end of the semester for full credit (see activities listed in the Modules). The online options for these activities will be varied (e.g., a quiz, a discussion board, an online padlet). You can choose activities based on your interest. It is just like a "Choose your own adventure!" You can do them in any order and timing. Please keep a running list of the activities you have chosen to do for yourself and turn that list in on Canvas by **December 12**. It is estimated that if you pace yourself evenly throughout the semester, each Module should take around three hours to complete.

In-person people are not required to do any of the online participation activities but need to appear in class a minimum of 20 times for full credit in addition to giving one 15-minute presentation/activity in class at some point in the semester on a topic of your choosing. Please keep a running list of dates you attended and turn that in at the end of the semester.

Lectures

There are short lectures on the course materials each week posted online. They are intended for the online course students, but anyone is welcome to view them. The content roughly corresponds to what will be happening in person. They will usually be 15-20 minutes in duration each.

Readings

Readings are recommended and made available on the web page each week. You do not need to purchase a textbook for this course. The readings will help you to succeed in the various other course components.

Media Corner

Each Module also includes a Media Corner, where interesting links to online material are provided as optional and recommended ways to engage and reinforce material covered in the lectures.

There are 3 main assignments for this course:

You should expect feedback on any submitted assignment within 2 weeks of your submission date.

Concept Map Assignment ([full description](#))

Students will choose any key concept discussed in the first section of the course and create a concept map to illustrate how the concept can be applied in a specific example (e.g., species or ecosystem). The map can be either digital (e.g., powerpoint, bubble.us) or hand-drawn. **Suggested Due Date- end of September.**

Wakelet Assignment ([full description](#))

Students will create a Wakelet on a chosen “hot topic” in conservation biology. Wakelets are online information portals that summarize content on a given issue. They include embedded links to a wide variety of online content including articles, blogs, images, twitter, and youtube. **Suggested Due Date: end of October.**

Success Stories Assignment ([full description](#))

Students will contribute to a class Padlet map showing conservation success stories around the globe. Students will explain how and why conservation efforts can work in different social and ecological settings. **Suggested Due Date: December 1.**

Take-home Essays ([full description](#))

A take-home (open book/open notes/un-timed) essays will take place at the end of the course. The essays should be completed individually (not in groups). There are two open-ended essay

questions. The essays are designed to synthesize information learned during the semester. **Suggested Due Date: December 12.**

Schedule at a Glance

Course Schedule

Content		Assignments
Course Introduction		
KEY CONCEPTS		
Week 1	What is Conservation Biology?	
Week 2	Extinctions	
Week 3	Sources and Sinks/Communities	
Week 4	Valuing Biodiversity	
THREATS TO BIODIVERSITY		
Week 5	Habitat destruction/fragmentation	Concept Maps
Week 6	Climate change	
Week 7	Wildlife harvesting/trade	
Week 8	Chasing Coral	
Week 9	Invasive species	Wakelets
CONSERVATION STRATEGIES		
Week 10	Protected areas	
Week 11	Restoration/Reintroduction	
Week 12	Conservation for All	Success Stories
Week 13	Science Communication	

Grades will be calculated as follows:

A (90% or greater), B+ (87%-89.99%), B (83%-86.99%), B- (80%-82.99%), C+ (77%-79.99%), C (73%-76.99%), C- (70%-72.99%), D+ (67%-69.99%), D (63%-66.99%), D- (60%-62.99%), E (<60%)

Grades will be available [here](#) on Canvas and will be frequently updated throughout the course.

Note: I will run all major assignments through Turnitin to prevent plagiarism.

Grade Distribution

Item	Points
Online Participation (25 activities x 5 pts each) OR In-Person Attendance (20 days x 4 pts each + one 45 pt presentation)	125
Concept Map	100
Wakelet	100
Success Stories	100
Take-home Essays	100
Total	525

Note: I do not deduct points for late assignments. The due dates are suggestions for optimal pacing to prevent backlog.

Accessibility Statements

Information on the accessibility of various tools used for this class can be found via the following links: [Wakelet software.](#), [Padlet software.](#), [Jamboard software.](#), [Kahoot.](#) .

Canvas accessibility policy can be found [here.](#). Zoom accessibility policy can be found [here.](#). UF's accessibility information can be found [here.](#).

Privacy Statements

Information on the privacy of various tools used for this class can be found via the following links: [Zoom.](#), [Canvas](#), [Wakelet software.](#), [Padlet software.](#), [Jamboard software.](#), [Kahoot.](#)

Academic Policies and Resources

Academic policies for this course are consistent with university policies. See <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>.

Campus Health and Wellness Resources

Visit <https://one.uf.edu/whole-gator/topics>. for resources that are designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF. Please contact U Matter We Care for additional and immediate support.

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.

