

**Tentative Syllabus**  
**Avian Ecology and Conservation**  
WIS 4934, Fall Semester, 2020

**Instructor:** Jessica Hightower

**Office:** Online

**Office Hours:** By appointment via Zoom

**Email:** [jnhightower@ufl.edu](mailto:jnhightower@ufl.edu)

**Lecture/Discussion:**

Tuesday, Period 8 & 9 (3:00-4:55), online

Thursday, Periods 9 (4:05-4:55), online

**Course Goals and Objectives:**

This course will focus on current issues in ecology and conservation of birds around the world. Students will be introduced to basic ecological theory and concepts in conservation biology as it relates to avian populations and communities. Readings will be drawn from current literature, with class discussions of those readings forming a major part of the course. Major topics will include population dynamics (breeding demographics, predation, disease, etc.), dispersal and migration, impacts of habitat alteration (fragmentation, fire, logging, etc.), species interactions (seed dispersal, etc.), climate change, urban ecology, wildlife trade, as well as citizen science and outreach.

A major component of the course will be to highlight the breadth of experience and diversity in the field of avian ecology and conservation. To that end, seminars from guests around the world will be a regular part of the course. We will hear from people working on projects in Borneo, Hong Kong, South America, Africa, and the United States. Guest seminars will include topics on scientists researching questions in avian ecology, practitioners involved in on the ground conservation initiatives, and those who are actively engaged in citizen science and outreach. In addition to attending guest seminars students will have the opportunity to interact with the guests and ask questions. This course will offer a unique opportunity to meet and engage with professionals in the field of avian ecology and conservation from around the world.

**Course Materials:**

No textbook required. Readings from the primary literature will be posted on the class website.

**Grading:**

The grades for this course are based on the following:

Online and Field Notes Exercises (formats may vary) – 200 pts

Class participation (including attendance and discussion) - 200 pts

Total possible score: 400

**Final grades will be assigned on the following scale:**

**A** = >93%, **A-** = 92-90%, **B+** = 89-87%, **B** = 86-83%, **B-** = 82-80%, **C+** = 79-77%, **C** = 76-73%, **C-** = 72-70, **D+** = 69-67%, **D** = 66-63%, **D-** = 62-60%, **E** = 59% and below. **Grading Policy:**

Information on the UF grading policy for assigning grade points can be found at:  
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

### **Class Attendance:**

Class attendance is an important part of your overall grade. Failure to attend the online seminars and participate in class discussion will result in a reduced grade.

### **Tentative Schedule:**

<b>Topics</b>	<b>Week</b>
Intro to Birds and Bird Diversity	Week 1 & 2
Population Ecology	Week 3 & 4
Conservation Genetics	Week 5
Bird Movement: Dispersal	Week 6
Bird Movement: Migration	Week 7
Habitat selection: Habitat degradation and fragmentation	Week 8 & 9
Social Behavior	Week 10
Urban Ecology	Week 11
Invasive Species	Week 12
Climate Change	Week 13
Poaching and the wild bird trade	Week 14
Jobs in Avian Ecology and Conservation	Week 15

### **Students Requiring Accommodations:**

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

### **Course Evaluation:**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/>.

### **University Honesty Policy:**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the

following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

### **Counseling and Wellness Center:**

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.