



BECOMING A WILDLIFE PROFESSIONAL

AG 316 01E / BSC 316 01E

FALL 2025

Instructor: Dr. Pedro M. Chavarria
Course Location: Talbot Hall 203; (some weekly Zoom meetings)
Course Hours: T-Th 0930-1045; 1 weekly Zoom meeting(s) (TBA)
Office Location: AG/ET 253
Office Hours: By appointment, schedule by e-mail
Office Phone: 903.886.5615 (E-mail preferred)
University Email Address: Pedro.Chavarria@tamuc.edu
Preferred Form of Communication: e-mail

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook: (Recommended, not required) Becoming a Wildlife Professional by Scott Henke and Paul Krausman. Johns Hopkins Press.

Supplemental Materials: Presented by the instructor or on myleonline.tamuc.edu

Course Description

Careers in studying and managing wildlife are exciting and can take you on adventures to explore local or remote areas of the natural world. This field demands strong preparation and personal commitment. In this course, students will be exposed to diverse perspectives of skill sets necessary to succeed in careers related to wildlife through the lens of professionals active in the field. Students will gain knowledge in the proper training and guidance needed to transform themselves into competitive applicants for wildlife jobs and forge successful careers.

Students will learn about many jobs available for the next generation of wildlife professionals. Over 100 diverse careers for aspiring wildlife workers will be presented, including work in biological field research, zoology, extension, ranching, photography, and refuge management. Students will learn the best ways to prepare for a vocation in the wildlife profession while obtaining pragmatic advice about obtaining a job.

The class also brings together useful advice from a range of seasoned experts who actually hold these jobs and have used these techniques to secure employment. Becoming a Wildlife Professional conveys the responsibilities and challenges of a career in wildlife conservation and management, and shows students how to make themselves marketable for employers across a wide spectrum of wildlife jobs.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Gain knowledge in the proper training and guidance needed to transform into a competitive applicant for wildlife jobs and forge successful careers
2. Learn about many entry-level jobs available
3. Learn the best ways to prepare for a vocation in the wildlife profession
4. Obtain pragmatic advice from seasoned professionals in the wildlife profession

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

You must be proficient in navigating myleoonline.tamuc.edu, using Microsoft Word and PowerPoint, e-mailing your instructor, writing papers, and opening .pdf documents.

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%; B = 80%-89%; C = 70%-79%; D = 60%-69%; F = 59% or Below

Assessments

1. Career Development Assignment: 400 pts (CV, LinkedIn, Mock Interview)
2. Attendance and Participation: 150 pts (25 pts. x 4 to attend 4 live Zoom session; 50 points in-class attendance assignments).
3. Reflection Paper(s): 4 * 100 pts (400 pts)
4. Wildlife Professional Highlight Powerpoint Presentation: 50 pts

Attendance and Participation:

Each student is expected to attend all classes, participate in all discussions, and ask questions of guest speakers. This course will meet in-person on Tuesdays. On Thursdays, we may have guest speakers present in-class or via Zoom. Some of these Zoom meetings may take place after regularly scheduled lecture hours to accommodate guest speakers. When that is the case, the class will not meet in the morning on Thursdays so that the Zoom conference call with the guest speaker can be scheduled in the afternoon (Wednesday or Thursday). You are responsible for attending at least 3 of the Zoom conference presentations by guest speakers when those are presented after regularly scheduled lecture time on Wednesdays or Thursdays.

I will take attendance during the guest Zoom presentations. When attending a Zoom meeting, send me a private chat message letting me know that you are in attendance of the Zoom presentation. I will take a poll at the beginning of the class to select a time(s) and day of the week that serves most, if not all, of the students for scheduling a live Zoom session (Wednesday or Thursdays) so that you can interact with our guest speakers. If you cannot attend the sessions with the guest speakers at those times, the presentations will be recorded and available for you to review at a later time. You must attend at least 4 of any of the various presentations by guest speakers during the time they are presenting live over Zoom.

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Career Development Assignment:

Use the TAMUC Career Development Center to develop a resume/CV, cover letter, reference page, and LinkedIn profile. This will include making a follow up appointment with your Career Coach and learning the basics of professionalism and networking. You may visit the Career Development Center in-person on campus or schedule a virtual session and appointments with them through Zoom.

1. Draft resume/CV and Cover letter: 50 + 25 pts. = 75 pts.
2. Final draft resume/CV: 75 pts.
3. Final cover letter: 50 pts.
4. Develop a professional LinkedIn profile: 100 pts.
5. Mock Interview and feedback from career center: 100 pts.

Reflection Papers and Readings:

You will have 4 “Reflection Papers” due at various intervals scheduled throughout the semester. The format of these papers will consist of 1-1.5 page essays, 1.5 spaced, that center around 3 basic questions: 1) Discuss important points made in the reading(s) or by guest speakers that note any new information you learned about knowledge, skills, abilities that will help you succeed as a wildlife professional; 2) What did you like most about the reading(s) or speakers presentation?; 3) Do you see yourself pursuing the career path of the guest speaker in any way and what would you need now, as a student, to start or continue on that career path?

Some reflection papers will have a focused question to answer rather than the format provided above. All assignments will be submitted online through myLeo. An assignment dropbox link will be provided. Assignments will generally be due on a Tuesday, by end of day, unless otherwise posted. Late assignments will receive a 20% penalty per day in addition to any other deductions.

Wildlife Professional Highlight Powerpoint:

All students will create a short 5-slide Powerpoint that highlights a wildlife-related career they are interested in that will not be highlighted by the invited guest speakers. More details regarding the format and requirements will be provided early in the semester. Multiple students will volunteer to give the presentations on a weekly basis throughout the semester until the last week of November. Presentations must be uploaded to myLeo.

Course week	Dates	Weekly agenda
Week 1		<p>Course introduction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Syllabus overview 2. Readings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Hein and Bates (1983): Criteria for hiring wildlife employees 3. Speaker: Dr. Pedro Chavarria (NPS) 4. Reflection 1: Reflection paper on Hein and Bates (1983) due 9/5 by end of day
Week 2		<p>Science careers with the Federal government</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Readings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Getting a job with the federal government b. Federal Biological Science, Conservation, & Wildlife Jobs c. Schmutz 2002—Educational background and professional participation by federal wildlife biologists 2. Speaker(s): (TBA)
Week 3		<p>Professional Resume and CV Preparation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Readings: Online 2. Speaker: TBA 3. Assignment: Draft Resume / Curriculum Vitae (CV) and Cover Letter; due 9/19
Week 4		<p>Skills for Nonacademic Wildlife and Conservation Careers; KSAs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Readings Crawford et al. (2011) Comparative analysis of soft skills: What is important for new graduates? 2. Delany (2004). Entry-level job skills needed by wildlife management professionals (pp.159) (172) 3. Speaker: (TBA) <p>Reflection 2: Due 9/26 by end of day</p>
Week 5		<p>Exploring Wildlife Careers State, NGO's, Industry; Part 1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Readings: A How-To Guide for Pursuing a Career in Natural Resources, 2nd edition. 2. Texas Parks and Wildlife—We Are TPWD 3. Speakers: TBA
Week 6		<p>Exploring Wildlife Careers State, NGO's, Industry; Part 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Readings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Nature Conservancy b. Defenders of Wildlife

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- c. National Audubon
 - d. Sierra Club
 - e. Institute of Wildlife Studies
2. Speakers: **TBA**

Week 7

Professional Societies

1. Readings:
 - a. The Wildlife Society
 - b. Society for Conservation Biology
 - c. Ecological Society of America
 - d. American Association for Advance of Science
2. Speaker: **TBA**

Week 8

International wildlife opportunities

1. Readings:
 - a. Smithsonian
 - b. World Wildlife Fund
2. Speaker: **TBA**
3. **Reflection 3:** Reflection paper on previous speakers; **due 10/24**

Week 9

Professional Communication

1. Readings: Online
2. Speaker: **TBA**
3. **Assignment: LinkedIn Profile, due 11/7**
4. **Assignment: Final Draft Resume/CV and Cover Letter, due 11/14**

Week 10

Graduate School Preparation: Perspectives Looking ahead: Preparing for graduate school

1. Readings:
 - a. Kaemingk et al. (2016) Insights for Undergraduates Seeking an Advanced Degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences
 - b. Edge (2022) Learning for the future: educating career fisheries and wildlife professionals
2. Speaker: **TBD**

Week 11

Professional Diversity: Key to Conserving Wildlife

1. Readings: Online
2. Speaker: **TBD**

Week 12

Interagency Professional Career Development

1. Readings: Online
2. Speaker: **TBD**

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Week 13	Human Dimensions and Commerce <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Readings: Online 2. Speaker: TBD 3. Reflection 4 on previous speakers, due 12/5 Walking the walk of a wildlife biologist
Week 14	Watch My Life as a Turkey (MLAAT) video
Week 14	Thanksgiving Break – No Classes
Week 15	Presentations Week; Guest speaker Career Development Center Mock Interview feedback due 12/7
Finals Week	Finals

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TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>.

You will be required to download the Codific Attendance Radar App (<https://codific.com/student-attendance-radar/>) to your mobile devices for in-class attendance verification. If you do not have a mobile device, you will need to consult with the instructor with your student ID to verify your attendance in-person.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor first.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

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Interaction with Instructor Statement

Student Success

To be successful in my class:

- Check the course daily (e-mail and myLeo D2L) and read all announcements.
- Some changes to the course content, including deadlines to assignments, may occur during the semester. These announcements will first be made in-class during lectures. Not all announcements and changes to deadlines may be posted immediately to myLeo online. It is the student's responsibility to check with the instructor, preferably by e-mail, if a class is missed.
- Read and respond to course email messages as needed; please understand that I will respond as quickly as conveniently as possible. Sometimes I will respond to messages late into the evening, but generally expect me to reply within regular business hours
- Because it may take me a while to immediately respond to your e-mail, I recommend you build a connection with peers in your class in which you can confide and rely (i.e. "study buddy") to keep you informed of the changes to the course schedule and material in case you miss a class.
- Complete assignments by the due dates specified; If you have extenuating circumstances that prevent you from meeting a deadline, please let me know ahead of time so I can consult with you about necessary accommodations or make-up opportunities.
- Communicate regularly with your instructor (office hours) and peers. I am very understanding of situations that may arise in the academic environment or in our personal lives which can create challenges to your performance. Please let me know what's going on so I can provide reasonable opportunities to help you recover and/or stay on track with the course.
- Create a study and/or assignment schedule to stay on track
- If you have any concerns regarding course content, need clarification on grading, or other matters related to the course, please make an appointment with your instructor to try to resolve the issue with the instructor first. If you find that the issue at hand cannot be resolved with the instructor after first consulting with the instructor, then feel free to seek support from the Chair of the department.
- Penalty enforcement (I reserve the right to adjust your grade for violation of the minimum expectations).
- Make-up assignments will only be given if arrangements are made with the instructor before missing the scheduled assignment. A documented excuse acceptable by the university standards will be required.
- If you miss class because of medical reasons, you will need to verify your illness through the TAMUC Student Health Services office (<https://www.tamuc.edu/student-health-services/>) or Student Disability Services office (<https://www.tamuc.edu/student-disability-services/>). A confirmation note (e-mail) from staff from either office is needed to make accommodations for missed assignments.
- Otherwise, missing assignments will be counted as zeroes in the overall grade computation.

I want you all to succeed in my courses and in life beyond your graduation. Schedule a time to come and chat with me formally or informally to discuss your interest in wildlife conservation and what kind of things you are expecting to learn while a student at TAMUC. I will make the strongest effort to adapt the degree program to the needs of our students and make the learning experience fun and exciting!

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COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

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Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Course Policy

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty
13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce
Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/)
<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

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Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.tamuc.edu/counsel

The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus during the semester, if needed. The instructor also reserves the right to extend credit for alternative assignments, projects, or presentations. Some elements of grading may be delegated to a teaching assistant for this course.

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