

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Lani Lyman-Henley      **Office:** STC 237 (McFarland Science Building)  
**email:** Lani.Lyman-Henley@ETAMU.edu      **Course Website:** at MyLeo Online (D2L)  
**Office Hours:** MWF 11-12; appointments as needed  
Message via email, text, Discord, & D2L anytime (usual response within 24 hrs.) More contact information will be posted at D2L

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

*Herpetology*, 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Pough, et al. 2015. ISBN: 978-1-60535-233-6

The text may be available in paperback or ebook form. I'm ok with students purchasing ebooks or renting to reduce expense. Do note that it is strongly recommended that you use the current edition of the text as listed, but this one does retain the same basic organization as the last edition.

**ADDITIONAL TEXT:**

There will be an additional required reading, but students will be able to pick from a list of possible books. List will be available shortly before classes start.

**COURSE MEETING TIME/PLACE: WEB-BASED COURSE;**

In-Person and/or Zoom sessions TBD

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Three hours. An investigation of the study of amphibians and reptiles, with emphasis on diversity, evolution, and natural history of extant groups. Current controversies, conservation, and behavior will be topics of note.

**COURSE FORMAT:**

This is a “web-based” course- that is, you don’t actually attend a lecture class. Instead, you do all your work via our **D2L** site - enter through your MyLeo page. Check the website frequently (I’d recommend daily!) for announcements, instructions, and discussion; the closest thing to a lecture or office hours you’ll get from me will be in the course discussion boards or via email. Try everything out early so you know that you can access it all. If you have difficulty with the material, talk to me *as soon as you can* for advice on how best to improve. Be sure to turn in work using appropriate file formats (doc, pdf, rtf, etc.- and NOT zip files!); if I can’t open or read your work it cannot be graded and will be given a 0 score. I can’t stress enough how important it is to keep up with the material...with this much reading and writing, it can be really difficult to catch up if you fall behind!

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- Students will be familiar with what the study of herpetology entails
- Students will gain familiarity with amphibian and reptile taxa and the basics of their identification and classification
- Students will understand the place of amphibians and reptile in vertebrate evolution
- Students will be familiar with examples of reptile and amphibian ecology, behavior, and physiological adaptations.
- Graduate students will be able to find and interpret scientific literature pertaining to the subject matter.
- Graduate Students will be able to communicate scientific data and literature in both written and oral presentation format.

**ATTENDANCE:** Being an online course, attendance is measured by demonstrated time at the website. This is measured in two main ways- time spent actually logged into the site (yes, I can see that information), and participation in activities demonstrating you are engaged and participating. Minimum allowable attendance should reflect at least weekly logins- more appropriate and beneficial interaction will be rewarded in your grade (see below). If Zoom sessions are scheduled, attendance will count toward your participation.

**A BIT ON ORGANIZATION:** Oddly enough, we are going basically in the order the main text is organized in, so you can start at the beginning! Please DO read the Preface of the text before starting the chapters, and read each opening essay to the Parts of the text. Authors usually include these items for a reason. Feel free to read ahead, but do check back for specifics to review and discuss if you get ahead of the assignment postings so you don't skip over stuff. Please DO NOT fall behind on reading- there is a lot of material to cover and it will pile up fast if you let it slide. The textbook will be the "meat" of your course reading, but not the whole meal!

Do remember that this is a GRADUATE level course, and therefore you will be expected to show appropriate levels of effort. You will be responsible for textbook readings, plus assorted outside readings as assigned (again, visit D2L frequently for guidance), you will be expected to take part in discussions in a mature and in-depth manner, to write in a clear and professional voice, and you should not need excessive amounts of instructor "hand-holding."

#### **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS\***

<b>Week</b>	<b>Starting Date (M)</b>	<b>Topic</b>	
1 – 5	Aug. 25	Part I: What are Amphibians & Reptiles?	Ch. 1-5
6 – 11	Sept. 29	Part II: How Do They Work?	Ch. 6-11
11 – 15	Nov. 03	Part III: What Do They Do?	Ch. 12-16
		Part IV: What Are Their Prospects for Survival?	Ch. 17
<b>16</b>	<b>Dec. 08</b>	<b><i>Final Exam Period</i></b>	

\*This schedule is a general outline for your reference and is subject to change. Note that only the main textbook chapters have been listed; additional readings may be required. Any changes will be announced in class /at the course website; you will be responsible for keeping up with them.

**MATERIAL AND GRADING:** This course is partially self-paced: there are periods in which you need to complete given portions of the work, but you can schedule your specific work times as pleases you- and don't forget the website is still active at night, on holidays and weekends! The material for this class will be organized around content blocks. Please see the Topic folders at D2L for guidance through specific chapters and materials. Each section will have a Commentary devoted to guiding you through the material to study- read that first, then work any assignments given as you study the material. Some of your work will be in the form of posting commentaries of your own to the Discussion boards, and responding to the postings of other students.

Exams will include essay-type questions, and may include material from both lecture/discussion, reading assignments from the books, hand-outs or websites, or student presentations. You are expected to read all assigned text (refer to D2L for specific reading assignments). Exams may *emphasize* the most recent block of material, but will be comprehensive. Depending on class demographics I may break up "exams" into smaller units,

incorporating online D2L multiple choice and other “auto-grading” mechanisms to test over topic specifics, with at minimum a single “take-home” style exam covering integrated concepts from the entire course posted at the end of the term (similar to my previous exams, for any of you who’ve taken my courses before). **There are NO drop grades for exams**, so take each exam seriously!

Another aspect of the course that I’ll introduce after about a week will be the written projects, exercises, and/or papers. You will be required to complete a minimum number of these items. The nature of some of these exercises/assignments will be structured based on the student group in the class (for example, some in-person lab or field exercises may be offered if enough students could meet on campus for them).

Grades will be computed based on a “10-point scale” such that a total of 90% or higher of possible points will result in a grade of A, between 80% and 89.9% a B, and so on. If your total is lower than 60% of the class points you will fail the class (yes, that’s an F). The points are planned to be as follows:

Exams & Quizzes	300
Written assignments	200
Short Exercises	100
Participation, etc.	<u>100</u>
<b><i>Total course points</i></b>	<b><i>700</i></b>

With a 700 point total, minimum scores for each letter grade would be 630 (A), 560 (B), 490 (C), and 420 (D). Any changes will be announced in class- this is a maximum workload, some items may be reduced, but the total will not exceed this outline

Working together on some projects is encouraged, studying together can be highly beneficial, but exams and turned-in assignments must be done *individually*. Cheating, plagiarism, and disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.

**Late or Make- Up Work:** Since there are no actual class meetings or sit-down exam periods, there really isn’t any use for “make-up” work. All work will have a deadline posted; assignments MAY be accepted late, but will be penalized on an increasing scale (the later it is, the more points it loses). Please contact me immediately if you are “absent” long enough to miss any due dates, but in general I strongly recommend planning ahead to avoid such problems. Obtain a calendar or planner for the semester, and USE IT. Extreme circumstances will always be taken into consideration- TALK TO ME before you assume anything.

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## RESOURCES:

There are a variety of resources at your disposal to aid with your studies. This lecture is “Web Enhanced”- it has a D2L (MyLeo Online) site that you will be expected to use regularly; you can enter via your MyLeo account.

Hopefully you no longer need the types of services provided by the **Academic Success Center** services, which include tutoring and workshops (including such topics as “Managing Test Anxiety”), but here’s the link:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/CampusLife/CampusServices/AcademicSuccessCenter/default.aspx> .

Those of you who are GAT’s may want to point your own students this way!

And of course the Academic Calendar, which does include information regarding

University holidays, deadlines to add, drop, withdraw, and other such activities. This page also includes the link to each semester's Final Exam schedule (which may also be useful for your other courses): <http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/academicCalendars/>

As many of you are (or plan to be) teachers and academics, you may find the following discussion about plagiarism interesting and/or helpful:

[https://wpacouncil.org/aws/CWPA/pt/sd/news\\_article/272555/\\_PARENT/layout\\_details/false](https://wpacouncil.org/aws/CWPA/pt/sd/news_article/272555/_PARENT/layout_details/false)

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### **OTHER NOTES (INCLUDING OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY STATEMENTS/AKA: THE FINE PRINT)**

It is the responsibility of the student to inform me of any problems you may have affecting your performance in class, be it due to professionally diagnosed disability, personal or work-related problems, or anything else that comes up, so that appropriate adjustments can be made.

#### **EARLY INTERVENTION FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS:**

Early intervention for freshmen is designed to communicate the University's interest in their success and a willingness to participate fully to help students accomplish their academic objectives. The university through faculty advisors and mentors will assist students who may be experiencing difficulty to focus on improvement and course completion. This process will allow students to be knowledgeable about their academic progress early in the semester and will provide faculty and staff with useful data for assisting students and enhancing retention. Grade reports will be mailed by the end of the sixth week of the semester.

### ***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](https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm)

#### ***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](mailto: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.

## **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>

## ***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>

### **AI use in courses**

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.

The critical work of creativity and original writing relies on integrity, originality, and ethical conduct in regard to appropriate representation as an author or creator. Thus, submitting work with a significant percentage of AI-generated content, unless otherwise permitted, can be considered academic misconduct under East Texas A&M University Student Rule 20. Students must therefore cite the use of Generative AI tools and document what they have contributed to an assignment.

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

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

<https://inside.tamuc.edu/aboutus/policiesproceduresstandardsstatements/rulesprocedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

## **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](#)

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

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

**“Plagiarism** is a criminal activity. You must cite all sources of information. Unreferenced copying of material, whether parts of sentences, whole sentences, paragraphs or entire articles, will result in a score of zero for your essay and can result in further disciplinary action.” Note that this is true throughout the University and we do have plagiarism-detecting software in place. Of special note in an online environment- “cut and paste” from websites without appropriate citation IS plagiarism, yet putting everything in quotation marks is not an acceptable alternative. You must learn to construct your own sentences with information you find (and changing a couple of words in a sentence or reordering sentences in a paragraph are not enough). If you have any questions about what is considered plagiarism or wish advice on avoiding it, please contact your instructor.

### ***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

Waters Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu)

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

### ***A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health***

#### **Counseling Services Statement**

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](http://www.tamuc.edu/counsel)

#### **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.

#### ***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.

**FINAL NOTE:**

I make efforts to conserve resources (and cost) in providing materials for class. All materials provided in class are to be found at the D2L website. I will not provide hard-copy handouts of anything that you can access there- you may print what you need, when you need it; or just download a copy to have handy. Clearly computer access is assumed of all students. If you do not have one of your own (or your online access is limited), there are computer labs available all around campus- Waters Library most notably, and more locally Science building room 210. There are even kiosks for checking out a laptop. You may need to provide your own paper for printing, or pay a charge. Also, places like Staples and OfficeDepot will print materials for a reasonable fee if you bring your flash-drive. Last bit of advice: **Get a Calendar. Learn how to use it.** ☺