

BSc 511

Avian Biology



Female Northern Cardinal (*Cardinalis cardinalis*)
near Commerce, Texas

I. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Jeff Kopachena,
Dept. of Biological Sciences

Office Location: In the Cloud

Office hours: Online course – communicate via email

University Email: Jeff.Kopachena@tamuc.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: Email
DO NOT CALL ON THE PHONE!!



II. Course Information

A. Textbook Required:

Gill, Frank. B. 2007. *Ornithology*, Third Edition. W.H. Freeman and Company, NY, NY.

ISBN-13: 978-0-716749837.



B. *Course catalog description:*

This course looks at current research in the areas of avian evolution, systematics, foraging ecology, mate choice, mating systems, and reproductive behavior and ecology.

C. Course Material:

Ornithology is the study of birds. According to the International Ornithological Congress, there are over 10,000 described living species of birds that fall into 228 families in 40 orders. That put birds at a distant second place (bony fishes have 30,000 species) for the most diverse vertebrate class. Despite this, and because of their largely terrestrial, diurnal, and conspicuous nature, birds are very well studied and much of what we know about the behavior, ecology, and physiology of wild animals comes from research on birds.



American White Pelicans (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) at Whitemouth Falls, Manitoba, Canada



Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) at Galveston Island, Texas

With the enormous body of research on birds it is not possible to cover everything during even a long semester, let alone a short summer semester. Because of this, I have selected chapters out of the textbook that tend to highlight avian behavior and ecology. As a behavioral ecologist, I find these aspects of the avian world to be particularly interesting and I hope that you will feel the same way.



There is a lot of material to be covered and a lot of reading involved, so do not let yourself get behind in assigned reading materials. Tests must be taken on the assigned date and there will be no make-up tests. Likewise, all assignments must be turned in on the assigned date. There will be

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus forficatus*) near Hemmingway Slough, Red River Co., Texas

no tolerance of late assignments and there will be no extra credit assignments. For each chapter in the text, there will be a quiz and a chapter review. A description of these assignments is provided after the grading scheme below. The schedule for chapters, quizzes, and chapter reviews is shown in the table below and in the course calendar further down. Note that there is also a comprehensive final exam on the last day of classes.

D. Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will know how avian brains differ from those of mammals and reptiles
2. Students will be able to describe how avian sounds are made and what their functions are
3. Students will be able to identify major features in the annual cycles of birds
4. Students will know the underlying mechanisms involved in avian migration and orientation
5. Students will be able to identify the various forms and causal factors associated with avian social systems
6. Students will know the factors leading to mate choice in birds
7. Students will understand the causal factors associated with parental care in birds
8. Students will be able to identify areas of concern in avian conservation.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Minimal Technical Skills Needed

1. Must be able to use the learning management system (D2L)
2. Must be able to use MS-Word
3. Must be able to read and write the English language
4. Must be able to use a calendar and take tests on the appropriate date
5. Must be able to communicate via email and NOT CALL ON THE PHONE!

B. Instructional Methods

This is an ONLINE course. All of the content is delivered online. There are no class meetings.

Students are expected to read the relevant chapters in the textbook. For each chapter there is a chapter review and a test based on the material in the textbook. Make sure

you are familiar with the course schedule and make time to turn in your chapter reviews on time and take the tests when they are due. You are also required to review a scientific research article which also must be turned in on time.

C. Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

You must complete all of the tests and chapter reviews in a timely manner. Make sure you have the textbook prior to the start of class. When you are ready to take a test, make sure you have both the textbook and your chapter review available to refer to. Review the materials beforehand. Book-marking important sections of the textbook may also be very useful and help you look up answers more quickly. Detailed descriptions of the tests and assignments are provided below. You are responsible for being familiar with these instructions and in following them exactly as provided.



Greater Roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*), Big Bend National Park, Texas

Chapter Title	Review Due Date	Quiz Date
Chapter 7. Senses, Brains, and Intelligence	July 8	July 8 or 9
Chapter 8. Vocalizations	July 12	July 12 or 13
Chapter 9. The Annual Cycles of Birds	July 15	July 15 or 16
Chapter 10. Migration and Navigation	July 18	July 18 or 19
Chapter 11. Social Behavior	July 22	July 22 or 23
Chapter 12. Mates	July 26	July 26 or 27
Chapter 16. Parents and their Offspring	July 30	July 30 or 31
Chapter 21. Conservation	August 3	August 3 or 4
Final Exam		August 6
Article Review		August 5

Grading Scheme:

Item	Count	Value	Total
Chapter Reviews	8	4%	32%
Chapter Quizzes	8	4%	32%
Article Review	1	11%	11%
Final Exam	1	25%	25%
Total			100%



Male Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) at Sulphur Springs, Texas

Important note about Due Dates and Times:

Please make sure you keep close track of all due dates. You can turn in your reviews at any time up to and including the review due date. You cannot turn in the review after the due date. This will allow you to work ahead if you want. However, keep in mind that the whole purpose of writing the review is to help you study for the test, so if you work too far ahead you will probably defeat that purpose. Also, I will not grade any reviews until after the review due date.

All quizzes and tests are scheduled over two days. You can take the test on either of the two days that it is open. Please look at the schedule in the syllabus carefully. You will need to allow 30 minutes for the quizzes. You can only take the quiz once, so once you are done you are done.

PLEASE NOTE: All students are responsible for having secure and reliable internet service. Nonetheless, internet services can be unpredictable at times. For this reason, **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO TAKE QUIZZES OR TURN IN ASSIGNMENTS.** If you turn in an assignment or try to take a quiz after 11:00 PM, I will not re-open the assignment or quiz and you will lose points for that assignment or quiz.

D. Chapter Reviews

For each chapter you will write, in your own words, a summary of the content of that chapter. **Do not use any quotes. You will lose points for using quotes.**

Write everything out in the form of paragraphs: **Do not use point form. You will lose points for using point form.**

You must highlight the major points covered by the chapter and how these points are relevant to the topic of the chapter. Close each chapter review with a personal comment on what you thought about the material covered in the chapter. **You will lose points for failing to include a personal comment on the chapter at the end of your review.**

Your chapter reviews must be in **MS-Word format** and submitted by the due date indicated in the course D2L shell. **Reviews not in MS-Word format will receive a grade of zero.** Put your name on your review. Reviews must be written using Times New Roman, 12-point font, double spaced, no extra spaces between paragraphs, with 1” margins on all sides. Include a title page with your name and the title of the chapter you are reviewing. **You will lose points for not following this format.**



Male Black-chinned Hummingbird (Archilochus alexandri) at Pedernales Falls State Park, Texas

You need to write a 5-page review if you expect full points because even with 5 pages it is hard to cover the material comprehensively. Reviews longer than five pages will not be penalized. Having said that, excessive verbosity and padding will get you nowhere. If you wish to include figures and tables, do so by appending them to the back of the review. Figures and tables do not count toward the page limit. All chapter reviews must be submitted through D2L in **MS-Word Format. Do not submit pdf documents.**

Important Note: This course uses Turnitin plagiarism software. This software compares all course submissions (chapter reviews, article reviews, etc.) to all published and unpublished materials including the course textbook and other student papers. It calculates a percentage match to these materials. Any student whose assignment yields a 20% or higher match will get a zero for their assignment. In the case of a 20% or higher match among two or more students, all of the individuals involved will get a zero for their assignment.

Because of this:

1. Do not use direct quotes
2. Be extremely careful about sharing your assignments with **anyone** – yes, anyone. That includes friends, family members, co-workers, etc.
3. Do not use other sites that may already contain chapter reviews as a template. If you do, you will be penalized for plagiarism, because that is plagiarism.



White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*) near Commerce, Texas

E. Chapter Quizzes

Each chapter will be followed by a chapter quiz. The chapter quiz will consist of 10 multiple choice questions. Quizzes will cover all material in the chapter, including information in figures and tables. Quizzes will be timed, and students will have 30 minutes to complete the quiz. You will be expected to have full comprehension of the material. As a result, some questions will require that you apply concepts covered in the chapter to examples that are not specifically mentioned in the textbook.



Inca Doves (*Columbina inca*) in Sulphur Springs, Texas

Article Reviews

During the semester you will select a current peer-reviewed article related to the material covered in the textbook. You will write a review of this article. It is extremely important that you choose a peer-reviewed journal article. Review articles are acceptable, but again, must be professional reviews. To approach this assignment, flip through the textbook. Find a topic that interests you and look for recent articles (2014 or more recent) on that subject. Google scholar can be most

useful for this purpose. Once you have found an article, please let me know so that I can evaluate its suitability. **You need to do this early just in case you have to use an inter-library loan to get the article.**

Using your own words, describe the purpose of the article, the methods (if applicable), and the major findings. Describe the significance of the work to the field of study. In doing so, you also briefly review background articles related to the one you are reviewing. Make sure you cite these articles in your review. Include your opinion on the value of the article and its level of interest to you. Your review must be in **MS-Word format** and submitted by the due date. Reviews must be in Times New Roman, 12 point font, double spaced, no extra spaces between paragraphs, with 1" margins on all sides. Include a title page with your name and the title of the paper you are reviewing. **Your review should be no less than six pages and no more than 10 pages, not including the title page.** If you include figures and tables, append them to the back of the review. Figures and tables do not count toward the page limit. Reviews must be submitted through the Dropbox in eCollege



Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*) in Armstrong County, Texas

F. Final Exam

The final exam will be comprehensive. It will consist of 50 multiple choice questions and you will have 2 hours to complete it.

IV. Below is the course schedule in calendar format:

July

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
5	6	7	8 Chapter 7 Review and Quiz	9 Chapter 7 Quiz	10	11
12 Chapter 8 Review and Quiz	13 Chapter 8 Quiz	14	15 Chapter 9 Review and Quiz	16 Chapter 9 Quiz	17	18 Chapter 10 Review and Quiz
19 Chapter 10 Quiz	20	21	22 Chapter 11 Review and Quiz	23 Chapter 11 Quiz	24	25
26 Chapter 12 Review and Quiz	27 Chapter 12 Quiz	28	29	30 Chapter 16 Review and Quiz	31 Chapter 16 Quiz	

August

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 Chapter 21 Review and Quiz	4 Chapter 21 Quiz	5 Article Review	6 Final Exam	7	8

****Disclaimer: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule of the class. Any alterations will be announced in class, in eCollege or via email by the instructor. Students who do not attend class, check eCollege or their email assume responsibility for missing adjustments to the course.**

V. Obligatory Statements:

****Disclaimer:** The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule of the class. Any alterations will be announced in class, in D2L or via email by the instructor. Students who do not attend class, check D2L or their email assume responsibility for missing adjustments to the course.

VI. TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

A. *LMS*

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University 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

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

B. *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@etamu.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.

C. *COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT*

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

D. *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>

VII. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COURSE

A. *CWID AND PASSWORD*

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@etamu.edu.

B. *TECHNOLOGY-RELATED ISSUES*

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 ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

VIII. TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT

A. *MINIMAL TECHNICAL SKILLS NEEDED*

Students will need reliable computer and internet access for this course. Students must be able to effectively use myLeo email, myLeo Online D2L, and Microsoft Office.

B. *LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS) – D2L*

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

- View the [Learning Management System Requirements Webpage](#).
- Learn more on the [LMS Browser Support Webpage](#).

C. *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 on the [Brightspace Support Webpage](#).

IX. COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

A. *INTERACTION WITH INSTRUCTOR STATEMENT*

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your instructor. Correspondence will always be through university email (your “myLeo” mail) and announcements in myLeo online (D2L). You will not RECEIVE email through D2L, so be sure to check your ETAMU email for communication. Students are encouraged to check university email daily.

B. *INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING IN EMAILS WITH INSTRUCTOR:*

- Course name and subject in the subject line
 - Salutation (Good afternoon, Dr. Jackson)
 - Proper email etiquette (no “text” emails – use proper grammar and punctuation)
 - Student name and CWID after the body of the email (possibly add to student signature on email)
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X. COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

A. *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.

B. *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 online in the [Student Guidebook](#).

Students should also consult the [Rules of Netiquette Webpage](#) for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum.

C. *ETAMU ATTENDANCE*

For more information about the attendance policy, please view the [Attendance Webpage](#) and the [Class Attendance Policy](#)

D. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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

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

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

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

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

E. USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

East Texas A&M University 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

F. 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

East Texas A&M University

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

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

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

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

G. NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE

East Texas A&M University 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.

H. CAMPUS CONCEALED CARRY STATEMENT

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University 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 ETAMU 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.

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

I. EAST TEXAS A&M SUPPORTS STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH – COUNSELING SERVICES

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, 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

J. MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code or go to https://studentsupport.telushealth.com/us/about#download_app to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.



As an Institutional Member of the National Association of Schools of Music, East Texas State A&M University supports the Association's commitment to student health and wellness. The following web address provides links to information for resources related to physical and mental well-being, as well as assists in offering preventative measures that students can take to avoid serious and/or chronic conditions: [Musician Health and Safety - East Texas A&M University](#)

K. DEPARTMENT AND ACCREDITING AGENCY STATEMENT:

School of Music Mission Statement:

The School of Music at East Texas A&M University promotes excellence in music through the rigorous study of music history, literature, theory, composition, pedagogy, and the preparation of music performance in applied study and ensembles to meet the highest standards of aesthetic expression.