

This syllabus contains important information that you will need to know to successfully pass this course. Please read it carefully, thoroughly, AND make reference to it throughout the semester.

Before emailing me with a question, please check this syllabus to see if the answer is contained here, within the syllabus.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE ABOUT TAKING THIS ONLINE COURSE:

1. This online course will meet asynchronously, meaning that you can work at your own pace (to a degree; don't get behind in your studies!) We will not meet at designated times. There are still due dates for tests and assignments.
2. I have organized the course by week and provided a schedule when tests and lab practicals will occur. Other assignments will be announced on Blazeview using the Announcements tool feature.
3. **MAKE SURE TO FREQUENTLY CHECK ANNOUNCEMENTS ON BLAZEVIEW FOR REMINDERS AND OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION AS I UPDATE MATERIALS.**
4. In order for you to be successful in this course you must have reliable Internet access, be motivated, organized, and stay on top of your assignments and studying.

The course syllabus and schedule provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.

BIOL 3920 Herpetology Online

Summer Semester 2020

Biology Department, College of Science and Math
Valdosta State University

Instructor: Dr. Adam Safer

Office: BSC 1211

Office Hours: PLEASE EMAIL ME WITH QUESTIONS. I CAN'T HELP IF YOU DON'T ASK.

Phone: 229.333.6001 (*please email first*)

E-mail: absafer@valdosta.edu

Email is my preferred method of communication. Please allow 12 hours for me to respond.

Lectures: Online (asynchronous) **VIA BLAZEVIEW**

Labs: Online (asynchronous) **VIA BLAZEVIEW**

Recommended Text: Herpetology: An Introductory Biology of Amphibians and Reptiles. 4th Edition. By L.J. Vitt, and J. P. Caldwell (2014, Academic Press).

While the text is not required, it is an outstanding resource for the course. I highly recommend that you purchase the text. The text can be purchased at the link below.

You may have to cut and paste the address into your browser.

<https://www.elsevier.com/books/herpetology/9780123869197>

Lab Manual: We will be using the following link and other online resources that I provide throughout the semester for lab resources. The link below takes you to UGA's Savannah River Ecology Lab page for herpetology. There you will find links to identifying the species of reptiles and amphibians native to Georgia.

You may have to cut and paste the address into your browser.

<https://srelherp.uga.edu/>

Course Description: BIOL 3920. Herpetology. 4 Hours. Prerequisites: [BIOL 1107](#), [1107L](#), [BIOL 1108](#), and 1108L. Introduction to the study of amphibians and reptiles, including anatomy, physiology, ecology, behavior, and classification coordinated with field study of local species.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand taxonomic methods and apply these methods to the understanding of the evolutionary history and relationships of reptiles and amphibians.
2. Learn the form and function of the major reptile and amphibian groups and how to distinguish between these groups.
3. Understand the adaptations (i.e. anatomy and physiology) allowing reptiles and amphibians to successfully occupy various environments.
4. Appreciate the techniques used to study, observe, and collect reptiles and amphibians.
5. Become familiar with the basic features of reptile and amphibian taxa. Use these features to specifically identify selected species native to Georgia.

Attendance: Because this is an online asynchronous course there is not an attendance policy. However, there are deadlines for assignments and assessments.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism and cheating are considered forms of dishonesty and are violations of the university's policy on academic honesty. If you are caught plagiarizing or cheating you will receive a "0" for that test or assignment. As a result, academic and disciplinary, action may be taken. Please take time to familiarize yourself with the academic honesty policy here at VSU. For more information visit <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/academic-honesty-at-vsu.php>

Disruptive Behavior: Please refer to the Student Code of Conduct at <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-conduct-office/student-handbook.php>

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who are experiencing barriers in this course may contact the Access Office for assistance in determining and implementing reasonable accommodations. The access Office is located in Farbar Hall. The phone numbers are 229-245-2498 (V), 229-375-5871. For more information, please visit [VSU's Access Office](#) or email: access@valdosta.edu.

Title IX Statement: Valdosta State University (VSU) is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive work and learning environment free from discrimination and harassment. VSU is dedicated to creating an environment where all campus community members feel valued, respected, and included. Valdosta State University prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex (including sexual harassment and sexual violence), sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status, in the University's programs and activities as required by applicable laws and regulations such as Title IX. The individual designated with responsibility for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries concerning nondiscrimination policies is the University's Title IX Coordinator: the Director of the Office of Social Equity, titleix@valdosta.edu, 1208 N. Patterson St., Valdosta State University, Valdosta, Georgia 31698, 229-333-5463.

Extra Help with Coursework The Academic Support Center (ASC): The Academic Support Center (ASC) provides free peer tutoring in core curriculum courses, including, math, writing, sciences, social sciences, humanities, and foreign languages. The ASC also provides supplemental instruction (tutor-led study group sessions) for historically difficult courses like biology, chemistry, geosciences, psychology and sociology, as well as academic success workshops. New for fall 2018: 24/7 access to online tutoring through ThinkingStorm, which includes Writing Center where you can submit drafts for feedback and get help with core courses when the ASC is closed. Visit the ASC office on the main campus, located on the 2nd floor of Odum Library, or call 229-333-7570 for an appointment, or visit the website where you can make appointment for yourself (www.valdosta.edu/asc).

SOI Statement: At the end of the term, all students will be expected to complete an online Student Opinion of Instruction survey (SOI) that will be available through SmartEvals. Students will receive an email notification through their VSU email address when the SOI is available (generally at least one week before the end of the term). SOI responses are anonymous to instructors/administrators, and they will be able to access results only after they have submitted final grades. Before final grade submission, instructors will not be able to see any responses, but they can see the percentage of students who have or have not completed their SOIs. While instructors will not be able to see student names, an automated system will send a reminder email to those who have yet to complete their SOIs. Students who withdraw or drop a course will also be sent invitations to complete the Dropped Course Survey. Complete information about the SOIs, including how to access the survey, is available on the [SOI Procedures webpage](#).

GRADING SCHEME

ALL WORK WILL BE COMPLETED THROUGH BLAZEVIEW

Grades will be based on the following:

Exams

800 points

There will be 4 online exams covering lecture material during the semester worth 200 points each, totaling 800 points.

Exams may include multiple choice, short answer, true-false, matching or essay questions.

There are no make-up exams.

Quizzes and other assignments

50 points (maximum)

Throughout the semester there will be quizzes and other assignments. Quizzes and assignments may cover lab or lecture materials.

There are no make-up quizzes and assignments.

Laboratory

150 points

There will be 2 lab practicals worth 75 points each, totaling 150 points.

Practicals may include multiple choice, short answer, true-false, matching or essay questions. The primary focus of lab practicals will be species identification.

There are no makeup lab practicals.

Total Points for the course 1000

Final Grades

- A 900 and higher (90% - 100%)
- B 800-899 points (80% - 89%)
- C 700-799 points (70% - 79%)
- D 600-699 points (60% - 69%)
- F Below 599 points (below 60%)

Please note: according to federal law an individual's grades will not be released to anyone but that individual. Furthermore, I will not discuss grades over the phone or email. For more information refer to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974.

BIOL 3920 Herpetology Summer Online 2020 Course Schedule

| <u>Week of</u> | <u>Lecture Topic(s)</u> | <u>Lab Topics</u> |
|----------------|---|--|
| 10-Jun | Lecture 1 Intro and Lecture 2 Evolution and Taxonomy Overview | |
| 15-Jun | Lecture 3 Amphibian Evolution and Characteristics; Life in Cold Blood (LICB): Land Invaders | Intro/SREL site |
| 22-Jun | Lecture 4 Amphibian Diversity and Classification | GA Amphibians/Virtual Fieldtrips Set 1 |
| 29-Jun | Lecture 5 Amphibian Anatomy and Physiology (A&P) | GA Amphibians/Virtual Fieldtrips Set 1 |
| 6-Jul | Lecture 6 Reptile Evolution and Characteristics | GA Reptiles/Virtual Fieldtrips Set 2 |
| 13-Jul | Lectures 7 & 8: Diversity and Classification of Turtles; Crocodylians; LICB: Armoured Giants | GA Reptiles/Virtual Fieldtrips Set 2 |
| 20-Jul | Lectures 9 & 10: Diversity of Tuataras and Squamates; Reptile A&P; LICB: Sophisticated Serpents | Study for last lab practical |
| 27-Jul | Lecture 10 Reptile Anatomy and Physiology (A&P) | |

Test Dates

23-Jun: Test 1 (Lectures 1-3; LICB: Land Invaders)

7-Jul: Test 2 (Lectures 4-5)

20-Jul: Test 3 (Lectures 6-8; LICB: Armoured Giants)

30-Jul: Test 4 (Lectures 9-10; LICB: Sophisticated Serpents)

Lab Practical Dates

10-Jul: Lab Practical 1 (GA Amphibians and Virtual Fieldtrips Set 1)

24-Jul: Lab Practical 2 (GA Reptiles and Virtual Fieldtrips Set 2)

Quiz and Other Assignment Dates

TBA. Make sure to check Blazeview frequently!

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