

Winter 2020 Term: 201902 (January – April 2020)

AMENDMENT TO EXISTING SYLLABUS FOR BIOL 225 Introduction to Ornithology

Date Revision Shared with Students: 1 April 2020

The winter 2020 term at Yukon College was disrupted by an unprecedented global health crisis. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic. Accordingly, Yukon College courses for the Winter 2020 term have moved to remote delivery. Subsequently, a decision was made to adjust the grading scheme for the Winter 2020 term.

The changes were put in place to ensure equity among students, preserve academic integrity in extraordinary circumstances, and to manage the issues presented by an uncertain future, including the impact on our students and human resources.

To ensure clarity for students, all Winter 2020 course outlines are to be updated using this amendment template and shared with students.

Course Code: BIOL 225

Course Title: Introduction to Ornithology

Instructor Name: Dr. Kathryn Aitken

Instructor Contact Information: kaitken@yukoncollege.yk.ca; 867-668-8866

Revised course assessment plan:

Field notebook 15%

Bird walk 5%

Species account 20%

Midterm exam 30%

Final exam 30%

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- If students require alterations in their approved accommodations, please contact the Learning Assistance Centre
- The changes with respect to the mode of delivery of instruction and assessment, and the changes to grading regulations do not constitute grounds for an appeal.



UNIVERSITY OF
ALBERTA



BIOL 225

INTRODUCTION TO ORNITHOLOGY – REVISED, APRIL 2020

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Kathryn Aitken
Instructor, School of Science, Yukon College
Adjunct Professor, Dept. of Renewable Resources, Univ. of Alberta

OFFICE HOURS: Mon./Weds., 10:30-12:00 (or by appointment)

OFFICE LOCATION: A2509

E-MAIL: kaitken@yukoncollege.yk.ca

CLASS DAYS & TIMES: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00-2:30pm

CLASS LOCATION: A2202 (and some Thursdays in the Biology lab A2805)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides a practical introduction to the subject of ornithology, the biology of birds. Students will learn about 1) the evolution of birds and the incredible array of avian morphological, physiological, and behavioural adaptations, 2) current research and issues in avian ecology and conservation, 3) methods used by researchers in the field of avian biology, and 4) identification of birds by sight and sound, with an emphasis on species found in the Yukon.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND COMPETENCIES:

On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Explain the behavioural, morphological, and physiological characteristics that distinguish the Class Aves from other animal taxa.
- 2) Identify and understand general themes in avian ecology and the conservation issues affecting Yukon and other northern bird species.
- 3) Identify 67 Yukon bird species by sight and/or sound and know the distinguishing characteristics of 11 bird orders and 25 bird families.

COURSE FORMAT (3-0-0):

The course consists of two 1.5-hour lectures per week. Class sessions will include a mixture of: 1) lectures covering general theoretical topics in avian biology and practical skills related to avian research, and 2) lab-based activity sessions in which students will examine study skins and specimens that illustrate points from the lectures. Lab sessions will be held in the Biology lab (A2805).

COURSE PREREQUISITES AND/OR CO-REQUISITES:

Successful completion of BIOL 101 and 102, or equivalent, or permission of the instructor.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS/MATERIALS:

1) The only required text for the course is a field guide of your choice containing birds found in western Canada. Local bookstores should have a good selection of bird guides in stock or available to order, or you can order one online (e.g. Chapters.ca, Amazon.ca, Wild Birds Unlimited).

An excellent choice for the Yukon is:

National Geographic Society. 2017. Field Guide to Birds of North America – 7th Edition. National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C. ISBN-13: 978-1426218354

Other good options are:

Sibley, David. A. 2016. The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America, 2nd ed. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. ISBN-13: 978-0307957924

Peterson, Roger Tory. 2010. Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Western North America, 4th Edition. Houghton Mifflin, New York. ISBN-13: 978-0547152707

2) Not required but good resources if you plan to continue in ornithology/wildlife biology/zoology/ecology:

Cornell Lab of Ornithology. 2016. Handbook of Bird Biology, 3rd edition. Lovette IJ, Fitzpatrick JW, editors. Wiley-Blackwell. ISBN-13: 978-1118291054

Gill, Frank B. 2007. Ornithology 3rd edition. W.H. Freeman and Company, New York. ISBN-13: 978-0716749837. There will be copies of Gill on reserve in the library, and for purchase in the YC bookstore. Note that there is a 4th edition of this textbook due out in spring 2019.

3) The most important piece of equipment for studying birds in the wild is a pair of binoculars. Students will need a pair of binoculars for field trips, and for conducting their research project (if applicable). I recommend 7x35 or 8x42 (the first number refers to the magnification, while the second number refers to the width of the outer lens). Avoid binoculars with less than 7x or more than 10x magnification; also avoid auto-focus binoculars. If you're unsure what to buy, you can wait until the first week of class and talk to the instructor.

4) Students will require a field notebook in which to keep notes on field observations, data for their research project, etc. I recommend a 3x5, 4x6, or 5x7 ruled notebook; a particularly good choice is a "Rite-in-the-Rain" brand notebook with waterproof paper.

COURSE WEBSITE

Much of the material for the course will be available on the BIOL 225/REN R 401B class site on YC's Moodle system (yukoncollege.me). Lectures, announcements, additional reading, and other material will be available there for download or viewing. Students must ensure that they have a valid Yukon College student computing account. Information on setting up a YC computing account is available at:

http://www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/student_info/pages/computing_services.

YUKON COLLEGE ACADEMIC AND STUDENT CONDUCT

Information on academic standing and student rights and responsibilities can be found in the current Academic Regulations that are posted on the Student Services/ Admissions & Registration web page.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Plagiarism occurs when students present the words of someone else as their own. Plagiarism can be the deliberate use of a whole piece of another person's writing, but more frequently it occurs when students fail to acknowledge and document sources from which they have taken material. Whenever the words, research or ideas of others are directly quoted or paraphrased, they must be documented according to an accepted manuscript style (e.g., APA, CSE, MLA, etc.). Resubmitting a paper which has previously received credit is also considered plagiarism. Students who plagiarize material for assignments will receive a mark of zero (F) on the assignment and may fail the course. Plagiarism may also result in dismissal from a program of study or the College.

PROFESSIONALISM AND CLASSROOM RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

Students are expected to attend all lectures and labs, be engaged and courteous in all course activities, and to be on time for class. Please do not use cell phones during class. Laptops are permitted for note taking and in-class work; however, please do not use laptops in class for non-class-related activities. While in computer labs, students are expected to refrain from using the computers to engage in non-class-related activities (e.g. Facebook, etc.).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/EVALUATION:

Attendance and Participation

~~There will be two Saturday or Sunday field trips to local birding "hot spots", and one bird walk at the Yukon College campus. Attendance is required on AT LEAST one of these. These will occur between late February and early April (exact dates will be determined in consultation with students in class). Weekend bird walks will last 1.5-2 hours and will occur mid-day or early afternoon. The campus bird walk will be during class time on April 7.~~ REVISION, APR 2020 – one class bird walk was held in February 2020. Students who did not attend the Feb bird walk fulfilled this requirement by completing a solo bird walk in March or April 2020 and reporting the location, date, time, and observations to the instructor.

Assignments

Assignments will focus on the development of skills used in avian research, including conducting basic data analyses and summaries, and scientific communication. Students will complete a field notebook, and a writing project (species account – details below). Unless otherwise specified, assignments are due by 11:59 pm PST on the date that they are due. Late assignments will lose 5% of their mark per day that they are late.

FIELD NOTEBOOK. Throughout the term, students will keep a neat, detailed field journal, containing data and observations from class birding trips, from independent birding walks/outdoor trips, and from their research project (if applicable). The notebook should contain entries for every day the student makes bird observations, with at least two per week. Each entry must include: date, location, observer(s) (if anyone else was present), start and finish times, weather, species list with approximate numbers for each species seen, data for your research project (if applicable), and any additional notes (comments on habitat, behaviour, drawings, etc.). You may also include incidental bird sightings (e.g. while driving, or doing other non-birding activities).

Organization and legibility count! Details of field notebook organization and content will be discussed in class and on the course website. ~~Field notebooks will be checked three times throughout the term~~ REVISION, APR 2020: Field notebooks were checked twice during the term (Feb. 4, Mar. 3).

SPECIES ACCOUNT. Students taking will write an original 3-5 page species account detailing the life history of a Yukon bird species. Details of the content for the species accounts will be handed out in class. Species account papers will be due on APRIL 14.

Exams

There will be one midterm exam and one final exam. The midterm will be scheduled during class time on Feb. 18. The final examination will be held at the end of term, during the scheduled College exam period. It will cover material from the entire course, but there will be an emphasis on material covered after the midterm. Exams will cover both lecture and lab material.

Evaluation

The course grade will be determined as follows:

Assignment	Percent
Field notebook	15%
Participation in ≥ 1 field trip	5%
Species account paper (due Apr 14)	20%
Midterm exam (in class Feb 18)	30%
Final exam (during exam period)	30%

Assignment of grades

The total numerical score will be converted to a grade on Yukon College's letter grading system.

YUKON FIRST NATIONS CORE COMPETENCY

Yukon College recognizes that a greater understanding and awareness of Yukon First Nations history, culture and journey towards self-determination will help to build positive relationships among all Yukon citizens. As a result, to graduate from ANY Yukon College program, you will be required to achieve core competency in knowledge of Yukon First Nations. For details, please see www.yukoncollege.yk.ca/yfnccr.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

Reasonable accommodations are available for students requiring an academic accommodation to fully participate in this class. These accommodations are available for students with a documented disability, chronic condition or any other grounds specified in section 8.0 of the Yukon College Academic Regulations (available on the Yukon College website). It is the student's responsibility to seek these accommodations. If a student requires an academic accommodation, he/she should contact the Learning Assistance Centre (LAC): lac@yukoncollege.yk.ca.

EQUIVALENCY/TRANSFERABILITY:

For information on transferability of BIOL 225, see <http://www.bctransferguide.ca> or contact the Yukon College School of Science.

TOPICS:

- Introduction to Class Aves
- Orders and Families of birds
- Introduction to bird identification (sight and sound), and bird survey techniques
- Origin of birds
- Feathers and flight
- Life in the North
- Avian physiology (respiration, circulation, feeding, and digestion)
- Senses, brains, and intelligence
- Vocalization
- Social and foraging behaviour
- Mate choice and breeding systems
- Reproduction (bird sex; nests and incubation; parents and their offspring)
- Populations and Communities
- Avian conservation issues in the North and elsewhere