Course Syllabus

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Brian C. Ring

Valdosta State University

Phone Number: (229) 249-4841

Email: bcring@valdosta.edu

Office hours:
Monday & Wednesday, 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

During office hours, you can reach me by phone or via the virtual office link.

Response Time: Unless you are notified otherwise, I will work to respond to all student questions and emails within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours during the weekend.

Course Information

Course Name. Biodiversity Lab

Course Number. BIOL 1020L

Section. P01

CRN. 26235

Description. This course cannot be taken for credit toward the major in biology. A laboratory course to accompany Biology 1010, emphasizing the diversity of life.

Prerequisites. None

Corequisite. BIOL 1010

BIOL 1020L - BIODIVERSITY LAB

This is a Core IMPACTS course is part of the STEM area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad **Orienting Question:**

- How do I ask scientific questions or use data, mathematics, or technology to understand the universe?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following **Learning Outcome**:

- Students will use the scientific method and laboratory procedures or mathematical and computational methods to analyze data, solve problems, and explain natural phenomena.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following **Career-Ready Competencies**:

- Inquiry and Analysis

- Problem-Solving

- Teamwork

Course Outcomes

At the end of this course, you will be able to

1. Demonstrate understanding of the physical universe and the nature of science.

2. Use scientific methods and concepts to solve problems.

3. Explain the process and principles of evolution.

4. Describe distinguishing characteristics and group organisms using taxonomic classification.

5. Explain the relationship and interdependencies between evolution, ecosystems, and biodiversity.

See the **Activities and Assessments** section below for how these course outcomes (COs) are addressed.

Textbook and Materials

Virtual Materials Information. This course features virtual labs through Labster.

More information about accessing course materials is provided in the Course Materials module.

SmartPath Core Accessibility Statement

Valdosta State University is committed to creating an equitable learning experience for all students. In these efforts, we have designed this course using inclusive principles that will address diverse learning needs and empower all students.

If at any point during this course you experience issues in accessing learning materials or activities due to the format of the course, please reach out to your instructor to work together to find reasonable alternatives.

If you are a student with a physical or learning disability, you are encouraged to reach out to the Access Office for assistance with course accommodations. The phone numbers are 229-245-2498 (Voice) and 229-375-5871 (Video).

Module Breakdown

The following modules are required for successful completion of the course:

- Start Here

- Module 1: Evolution and the Properties of Life

- Module 2: Evolution and Speciation

- Module 3: Evolution and Classification

- Module 4: Microbial Diversity

- Module 5: Plants and Animals

- Module 6: Biomes and Population

- Module 7: Ecosystems and Biodiversity

The Blazer Creed

Valdosta State University is a learning environment based on trust and mutual respect and is committed to the core values of community. Blazers strive to uphold these core values and practice civility, integrity, and citizenship for the advancement of the University.

As members of this community, you pledge to uphold these core principles outlined in the Blazer Creed.

Attendance, Participation, and Time Commitment

Course Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular attendance and participation are **essential** for success in class. You will be expected to log in to this course regularly, to complete and submit assignments, to participate in ongoing discussions of the module topics, and to interact with other students and your instructor regularly. Be sure to read and observe the following expectations:

- Submit work on time.

- Keep your instructor informed of your status.

- Review your instructor's feedback carefully and learn from it.

In the online environment, problems associated with power outages, networks being down, and ISP troubles inevitably result in legitimate reasons for delays; however, you should still be prepared to deliver your work by the stated deadlines. If you have a problem, let your instructor know as soon as possible. Students who turn in late work may be subject to penalties.

Time Commitment

Taking an online course is not easier or faster. On the contrary, it will take as much time as taking a face-to-face class or more. If you normally go to class 6 hours per week per course, you will need to devote that same amount of time to your online course. In addition to online time, you should spend time studying and working with course materials several hours per week offline. It will be helpful to set aside regular study time when you can work uninterrupted. Offline time could be spent in composing messages to post online, reading, studying, and working homework problems.

The amount of time it will take you to complete the work for the course will depend on many factors, which will vary with each individual. Students should expect to spend anywhere from 8-15 hours per week on this course. Consult the Course Schedule and your instructor to be sure you are on schedule, keeping up with the material and completing work on time.

As a general rule, in this course you will be expected to:

- Log in regularly to check messages from your instructor and other students.

- Read all communication from your instructor.

- Study, read online materials, and complete all assessments in each module.

Conduct

You are expected to refrain from profanity, crudeness, and slurs of any kind. In other words, you are expected to behave and treat your fellow students and instructor fairly, just as you would in the traditional classroom.

Proper conduct applies to all forms of communication in the course. Just as you would listen to others speak in the classroom, you are expected to read and respond politely and thoughtfully to others in the online course. You should demonstrate good netiquette (online conduct) by observing the following procedures:

- Practice manners and civility, and be polite and respectful of your instructor and classmates in all your communication.

- Use correct grammar and punctuation in all your communication ('Dear Professor xxx' not 'Hey').

- Capitalize words only to highlight an important point or to distinguish a title or heading. Capitalizing whole words that are not titles is generally termed as SHOUTING!

- Cite all quotes, references and sources and respect copyright and license agreements.

Due Dates and Late Policy

All work in this course is due according to the dates on the Course Schedule.

Make-Up Work: Make up work or alternative assignments will be determined by the instructor and at the sole discretion of the instructor. These assignments may or may not exactly duplicate the original and will not entitle other students to the same alternatives since they may not have experienced the same situations.

Grading and Standards

Grade Distribution

GRADED ACTIVITY	POINTS
Virtual Lab Simulations (14 @ 100 points)	1400
TOTAL	**1400 POINTS**
Syllabus Quiz	2.5 bonus points
Introduction Discussion	2.5 bonus points

Graded Activities and Contribution to Final Grade

Activities and Assessments

Expand each section of the accordion below to learn more about how you will be graded in this course.

> **Virtual Lab Simulations: 1400 Points**

- **Simulation 1: Evolution: Founding theories and principles (CO 1-5)**

- **Simulation 2: Evolution: Generations of an allele (CO 1-3, 5)**

- **Simulation 3: Evolution: Identifying a deep sea creature (CO 1-4)**

- **Simulation 4: Evolution: Journeys of the canids (CO 1-3, 5)**

- **Simulation 5: Evolution: Are you related to a sea monster (CO 1-5)**

- **Simulation 6: Evolution: Taxonomic tree of life (CO 1-4)**

- **Simulation 7: Biodiversity: Asses and compare diversity on an exoplanet (CO 1, 2, 4, 5)**

- **Simulation 8: Building Gram Positive and Gram Negative Cell Walls (CO 1, 2, 4)**

- **Simulation 9: Food Webs: Learn about interactions between trophic levels (CO 1, 2, 4, 5)**

- **Simulation 10: Competition: Learn to identify and quantify competition between species (CO 1, 2, 4, 5)**

- **Simulation 11: Biomes: Identify and create the main biomes on Earth (CO 1, 2, 5)**

- **Simulation 12: Population Growth: Let's catch some goslins! (CO 1, 2, 4, 5)**

- **Simulation 13: Spatial Ecology: Learn how the environment can influence the distribution of species (CO 1, 2, 4, 5)**

- **Simulation 14: Trophic Levels: Grazer vs. predator (CO 1, 2, 4, 5)**

  You will conduct exercises and experiments in a simulated laboratory environment. As you proceed through each exercise, you will be scored on background information, results, and methods by ongoing quizzing during the exercises. At the end of an exercise, your quiz answers are compiled and scored for an overall percentage grade. You may complete a lab as many times as necessary. The best attempt will be counted for your final grade. You will be given the necessary background information and theory in a reference section within each simulation.

  Grading Standard: 100 points each

> **Syllabus Quiz: 2.5 Bonus Points**

- **Syllabus Quiz**

  The purpose of this quiz is to test your knowledge of the syllabus in this course. Completion of this quiz is required for attendance verification.

  Grading Standard: 2.5 bonus points

> **Introduction Discussion: 2.5 Bonus Points**

- **Introduction Discussion**

  The purpose of this discussion is to initiate interaction with your peers.

  Grading Standard: 2.5 bonus points, scored according to the Introduction Discussion Rubric.

Grade Scale

Grades are based on student performance and capability. Simply turning in all the assignments does not guarantee that the student will receive a "good grade." To receive a higher grade, a student must demonstrate proficiency in the material. For different students, gaining that proficiency requires different levels of work, because not all students walk into the class with the same aptitude for the course content. The standards for the respective grades are as follows:

A: 1260-1400 points
B: 1120-1259 points
C: 980-1119 points
D: 840-979 points
F: 0-839 points

All assignments and assessments will be graded within one week's time. The instructor will provide comments along with grade as necessary for feedback.

Policies

Student Accommodations

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 University Center Room 4136 Entrance 5. 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. To request reasonable accommodations for pregnancy and childbirth, contact Ms. Myia Miller, Title IX Compliance Officer, at maburden@valdosta.edu. Please note, you will be required to provide documentation from an appropriately licensed medical professional indicating the requested accommodations are medically necessary.

Nondiscrimination and Title IX Statement

Valdosta State University (VSU) upholds all applicable laws and policies regarding discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex (including sexual harassment and pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, religion, age, veteran status, political affiliation, or disability. The University prohibits specific forms of behavior that violate Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities that receive federal funding. VSU considers sex discrimination in any form to be a serious offense. Title IX refers to all forms of sex discrimination committed against others, including but not limited to: sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, and sexual violence by other employees, students or third parties and gender inequity or unfair treatment based on an individual's sex/gender. To view the full policy or to report an incident, visit the webpage Title IX: Sex-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct. You may also contact the designated Title IX Coordinator, Selenseia Holmes.

FERPA

The Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) grants students certain information privacy rights. See the registrar's explanation of Student Rights to Educational Records and Privacy (FERPA).

Academic Integrity

As members of the academic community, VSU students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the Academic Honesty Policy as set forth in the Student Code of Conduct. All students are expected to do their own work and to uphold a high standard of academic ethics.

What comprises academic dishonesty?

- **Plagiarism** - Always cite your sources. Plagiarism is using other people's writing or ideas without giving credit. This includes paraphrasing material without citing the source and submission of assignments completed by someone else. Content generated by an Artificial Intelligence third-party service or site (AI-generated content) without proper citation is another form of plagiarism. If you are unsure about whether something may be plagiarism or another form of academic dishonesty, please reach out to your instructor as soon as possible.

- **Cheating on Exams** - Utilize only authorized materials during exams. Additionally, sharing information with other students before or after an exam is also considered cheating.

- **Unauthorized Collaboration** - Work individually on assignments unless your professor approves group work.

- **Falsification** - It is a violation of academic honesty to misrepresent material or fabricate information in an academic exercise, assignment or proceeding. Additionally, it is a violation of the Academic Honesty policy for authorized users to knowingly share passwords, PINs, or any other means of access to their BlazeVIEW courses with unauthorized persons or for the purpose of dishonorable or unethical conduct related to their academic work.

- **Multiple Submissions** - Only submit work for which you have not previously received credit. This includes using assignments completed in prior courses.

- **Unauthorized Use or Distribution of ANY VSU Course Material is Expressly Prohibited** - Materials in this course are presented to students in an educational context for their personal use and study only. Unauthorized distribution of copyrighted material occurs when a student shares, reproduces, publishes, or sells copyrighted material, in print or digital formats, without express written permission of the copyright owner. This includes sharing any information about VSU courses with websites or any other third party. *Additionally, copying or buying copyrighted materials is prohibited.*

- **"Tutoring" Services** - If a "tutoring" service provides solutions to course assignments, this is considered cheating. Legitimate tutoring services will never directly give answers to course assignments.

Violation of the Academic Honesty Policy can result in failure of the assignment, failure of the course, and/or further consequences from VSU. Ignorance of this policy is not an excuse or a means to repeal a charge of academic dishonesty.

Respondus Use Statement

VSU courses may require Respondus LockDown Browser *or* Respondus LockDown Browser with Monitor for secure online testing. Respondus LockDown Browser secures exams through a custom browser that locks down the testing environment. Respondus Monitor adds virtual proctoring which requires the use of a webcam and microphone. The webcam can be built into your computer or externally attached through a USB cable.

Watch the brief video Introduction to Respondus LockDown Browser for Students for an introductory understanding of LockDown Browser and Respondus Monitor. A Quick Start Guide for Students is also available. For more information about system requirements and troubleshooting Respondus, please review the Respondus section of the Course Technology Information webpage.

Turnitin Use Statement

By taking this course, you agree that required course work may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin, a tool within a BlazeVIEW Assignment. For more information on the use of Turnitin at VSU, see Turnitin for Students.

Course work documents may include but are not limited to papers, blog postings, journal entries, presentations, discussion postings, emails, or any other written work, in electronic or hardcopy, submitted in the format and on the schedule required by the course instructor.

Identify a Turnitin assignment

- Turnitin is completely integrated with the BlazeVIEW Assignment tool and may be turned on by the course instructor.

- Submission to Turnitin is done automatically when you submit to a corresponding assignment.

- Assignments using Turnitin will be marked with an icon and would read "Plagiarism Detection enabled" through a screen reader.

- For instructions on how to use Turnitin, visit the Turnitin Guidance website.

Student Opinion of Instruction

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.

Technology Requirements and Policies

> ❯   Course Technology Information

The Center for eLearning supports VSU students and faculty with technology-enhanced courses.

Visit the Course Technology Information webpage to find minimum technological requirements, privacy policies, accessibility statements, and support links for BlazeVIEW and its embedded educational technologies.

› Digital Skills Requirements

At minimum, students are expected to be proficient in the use of:

- Computer, laptop or other digital devices

- Library and electronic databases

- Electronic communications/email

To be successful in this course, students must be able to:

- Access websites on the Internet, including MyVSU and BlazeVIEW

- Send and read email with attachments

- Create, save, and upload files

- Use Microsoft Office applications and open PDF documents

- Access digital course materials including electronic textbooks (if applicable)

- Download and install software

- Use apps in digital devices

- Use web conferencing tools and software

› VSU eLearning Related Policies

- [Information Resources Acceptable Use Policy](#)

- [Scholarly Misconduct](#)

- [Sexual Misconduct and Title IX](#)

- [Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)](#)

- [Student Code of Conduct](#)

- [Student Rights to Educational Records and Privacy (FERPA)](#)

- [Security of Student Information (Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act)](#)

Helpful Links

I need:	I should:
Course and Exam Accommodations	Visit the [Access Office](#) webpage.
Technical Support	Visit the [IT Help Desk](#) webpage.

I need:	I should:
To Report a Course Error	Email blazeview@valdosta.edu and describe the error.
To Make a Title IX Student Complaint	Visit the Employee Matters webpage.
To Express a Concern about a Course or Instructor	First discuss any concerns with your instructor. If the concern is not resolved, contact the instructor's department head.
To Make a Grade Appeal	Visit the Academic Affairs webpage.
To Drop a Course	Follow the steps for Adding or Dropping a Course.
To Withdraw from a Course	Find the Withdrawal Policy and process that applies to your situation.
To Understand the VSU Academic Honesty Policy	Read the Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures webpage.
To Know the Campus Carry/HB 280 Policy	Read Additional Information Regarding House Bill 280 by the University System of Georgia.
Center for eLearning Frequently Asked Questions	

Helpful Links

SmartPath **Core**

accelerating your success