

# **BIOL 6350**

## **Plant Physiological Ecology**

### **Spring 2019**

## **1 Course Description**

Students in this course will learn the fundamentals of plant physiology through an ecological lens. The course will focus on plant responses to environmental conditions across multiple spatial and temporal scales. The course will cover plant, water, carbon, and nutrient relations in natural and managed systems across multiple ecological scales. Students will be evaluated on their ability to discuss and disseminate ecophysiological topics.

### **1.1 Class Time and Location**

Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30-10:50

Biology Building Room 102/103

### **1.2 Instructor**

Dr. Nick Smith

Biology Building Rm. 215

806-834-7363

[nick.smith@ttu.edu](mailto:nick.smith@ttu.edu)

*Meetings by appointment*

### **1.3 Recommended Texts**

Plant Physiological Ecology (2nd Edition; 2008) by Lambers, Chapin, and Pons

Plant Physiology and Development (6th Edition) by Taiz, Ziegler, Moller, and Murphy

## **2 Course Materials**

All course materials, including lecture slides, readings, activities, and code will be posted to a GitHub repository for the course. The primary repository address is [https://github.com/SmithEcophysLab/ecophys\\_sp2019](https://github.com/SmithEcophysLab/ecophys_sp2019).

## **3 Learning Objective**

This course will broadly focus on understanding the role that plant physiological processes play in driving ecological responses across multiple scales from the individual to the globe. Class activities will be based on discussion and dissemination of ideas, including classic and recent scientific literature. Topics will be flexible and modified to match student interests where possible.

## **4 Attendance Policy**

Attendance will not be taken, but is strongly recommended. In class activity points will only be granted if students are in class. Makeups will not be granted.

## **5 Course Assessment**

### **5.1 *Participation and Engagement***

Being an active and engaged participant in the class will benefit your understanding of material as well as your peers'. Examples include asking questions,

providing feedback, and facilitating discussion.

## **5.2 *Mini-quizzes***

Short “quizzes” will be given in class each week (typically on Thursdays). These quizzes will be used to stimulate discussion and to assess how well prior concepts were understood by the class. These will be graded for completion and participation in the ensuing class discussion.

## **5.3 *Classical literature feedback***

Each week students will be required to read a “classic” article on the current weeks’ topic and produce a short summary as well as two questions that arose during their reading of the article.

## **5.4 *In-class discussion lead***

Each student will be required to lead one Thursday discussion on recent literature. This will involve choosing an article for the class to read, presenting the article, and leading a discussion related to the article. Students must read some of the cited literature integral to the study in order to answer relevant questions brought forth during the discussion. Students not leading the current week’s discussion will be required to produce a summary and develop two questions based on each week’s article. Discussion lead will be done individually.

## **5.5 *Deliverable***

The primary semester project will be to produce a deliverable. Broadly, the deliverable should answer a question or solve a problem related to plant eco-physiology. This deliverable could be a literature review, a research project, a podcast, an outreach project, etc. Students will first present their idea for their deliverable to the class. The class will provide feedback. Students will then produce and present their deliverable to the class at the end of the semester. This project must be done individually, though students are encouraged to receive help and guidance from the instructor as well as the class at large.

The deliverable will be assessed for completeness, breadth, originality, and presentation. Students must have their project OKed by the instructor before beginning. Field, lab, or greenhouse space may be used, subject to availability.

## **6 Grading**

Participation and Engagement: 5%

Mini-quizzes: 10%

Classical literature feedback: 10%

Recent literature lead: 15%

Recent literature feedback: 10%

Deliverable idea proposal: 10%

Deliverable idea feedback: 5%

Final deliverable presentation: 10%

Final deliverable: 25%

Grades will be made available on Blackboard. All grades posted at the end of the course will be final, unless an error has been made in their calculation. Please contact Dr. Smith if you feel your grade has been calculated incorrectly.

## **7 Grading Scale**

A:  $\geq 90\%$

B: 80 – 90%

C: 70 – 80%

D: 60 – 70%

F:  $\leq 59.9\%$

## **8 Missing In-class Activities**

Students will be required to be in class to receive in-class activity points. Please contact Dr. Smith if you plan to miss class for a university function *prior to class*. If class is missed due to an illness, please let Dr. Smith know as soon as possible and provide Dr. Smith with a signed doctor's note by the start of the next class period.

## **9 Special Considerations**

### **9.1 Disabling Condition**

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact Dr. Smith as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services. Please note instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, you may contact the Student Disability Services office at 335 West Hall or 806-742-2405.

### **9.2 Religious Holy Days**

"Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Texas Tax Code §11.20. A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who is excused may not be penalized for the absence; however, the instructor may respond appropriately if the student fails to complete the assignment satisfactorily.

## **10 Academic Integrity**

As stated in the Texas Tech University catalog, “The attempt of any students to present as their own work that they have not honestly performed is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense and renders the offenses liable to serious consequences, possibly suspension.” This statement applies to cheating in whatever manner, including plagiarism.

## **11 TTU Resources for Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Violence**

Texas Tech University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from gender and/or sex discrimination of any kind. Sexual assault, discrimination, harassment, and other Title IX violations are not tolerated by the University. Report any incidents to the Office for Student Rights and Resolution, (806)-742-SAFE (7233) or file a report online at [titleix.ttu.edu/students](https://titleix.ttu.edu/students).

Faculty and staff members at TTU are committed to connecting you to resources on campus. Some of these available resources are:

- TTU Student Counseling Center, 806-742-3674, <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/scc>. Provides confidential support on campus.
- TTU 24-hour Crisis Helpline, 806-742-5555. Assists students who are experiencing a mental health or interpersonal violence crisis. If you call the helpline, you will speak with a mental health counselor.
- Voice of Hope Lubbock Rape Crisis Center, 806-763-7273, <https://voiceofhopelubbock.org>. 24-hour hotline that provides support for survivors of sexual violence.
- The Risk, Intervention, Safety and Education (RISE) Office, 806-742-2110, <https://www.depts.ttu.edu/rise/>. Provides a range of resources and support options focused on prevention education and student wellness.
- Texas Tech Police Department, 806-742-3931, <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/tttd/>. To report criminal activity that occurs on or near Texas Tech campus.

## **12 LGBTQIA**

I identify as an ally to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) community, and I am available to listen and support you in an affirming manner. I can assist in connecting you with resources on campus to address problems you may face pertaining to sexual orientation and/or gender identity that could interfere with your success at Texas Tech. Please note that additional resources are available through the Office of LGBTQIA within the Center for Campus Life, Student Union Building Room 201, [www.lgbtqia.ttu.edu](http://www.lgbtqia.ttu.edu), 806.742.5433.

## **Schedule of Topics by Week**

14/01/19 – Introductions, semester planning, and goals

21/01/19 – Physiology's role in ecology

28/01/19 – Key physiological processes: photosynthesis, respiration, transpiration, translocation

04/02/19 – Light

11/02/19 – Temperature

18/02/19 – Water

25/02/19 – CO<sub>2</sub>

04/03/19 – Nutrients

11/03/19 – NO CLASSES; SPRING BREAK

18/03/19 – Growth and allocation

25/03/19 – **Deliverable idea proposal presentation**

01/04/19 – Life cycles, ontogeny, and phenology

08/04/19 – Competition

15/04/19 – Symbioses

22/04/19 – Decomposition

29/04/19 – Scaling from cells to canopies to ecosystems to the globe

06/05/19 – **Deliverable presentations**

## **General Weekly Schedule**

Generally, each Tuesday will consist of a lecture by Dr. Smith followed by a discussion of a classical literature article. Students will turn in their classical literature feedback at the end of Tuesday's lecture. Thursdays will generally begin with an in-class mini-quiz and discussion. This will be followed by a discussion of a recent literature article and (time permitting) an in-class activity.