

## **COURSE OUTLINE: GEOG 4431 – Conservation Geography Fall Term 2012**

**Text:** Primack R. 2012. A Primer of Conservation Biology: 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Sinauer Associates Inc., Sunderland, MA, 365pp.

**Instructor:** Dr. Mitchell Taylor, Department of Geography  
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**Office Hours:** Office location: RC 2006E Thunder Bay Campus. I am in M-F from 8:30 to 5:00. My teaching schedule is posted on the door. Office hours are by appointment, or just come when I am there.

**Communication:** Please use the email address above for all digital communications. I will not monitor the WebCT communication option just because there is no need for two independent addresses. Please consult the reference materials before emailing me with a question. The Course Outline will be updated periodically, so please check it periodically. Questions are welcome, but please be patient. I will reply as soon as I can.

**Introduction:** My BS and MSc are from the Department of Biology at Kansas State University. My PhD. is from the Department of Ecology at University of Minnesota. I did post-doctoral work and lectured at the Faculty of Forestry at University of British Columbia. Then I taught in the Fisheries and Wildlife Department of Michigan State, and eventually took a position as polar bear biologist for the Northwest Territories Department of Renewable Resources. That position transferred to Nunavut when the Territories divided. I was Manager of the Wildlife Research Section for my last few years in the north and moved to the Thunder Bay area in 2008. I am an adjunct professor with Geography and teaching this course as contract lecturer for Dr. Martha Dowsley who has assumed the Graduate Coordinator duties for the next couple of years.

Conservation geography is a multidisciplinary field of study. Conservation is a human-caused problem and most often, conservation initiatives have more to do with influencing human behavior than modifying nature. The foundation of economies and of civilizations is natural resource and ecosystem service use. Human populations have increased, and the quality of life of most individuals is also increasing. This is both the rationale for conservation and a constraint. We live from nature, and reducing our use of natural resources or using them in a better way can mean reducing/limiting what is available. There are trade-offs that are necessary and governance of natural resources is a political as well as scientific endeavor. What is necessary is sometimes not practical, and what is deemed to be an acceptable practice sometimes has unacceptable

consequences. Conservation is not development, or preservation or environmentalism; rather it is finding a middle way that buys time for individuals, populations, species, ecosystems, and ultimately human-kind to reconcile the drive to increase with the realities of a finite world. Conservation is not a goal or an ideal, it is an activity. It is like driving a car; once you take your hand off the wheel it goes wrong very rapidly. It is also true that few people manage to have a lasting impact on conservation, so those that have “made a difference” past their time are worth learning about.

As with most fields, conservation has its own vocabulary, basic principles, and a knowledge base that must be learned before conservation as an activity can be understood and practiced. This course will provide a geographical perspective on basics of conservation, and require a case-history practicum that considers a conservation issue in more depth. Instructor reserves the right to modify the course outline as required to meet course objectives.

The scheduled times for completion of quizzes, exams, and assignments are firm, and will be modified only in accordance with Lakehead policy (documented illness and family emergencies). Please contact me if you have any special circumstances or questions. Good luck with the course.

**Conservation Case History Practicum:** The case history practicum will consist of three components that will be evaluated: Outline, Power-Point Presentation, and Final Paper. The topic will be the student’s choice of a current conservation issue. The practicum will involve researching/documenting the issue, examining/evaluating current conservation approaches to the issue, discussing the root causes of the issue, the constraints to mitigating or resolving the issue, and providing a **practical** action plan that discloses both the costs and benefits of whatever you suggest.

The format should be “decision paper” as described in the Administration directory on the course WebCT site. Citations should follow the conventions for scientific writing (also see guides in the Administration directory). For greater clarity, an alternative format or unstructured paper is not acceptable, an essay format is not acceptable, a scientific format is unacceptable, footnotes or other numbered reference styles are not acceptable. You must use the decision paper format and the scientific writing and citation styles.

Topics should be selected by the end of the second week of class. An outline must be submitted by the end of the third week of class to confirm an approach that will be successful. The outline should capture the format for decision papers. A description of what constitutes an outline is contained in the Administration directory, and that style is required. The most common error in choosing a topic is to identify something that is too general. Please reduce the scope of your paper to something that is manageable for the time frame (one semester) and page limit (10-12 pages maximum) identified.

A critical part of the assignment is to learn outlines, scientific writing style and citation conventions, and the decision paper format. I will cover this material in class as well as

provide guides on WebCT. Questions are welcome. I know this will be the first time many of you have used these formats, so don't be shy about asking if anything is unclear. The due dates for the outline and paper are indicated in the course calendar below.

The final portion of this assignment is to provide a 10 minute presentation (power-point) on your conservation issue. Depending on class size, you may also be asked to lead a 5 minute question and answer session on your conservation issue. Presentations are scheduled for the last 2 course periods, but can be given anytime during the term by prior arrangement. Information included in student presentations may be included in quizzes or the final exam. Students will provide digital copy of their presentations and 3 multiple choice test questions on the most important aspects of their presentation (Calibri 11 pitch font for the questions).

### **Quizzes:**

There will be short (T/F and multiple choice) quizzes given near the end of class frequently. These quizzes will focus on material that was presented recently, but the quizzes are also comprehensive. You should attend every class and should bring a soft lead pencil (#2 is best) and a good quality eraser (white gum erasers work well) to every class in case there is a quiz.

### **Grading Protocol:**

Quiz Scores	30%
Decision Paper (3 parts)	30%
outline (3%), presentation (7%), paper (20%)	
Final (comprehensive)	40%
Total	100%

I will throw out the lowest quiz score (one quiz) and determine the average quiz percentage based on the remaining quiz scores. There is no midterm exam.

### **Deferred Examinations and Assignments:**

You must take all quizzes and examinations during their scheduled periods, and submit assignments on or before the day that they are due. Missed quizzes, missed exams, and late assignments will be counted as zero credit unless prior approval is provided (email message or hard copy) or appropriate documentation for University approved absence is provided. Approved absence includes illness (medical practitioner certificate), varsity sports (letter or email message from coach), or family emergency (documentation of circumstance). Scheduling conflicts with other courses are not considered an approved absence. Absence due to participation in scientific meetings or field trips associated with other courses will be considered on a case by case basis.

### **Special Circumstances or Disabilities:**

Students with special circumstances or disabilities are encouraged to contact the Learning Assistance Center right away so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged. It is not necessary to get my permission or support. The Learning Assistance Center will notify me of any accommodations that are required, and this information will be kept confidential.

### **Academic Honesty:**

The Guidelines for Academic Conduct from Lakehead University (Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures) may be found at:

><http://vpacademic.lakeheadu.ca/?display=page&pageid=46><

Honesty and integrity are expected in class participation, examinations, assignments, and other academic work. Expectations include:

- Perform your own work unless specifically instructed otherwise;
- Use your own work to complete assignments and exams;
- Cite the source when quoting or paraphrasing someone else's work;
- Follow examination rules;
- Be truthful on all university forms;
- Discuss with your professor if you are using the same material for assignments in two different courses;
- Discuss with your professor if you have any questions about whether sources require citation;
- Use the same standard of honesty with fellow students, lab instructors, teaching assistants, sessional instructors and administrative staff as you do with faculty.

### **Fine Print:**

The course outline is an expression of an intention and can be modified by the instructor as required to meet course objectives and to accommodate contingencies.

**Course Schedule:** Class meets T-TH 5:30-7:00 in RC 1003. Any assigned readings (TBA) may be found on WebCT.

Date	Topic	Chapter	Readings
September 11	Introduction to Conservation Geography	1	
	<b>Biological Basis of Conservation and Biodiversity</b>		
September 13	Nature Begins - Conservation Comes Later	2	
September 18	Landforms, the physical matrix		
September 20	Biogeographical Framework		
September 25	Biological Landscapes 1-Types		
September 27	Biological Landscapes 2- Physical Limits		
October 2	Biological Landscapes 3- Interactions Disturbance		
October 4	Multispecies Interactions and Biomes		
October 9	Marine and Fresh Water Systems		
October 16	Biodiversity	4	
October 18	Genetic Diversity	5	
	<b>Threats to Biodiversity</b>		
October 23	Extinction as a Natural Process	6	
October 25	Population Dynamics		
October 30	Population Viability		
November 1	Habitat Fragmentation and Degradation		
	<b>Maintaining Biodiversity</b>		
November 6	Survey Methods and Considerations		
November 13	Protecting/Managing Ecosystems and Populations	7	
November 15	Zoos, Zoological Gardens, Parks		
	<b>Human Factors</b>		
November 20	Economics, and Sustainable Development	9	
November 22	Canadian Conservation Governance	8	
	<b>Decision Paper Presentations</b>		
November 29	Decision Paper Presentations (first day)		
November 27	Decision Paper presentations (final day)		
	<b>Other Case Studies</b>		
as time allows	Ontario Endangered Species (Peregrine Falcon)		
as time allows	Polar Bears and Climate Change		
Final Exam	Time and Date to be announced		