

BIO 262: Introductory Ecology Summer 2026

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Office Hours: Email for appointment

Course goals: “Introductory Ecology” is a one-semester introduction to ecological thought and principles discussing the many factors that influence the distribution and abundance of organisms. The course covers topics in the areas of individual, population, community, and ecosystem ecology, as well as human effects on natural systems. This course is designed for anyone interested in ecology, both majors and non-majors.

This course aims to achieve the following learning objectives:

- Explain the principles of organismal evolution, including the role of natural selection.
- Explain the ecological relationships between organisms and their environment.
- Demonstrate an ability to think critically and synthesize scientific information.

Course hours: Monday, Wednesday 6:00-8:30 pm, conducted via Zoom

Textbook: There is also an OPTIONAL print textbook: “Ecology: Concepts and Applications” by Manuel Molles (5th edition). This textbook is not required, but may be a useful supplement.

Course evaluation: Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

60%	2 exams
20%	Research proposal
10%	Reading comprehension questions
10%	Attendance/participation

Exams: Two open-note exams will be taken during regular class hours (6-8:30pm), and I will be available to answer clarifying questions. Exams will consist of information from the lecture and readings. Due to the open-note format, exams will consist of extended response questions, graph drawing, and case study analysis. AI use or plagiarism of any sort will result in a 0 on the exam. Exam 2 is **not** cumulative.

Research Proposal: You will write a short research proposal (1-2 single-spaced pages) on a topic of your choice that relates to ecology. This will include an overview of the research study, a description of your personal connection to the topic, research questions, and a bibliography. You will receive a grade for submitting your research topic to me, turning in a rough draft on Eli Review, reviewing 1-2 of your peers’ drafts, and submitting the final proposal. AI use beyond spellchecking and basic grammar is not permitted and will result in a 0 on the proposal.

Reading Comprehension Questions: Before each class (excluding exam days), you will need to answer a short 5-10 question reading comprehension quiz on the assigned readings, topic outlines, and syllabus policies. These quizzes will not be timed and will act like a “pre-lab” to help you prepare for class.

Attendance/Participation: You are expected to attend all classes during this session. Since we only meet 10 times, consistent attendance is crucial to your success in this class. Except in the case of emergencies, you **must** email me before the start of class with a valid reason for your absence to avoid losing points. For details on what constitutes a valid excuse, see the ‘attendance’ section of the ‘course policies’ (listed below). There will also be small assignments, polls, and multiple-choice questions throughout each lecture. These are not graded for correctness, but you must engage with them to get full credit for your attendance.

Grading Scale

100 - 93 = A; 92 - 90 = A-; 89- 87 = B+; 86 - 83 = B; 82 - 80 = B-; 79 - 77 = C+;
76 - 73 = C; 72 - 70 = C-; 69 - 67 = D+; 66 - 60 = D; 59 & below = F

Web access: This syllabus, topic outlines, assigned readings, and topic slides (posted after each topic is completed in class) will be available for downloading on the class Brightspace site. Exams, quizzes, and proposal submissions will also be done through Brightspace. Peer review will be done using Eli Review. Lectures will be conducted via Zoom. You will need reliable internet access, and a device with a camera and microphone to join class. **If you cannot access the applications listed above, please contact URI IT Service (<https://its.uri.edu/it-organization/it-service-desk/>)**

Course Policies

Respect: Since summer classes are typically small, it is *especially* important that all students treat each other (and the instructor) with respect and do not disrupt the learning process. Failure to fulfill this requirement may lead to a lowered or failing grade, regardless of exam scores. Come to class on time; important announcements will be given at the start of lecture.

Attendance: Attendance at all lectures is crucial to success in this course. The material covered in lecture will not overlap completely with the reading assignments, and the lecture notes do not cover everything discussed in class. Absences due to serious illness or traumatic loss, religious observances, military service, or participation in a university sanctioned event are considered excused absences. Students are responsible for work missed during an excused absence but will not be penalized by grading or assignment/exam make-up policies. Students should notify faculty in advance of absences due to religious observance or university-sanction events, and as soon as possible for other absences.

If you need to take an exam at a different time, please contact me beforehand.

Academic Honesty: Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. A student's name on any written work, quiz or exam shall be regarded as assurance that the work is the result of the student's own independent thought and study. Work should be stated in the student's own words, and properly attributed to its source. Students have an obligation to know how to quote, paraphrase, summarize, cite and reference the work of others with integrity. Instructors shall have the responsibility of informing students about their expectations regarding the preparation of all assignments with academic integrity...[and] shall have the explicit duty to take action in known cases of cheating or plagiarism.

AI Use Not Permitted: In this class, it is essential that all submitted work reflects your own understanding and skills. The use of AI tools such as ChatGPT, Claude, or similar technologies is not permitted. This ensures that your submitted work genuinely represents your personal knowledge and capabilities. Any use of AI tools on submitted work in this course will be considered a violation of the university's Academic Requirements in the University Manual (see 8.27.10 – 8.27.22).

URI Resources and Policies (University Syllabus Statements):



Lecture Schedule:

Lecture	Date	Topic	Homework	Readings
Individual Ecology				
1M	June 22	Natural selection & evolution		Syllabus
2W	June 24	Predator avoidance & physiological ecology		Topic outline 2, Paper #1
Population Ecology				
3M	June 29	Mating, spacing, & territoriality		Topic outline 3, Paper #2
4W	July 1	Population structure & growth		Topic outline 4
5M	July 6	Exam 1		
Community Ecology				
6W	July 8	Predation, competition, & mutualisms	Proposal topic due 7/8	Topic outline 6
7M	July 13	Species abundance, diversity, & stability	Proposal draft due 7/13	Topic outline 7, Paper #3
Ecosystem Ecology				
8W	July 15	Trophic levels & food webs	Peer Review due 7/17	Topic outline 8
9M	July 20	Succession & island biogeography		Topic outline 9, Paper #4
10W	July 22	Exam 2	Proposal due 7/24	