

# Minnesota State University Moorhead

## **BIOL 115: Organismal Biology**

### **A. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Credits: 4

Lecture Hours/Week: 3

Lab Hours/Week: 3

OJT Hours/Week: \*.\*

Prerequisites: None

Corequisites: BIOL 115L

MnTC Goals: None

This course is designed for biology majors. The course will address biological diversity, primarily in plants and animals. Organismal diversity will be presented within an evolutionary context. Relationships between form and function as well as relationships of organisms to their environments will be addressed. Lab included.

### **B. COURSE EFFECTIVE DATES: 05/04/2004 - Present**

## **C. OUTLINE OF MAJOR CONTENT AREAS**

1. Nature of science and the scientific method.
2. Connection of biological processes with natural life in the field
  - i. Multiple data collection activities based at the MSUM Regional Science Center
    - a. Diversity and variation
    - b. Plant host & parasite interactions
  - ii. Participation in the MSUM bird banding program
3. Evolution by Natural Selection
  - i. Debunking myths about evolution by natural selection
  - ii. Evidences in support of evolutionary theory
  - iii. Modes of selection
  - iv. Sources of genetic variation
  - v. Micro- and macroevolution
4. Phylogeny and cladistics systematics.
5. The evolutionary basis for the organization of biodiversity of organisms.
6. Nomenclature of taxonomic classification.
7. Prokaryotic diversity.
8. Protist diversity.
9. Unicellular to multicellular transition.
10. Plant diversity
  - i. Water to land transition
  - ii. Evolution of vascular tissue
  - iii. Evolution of seeds
  - iv. Evolution of flowers
11. Fungal diversity.
12. Metazoan body plans: symmetry, coelom, germ layers, fate of blastopore
  - i. Protostomia: Porifera, Cnidaria, Mollusca, Annelida, Arthropoda
  - ii. Deuterostomia: Echinodermata, Chordata
  - iii. Evolution of the Vertebrata
    - a. Jaws, paired appendages
    - b. Amnion, rotated girdles, homeothermy
    - c. Human evolution
13. Behavioral ecology of organisms
  - i. Evolution of behavior
  - ii. Gene by environment interaction
  - iii. Sexual selection theory
  - iv. Application of behavioral theory to human behavior
14. Population ecology of organisms
  - i. Population estimates
  - ii. Population distribution patterns
  - iii. Population growth curves (exponential, logistic growth)
  - iv. Lotka-Volterra predator-prey cycling
15. Community ecology of organisms
  - i. Classification of species interactions
  - ii. Island biogeography
  - iii. The concept of niche, competition, character displacement, ghost of competition past
16. Ecosystem ecology of organisms
  - i. Nutrient cycling
  - ii. Food webs
  - iii. Top-down / bottom-up effects (biomagnification, keystone species)
  - iv. Ecological succession
17. Biosphere ecology of organisms
  - i. Global carbon budget
  - ii. Greenhouse gases, global warming, ocean acidification

#### **D. LEARNING OUTCOMES (General)**

1. Understand the mechanics of evolution by natural selection.
2. Understand the organization of biodiversity as a reflection of past evolutionary processes.
3. Connect biological theory presented in the classroom with real life organisms in the field.
4. Know the major groups of organisms and the characteristic traits that define them.
5. Understand the scientific method.
6. Be able to apply the scientific method to problems in organismal biology.
7. Be able to collate data, construct a graph of treatments means  $\pm$  SE in excel.
8. Be able to make conclusions from data drawn from statistical inference.
9. Know the distinction between primary literature and secondary sources of information.
10. Be able to search, retrieve and cite relevant sources of primary literature.
11. Be able to produce a written report that adheres to the format conventions of scientific writing.
12. Design and execute an experiment.
13. Present an oral presentation of their research findings to their peers.

#### **E. Minnesota Transfer Curriculum Goal Area(s) and Competencies**

None

#### **F. LEARNER OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT**

As noted on course syllabus

#### **G. SPECIAL INFORMATION**

None noted