

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
COLLEGE OF SCIENCE
DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Course: BIOL 4395 (CRN 23858)
Course Title: Topics in Biology
Curation and Research in the Natural History Museum
Term: Spring, 2019

Course Meetings& Location: TR 6:00-7:20 PM , LART 207

Instructor: Carl S. Lieb
Office Location: "Old Biology" Building, B-204
Office Hours: MW 1:45-2:45 PM, TR 10:-11 AM and by appointment (see contact information, below)
Contact Info: 747-6987 clieb@utep.edu

The telephone is the most reliable means for time-sensitive communication. If you do not receive a reply to an email within a few days, send it again (... and again).

Prerequisite Courses: At least 6 credits of upper division biology coursework, drawn from the following: BIOL 3316-3117, BIOL 3321, BIOL 4225, 4325, BOT 3437, ZOOL 3468, ZOOL 4476, ZOOL 4478. Prerequisites may be waived by instructor (and by no one else). Senior standing as a Biological Science major or minor recommended.

Course Objectives (Learning Outcomes): The objective of this section of BIOL 4395 is to offer an advanced undergraduate special topics course on the curation methodologies and associated research potential of natural history museums as facilities/organizations that promote the study of world biodiversity, ecology, and evolution.

Course Activities: Lectures will be delivered by the instructor, and presentations will be made by graduate students enrolled in the class. Two outside work/writing assignments will also be performed by each student.

Assessment of Course: Student performance will be evaluated by the instructor based on their scores on the two examinations (midterm and final), the quality of the three outside work assignments, and their well-attended and informed participation in class discussions.

Grading Policy: The final course grade will be determined as follows:
20% - Assignment No. 1 – Georeferencing (due 16 Feb)
25% – Midterm examination (14 March)
15% - Assignment No. 2: Data standards (16 Apr)
25% - Final Examination
15% - Faithful classroom attendance and scholarly preparation for same.

- Attendance Policy: On-time attendance at every class session is perforce expected.
- Drop Policy: The student drop date is **5 April**. Please bail out if you must by this date (but you might want' to consult with your instructor before taking such drastic action). The Office of the Dean of Sciences will normally not sign off on "W's" after this date.
- Academic Integrity Policy Despite his outward cynicism, your instructor more-or-less believes in the general goodness and honesty of his fellow human beings. Nevertheless, those who try to shatter his illusions and betray the norms of academic integrity will be turned in to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action. You may review UTEP policy in these matters at:
<http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=23785>
- Civility Policy: Civility between the members of the class, and between the instructor and the students, is also expected. Please use temperate language when speaking to one another and with the instructor. All are expected to use language and examples appropriate for a professional person.
Mute your cell phone before entering the classroom; please do not take calls or text messages during class time. Avoid all noisy endeavors no related to the matter at hand (talking, eating, snapping chewing gum, loud sighing/moaning/groaning,, and, of course, snoring).
Your instructor will do his best to be present by the start of class; please emulate him with timely appearances as well. *Nevertheless, he would prefer you to being a few minutes late to being completely absent for the entire period (as a rare event, not something that happens frequently!)*. The general rule is: if you must enter or leave the classroom when class is in session, do so as quietly and quickly as possible.
- Disability Policy: If a student has or suspects he/she has disability and needs an accommodation, he/she should contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148 or at cass@utep.edu or go to Room 106 Union East Building. You instructor is familiar with the operations and procedures of CASS; the student, however, is responsible for presenting to him any CASS accommodation letters and instructions.
- Military Call-Up: Your instructor understands that students engaged in military service may be called up and deployed at any time; such events may also affect military family members. Please consult with your instructor as soon as the orders come through, so what arrangements for completion or suspension of your academic work can be implemented in a timely manner.

Course Calendar/Schedule

The schedule below is subject to modification as the semester deteriorates. Exam dates, however, are fixed

22 January – Introduction to course; role of the modern natural history museum (Lieb)

24-29 January – Overview of the history of natural history museums, and the location, breadth and scope of today's natural history collections (Lieb)

31 January– 19 February - Administrative curatorial concepts (Lieb, + graduate students)
Including but not limited to: provenance, accessioning, cataloguing, de-accessioning, georeferencing standards, imaging, library resources, space utilization, controlling access to specimens and data, and declination to accept/accession materials.

16 February: Assignment No. 1 (Georeferencing Exercise) due

21 February 12 March – Specimen-specific best practices (Lieb, + graduate students)
Including but not limited to: Cataloguing and database standards, care of specimens (“wet, dry, or frozen”), temperature, humidity and pest control, chemical, safety, and waste-disposal issues.

14 March – (Thursday) Midterm examination

18-22 March – Spring Break, no classes

26 March – 4 April --Wrap-up of specimen-specific best practices (Lieb).

9-25 April:- Theory and practice of specimen-based research (Lieb, + graduate students)
Including but not limited to: the growing list of uses for museum specimens in evolutionary and ecological studies, non-destructive versus (partially) destructive use; benefits and hazards of educational use of specimens

16 April – Assignment 2 (Data standards) due

30 April - Museum collections and research as viewed by the public, politicians, etc. (Lieb)

2-9 May – Natural history collections and institutional/governmental bureaucracies (Lieb)
Including but not limited to: the principal laws (and regulations with the force of law) that apply; on establishing a pattern of compliance; avoiding pyrrhic victories.

16 May (Thursday) – Final Examination period, 7-9:45 PM

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