I. Course Number, Title, Prerequisites, and Fees.

BIOL 4225 (CRN 21842) - Field Biology. Prerequisites: Department Approval. A separate field trip fee of $180.00 is required and will be paid separately from tuition (see below).

II. Instructor Information.

Dr. Jerry D. Johnson
Office/Lab: B 205/B 220
Phone: 747-6984 (office); 747 – 6993 (lab)
E-mail: jjohnson@utep.edu
Office Hours: M 9:00 -11:30 am; W 2-3 pm; R 1-3, or by appointment

Teaching Assistant:

Gabriela Franco (grfranco@miners,utep.edu, B 220).

III. Objectives.

Students will perform a scientific research project from data taken under field conditions. Students will design the field project, produce a written and oral proposal, and deliver the study in a scientific manner using both written and oral presentations. Field biology projects will study aspects of the Chihuahuan Desert ecosystem at The Indio Mountains Research Station (IMRS, Indio Ranch), Hudspeth County, Texas. The written manuscript will be submitted to instructor as if it was being submitted for publication to the journal, The Southwestern Naturalist.

IV. Course Evaluation. Final Grades will be tallied from the following course Components (100 pts. possible).

5 points - Written proposal: Is it typed? Does it follow the exampled format? Has a literature search been conducted?

5 points - Oral presentation of proposal: All students from each group can be picked randomly to give a portion of each proposal. Is there adequate coverage for the study?

20 points – Two Quizes (10 pts. each). Quiz one can also contain questions about field trip rules

20 points – Flash card exam. Flash cards are available during class time and in lab (B 220) during non class hours. The exam will be identification of photos of selected common biota found on IMRS. You will need to identify the organisms by both common and scientific (species) names. I recommend that
you take digital photos of specimens for later study.

10 points - Individual participation in research project, including participation in field trip activities, writing paper, and oral presentation.

5 points - First draft of final paper: Does it follow the specifications for The Southwestern Naturalist? Was it turned in on time?

20 points - Final Paper: Is paper in exact format? Is the literature cited adequate?

10 points - Final Presentation. All students in each group can be picked randomly to give a particular section of the presentation, so everyone needs to be familiar with all parts of the presentation. Were visuals used? Was presentation complete? Did everyone in each group show up on time?

5 points - Mandatory attendance during scheduled class periods.

FINAL GRADES WILL BE ASSIGNED AS FOLLOWS:

100 - 90 points = A 
89 - 80 points = B
79 - 70 points = C 
69 - 60 points = D
Below 60 points = F

V. Text.


Jan. 22: Orientation/Logistics/Safety Instruction. Consideration/discussion of research projects and tentative proposals. Discuss forming groups.

Jan. 29: Discussion of scientific processes and its limitations. Discuss forming groups. Fill out all release forms.

Feb 5: Quiz 1 (10 pts.). Discuss how to write a scientific paper (in format of The Southwestern Naturalist) and how to prepare an oral presentation.

Feb. 12: Groups formally determined, discuss proposal format. Tentatively decide on project. Groups work on proposal of research project.

Feb 19: Quiz 2 (10 pts.). Work on research proposal.

Feb. 26: Work on Introduction and Materials and Methods section.

Mar. 5: Proposals due in correct format (typed). Oral proposal presentation
by groups. Work on Introduction section.

Mar. 12: Spring Break

Mar. 19: Pay field trip fee of $180.00. Go to campus cashier and deposit fee into the Biology Field School Desert Ecology account # 30-3054-61. Object Code - 1265. Payment can be by cash, check, or credit card. Bring a copy of the payment receipt to class. Work on Materials and Methods section.


Apr. 2: Final Orientation before field trip.

Apr. 9: 9:00 am. Leave for field trip from parking lot near Police Station on Sun Bowl Drive. Don’t be late, because we are on a tight schedule and cannot wait for late arrivals.

April 13: Return from field trip to Police Station parking lot about 3:00 pm.

Apr. 16: Work on Results section.

Apr. 23: Work on Discussion Section.

Apr. 30: Work on preparing draft of complete paper, including Abstract, Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion, Acknowledgements and Literature Cited sections.

May 7: Formal 12-minute Power Point presentation by groups. Continue working on entire paper.

May 16: Last date to turn in corrected final paper.

VII. Disability – If you have or suspect a disability and need accommodations, contact the Disabled Student Services Office (747-5148; dss@utep.edu: Union Bldg. East, room 106, or visit DSSO website at www.utep.edu/dsso/).

VIII. Field Research Facilities. - Indio Mountains Research Station is located about 26 miles (40 km) southwest of Van Horn, Texas (four hour drive from El Paso). It is isolated and located in a rugged Chihuahuan Desert landscape. Many plants have thorns and spines that can inflict painful wounds. It is highly recommended that long pants be worn when actually collecting data in the field or hiking off road. Shorts are fine around the ranch house and on road hikes. Indio Ranch has running water from a well, electricity, functional showers and flush toilets. Food preparation is by portable stoves and charcoal grills. Students will participate in cooks help and KP duties some time during your stay. If you are severely allergic to arthropod stings or other things, you should contact your doctor and get a prescription for an Epi Pen, and carry it at all times.
You will also indicate diet restrictions on the course contract. An overview of list of rules and activities will be given to you during orientation after arriving on IMRS.

IX. Course Rules (you will sign a contract agreeing that course rules will be followed).

Attendance is mandatory for all students during scheduled class meetings and field trip activities unless absence is approved by the instructor.

Every student will participate in all aspects of fieldwork, paper writing, and presentation. If any student fails to participate fully, the instructor reserves the right to initiate corrective measures or subtract points from that person’s final grade. Disputed grades or other issue regarding the course should be discussed with the instructor first; if not satisfied the student should next contact the Biology Department Chair.

All students will obey rules, instructions, and orders given by instructor and teaching assistants while on field trip and in classroom. All laws of Texas and UTEP will be followed during field trip. Unlawful activity may lead to expulsion from course and may result in student being transported to Van Horn, where he/she will arrange for transportation back to UTEP.

Quiet time at Indio Ranch Headquarters will begin at 10:00 pm. This means that no loud behavior of any kind will be tolerated after 10:00 pm.

Statistical analysis will be required for studies that can be statistically analyzed. You are also required to develop a power point presentation to support your final oral discussion.

You are required to follow the style of the Southwestern Naturalist for your paper.

IMRS rules will be followed at all times. An orientation to those rules will be given in class and again upon arrival at the station.

Respect the rights of others. Different people have diverse mindsets, activity preferences, and belief systems.

Conserve water and electrical resources by turning off faucets or lights when they are not being used. Cell phones and computers will not be left plugged into power outlets except during the day when the sun is shining – charge them during daylight.

Keep the facilities at IMRS as clean and neat as possible. Any “dirty” work associated with your projects is to be done in the old ranch house labs, not in the assembly hall or clean lab building. Do not eat meals in dorm rooms and bring any IMRS drinking containers back to kitchen and wash them. If you spill liquids or food on floor, clean them up with paper towns.
Do not place any food or paper products, including toilet paper, into the toilets. Place soiled toilet paper or other paper products in the trash cans and eventually into the burn barrel for disposal.

Do not leave dirty dishes, silverware, or drink containers on tables after you are finished with them. Throw empty aluminum cans into designated recycle bins (do not pull tabs off of cans). Throw any plastic or metal containers into designated recycle bin (no trash or aluminum cans). Throw non-burnable trash in designated trash containers, and put only paper products in the burn barrel. Their locations will be identified during the orientation when arriving at IMRS.

Be careful when using kitchen facilities. If you have any questions please ask Dr. J or TA’s. Never put stoves on high flame and never use metal implements on tephlon coated cooking pans.

Do not smoke in any building and put cigarette butts in burn barrel, not in drink containers and never throw them on the ground.

Do not light a bonfire under windy conditions (ask Dr. J or a TA before hand).

Students will wash their personal dishes, cups, and silverware in the washroom in the old ranch house. Never wash dirty plates in the soap water solution (rinse off into other sink first), because this quickly fouls the dish water. Food left on plates is to be put into non-burnable trash containers. Use cloth drying towels to dry dishes, not paper towels.

First aid materials are located in the old ranch house in a cabinet located in the washroom.

Student rights concerning appeal of any action relating to course governance can be found in UTEP’s Student Handbook.
COURSE CONTRACT

I (printed name) _______________________________

(Student number) ______________________________

I am a student enrolled in BIOL 4225 (Field Biology, section 23084, Spring 2010), offered by UTEP, and have read and agree to follow all rules and laws described in the syllabus or expressed in any other supplementary handouts for this course. I also agree that the instructor is the administrator of this course and is responsible for decisions on all grades assigned to the different conditions listed in the course syllabus. The instructor also has the right to determine disciplinary action concerning rule or law violations stipulated therein.

Signature of student ______________________________

Date _____________________

Signature of Instructor ______________________________

Date _____________________

Please indicate below any diet restrictions or medical issues that the instructor should be aware of: