

Professional Skills Development for Ecology, Evolution, and Environmental Science

BIOL 5208/6208 CRN: 19480/19438

M 10:30 am – 12:20 pm

Instructors:

- Marguerite Mauritz, Ph. D. (memauritz@utep.edu)
- Guest lecturers

Prerequisite:

Enrollment in either the EEB MS or PhD program, ESCI MSc Program, or ESE PhD Program.

Course Description:

This course aims to provide instruction and guidance in the development of professional skills needed by doctoral students in ecology, evolution and environmental science. We will engage through in-class lectures, discussion (in-class and online), group exercises, reading, and reflection.

Learning Objectives:

- Develop tools and frameworks for success in grad school
- Consider strategies for navigating challenges of graduate school
- Explore future career-paths and post-graduation plans, recognize the importance of explicitly considering these goals throughout graduate school
- Learn skills for communicating science to peers and audiences outside our disciplines
- Critically examine how we shape the culture of our scientific communities
- Engage through discussion, self-reflection, and peer-input to foster professional peer mentor networks

Text: Materials on selected topics will be posted on Blackboard and occasionally distributed in class

Class meetings: Once a week, Monday 10:30-12:20

Classroom: Education 203

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 2.30-4.00pm in Biology 415 or online

Diversity Statement:

Each of us brings a different way of thinking, opinions, and lived experiences shaped by the complexity of our own identities. These diverse outlooks strengthen our community and science when we respect and are willing to learn from each other. Some of the exercises in this class ask for honesty and vulnerability as we share reflections and personal career goals. Growth often comes when we push our comfort zones in a safe environment. This takes courage. I ask that we create a safe environment together, by addressing each other with respect and support, and assuming good intentions. If we get something wrong, we should hold ourselves accountable and acknowledge a misstep. I will work to ensure the class environment remains constructive and I welcome any suggestions along the way.

Assessment: *All assignments will be accessed and submitted via Blackboard*

Attendance & participation: 25%

- Attendance: 1-minute reflections (5%)
- In-class participation and discussion board posting (20%)
 - Pre-planned discussion boards: for each topic post 1 comment & engage with at least 1 online post
 - Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion
 - Mental Health in Grad School
 - Data Management, Data, or Publication

Professional Development Materials: 40% (5% each, 8 total)

- Mentorship Map
- IDP & Strategic Action Planning and Development (Research)
- Field Safety Plan (suggestions for, edit/comment existing)
- Plain Language Abstract or SciComm piece
- Strategic Action Planning and Development (Career)
- Personal Statement
- CV/Resume
- Data Management Plan

End of semester peer presentations: 20% (10% each, 2 total)

- Research Plan & Teaching/Career Plan: Poster
- Field Safety or JEDI Poster/Resource

Feedback to peers: 15%

Give feedback to 2 peers in each area

- Plain Language/Sci Comm piece
- Personal Statement, CV, Resume
- Posters

Missed attendance or assignments:

Each student has 2 excused absences, 1 missed discussion board post & comment, and 2 late submissions of prof dev materials that can be used for any reason and without explanation. If you know in advance that you will be missing a class or be late submitting an assignment, please send a quick email. This helps me know what to expect and plan accordingly.

Instructor feedback:

I will provide feedback on assignments and discussion board responses within a week of timely submissions. For late submissions I will provide feedback and attempt to do so within a week.

Grading

Letter grades for this course will be determined based on the above requirements and will be assigned as follows:

90-100%	A
80-89%	B

70-79%	C
60-69%	D
59% or less	F

COVID-19 Precaution Statement:

**** I STRONGLY ENCOURAGE MASK--WEARING IN THIS CLASSROOM ****

Please stay home if you experience COVID-19 symptoms or have been diagnosed with COVID-19. If you are feeling unwell and suspect it could be COVID-19, please get tested. If you test positive, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support, help you with communication with your professors, and provide community tracing to others. Your report will be anonymous. [UTEP provides free COVID-19 testing](#). You can also get tested through the [City of El Paso COVID-19 testing program](#) and, if you haven't already, you can [order free at-home COVID-19 tests](#).

Academic integrity.

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarship free from fraud and deception. Ideas may result from discussion and collaboration, but all work submitted for this class must be original work of the student. Instances of academic dishonesty threaten the atmosphere of trust and free exchange of ideas. Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the [UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures](#). It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act.

Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Such instances will result in the offending student receiving a failing grade for work discovered to be fraudulent and for egregious cases, the student may be dismissed from the class with a failing grade. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the Office of [Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution \(OSCCR\)](#) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

Accessibility.

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University.

Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the The Center of Accommodations and Support Services ([CASS](#)). You can request accommodations via their [online portal](#), email the office at cass@utep.edu, phone (915) 747-5148, or visit the Union Building East, Room 106. For additional information, visit the CASS Office at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>

Military Service Statement

If students are in the military and are in a situation that could entail deployment, they should consult the lead faculty of this course as soon as possible.

Some EEB Resources:

- [EEB PhD Handbook](#)
- [UTEP EEB Student Resources Page](#)
- UTEP BEE Grads IG@utepbeegrads
- El Paso 500 Women Scientists (FB:500WomenScientistsEP, IG@elpaso500womenscientists)

University IT and Academic Resources:

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support where you can go for assistance:
Technology Resources

- [Help Desk](#): Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance. Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus.
- [UTEP Library](#): Access a wide range of resources including online full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks, inter-library loans, plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.
- [University Writing Center \(UWC\)](#): Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.
- [RefWorks](#): A bibliographic citation tool; check out the RefWorks tutorial and Fact Sheet and Quick-Start Guide.

Individual Resources:

- [Military Student Success Center](#): Assists personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.
- [Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#): Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.
- [Counseling and Psychological Services](#): Provides a variety of counseling services including individual, couples, and group sessions as well as career and disability assessments