

## SYLLABUS

### SPECIAL PROBLEMS (SPRING 2023)

#### I. Course Numbers; Time and Place:

BIOL 4398 (20164)

#### II. Instructor Information:

Dr. Vicente Mata-Silva, Professor

Office: Biology Building B406

Phone: 915-747-5354

Office Hours: M, T, W (2:00 pm – 3:00 pm) or by appointment

E-mail: [vmata@utep.edu](mailto:vmata@utep.edu)

#### III. Objectives:

During the semester, students will either compile a scientific document from a literature search on a species of vertebrate animal jointly picked by the student and faculty member, or participate in field and/or lab-based research projects decided on by faculty of record. Undergrads and MS students can take these courses.

The scope of the literature search, per course number, will be determined by the population size of the species in question, as follows: rare species (BIOL 4198), moderately sized (BIOL 4298), and common species (BIOL 4398). A handout explaining the style and completeness of the literature search document will be given to the student and discussed at the beginning of the semester. Literature citation style will be based on those found in the, *Journal of Herpetology*.

The scope of the field research will be determined by the ongoing research projects being performed by the faculty member or those by graduate students in direct support by the faculty member and other members of the professional staff in the Department of Biological Sciences, such as the collections manager in the UTEP Biodiversity Collections. Projects will be described to the student by the person directly involved in the research project. Any research activities needing IACUC permission will be performed only by faculty or graduate students that are already on IACUC protocols; students will support the approved personnel's projects by activities not needing IACUC permission (e.g. note taking, data analysis, site preparation, and report preparation).

IV. Evaluation: Undergrads – Literature Survey: The grade for the literature search will be totally (100%) determined by the quality and completeness of the finished document as determined by the faculty of record. Grading scale will be 90 – 100% (A), 80 – 89% (B), 70 – 79 (C), 60 – 69% (D), below 60% (F).

Evaluation: Graduate Students – Literature Survey: Graduate students will be evaluated as per the undergrads, although the survey document will be (worth 80%), and they will also produce a two to three page summary (worth 20%) on the species in question.

Evaluation: Undergrads – Field or Lab Research Projects: There will be 100 points possible on two evaluation formats: 50 points will involve the students active participation in the research project (50%) and 50 points will be the quality and completeness of a written research report (50%), as determined by the faculty of record. The grading scale will be the same as that founding the literature survey.

Evaluation: Graduate Students – Field or Lab Research Projects: Graduate Students will be evaluated as per the undergrads, except they will also be assigned to mentor a consigned undergrad as an extra measure on their evaluation. Thus, their grades will be determined as: 50% active participation in research project, 30% for quality and completeness of a written research project, and 20% as mentoring an undergraduate based on the undergraduate's evaluation on their research project.

- V. Methodology and Calendar: The Special Problems courses is entirely independent study, with meeting times reliant on student schedules and the field and lab research schedules will be worked out by the student and faculty of record. The final reports in all instances will be due on the last day of class for the semester in question.
- VI. Course Rules: It is expected that all work will be that of the students. Any duplication or plagiarism will lead to students being reported to the Dean of students for disciplinary action. If a student has a disability and needs accommodation, he/she should contact the Disabled Student Services Office (DSSO) at 747-5148; [dss@utep.edu](mailto:dss@utep.edu); or go to Room 106 Union East Building. Dropping this course with a W grade will not be allowed after the official drop date, 1 April 2022.