

BIOD48: Ornithology (and Herpetology)

Person	Role	Contact	Office Hours
Professor Weir	Instructor	jason.weir@utoronto.ca	Monday 1:00 to 2:00pm SW143 (visit me for help on lecture content)
Maya Faccio	TA	maya.sonnen@gmail.com	TBA (visit Maya for tutorial help)

CONTACTING US

Please use e-mail and use the following subject line “BIOD48”. E-mails that do not include this subject line may not be answered.

COURSE EVENTS

Lectures: HW 402 Thursday 9:00 – 10:00am

Tutorials: BV 498 Tuesday 9:00 – 12:00am (most tutorials involve outdoor activities, but tutorials will commence in BV 498)

COURSE OVERVIEW

Birds will be the primary focus of this course. Amphibians and reptiles (the Herpetology component) will probably not be covered at all, and the course name in the future will be revised to reflect this. The course will have two main components: 1) lectures will cover avian ecology, evolution, taxonomy, physiology, behavior, and conservation, and will include guest lectures from several Canadian ornithologists who will discuss their research; 2) tutorials will introduce students to the identification of birds in Ontario; point counts and mist netting; and bird song analysis. Regular field trips during tutorial will involve bird watching and field projects along the trails near UTSC and nearby sites in the Toronto area, participation in a census of migratory raptors along the Scarborough bluffs, observation of mist netting techniques to capture and band birds, and a visit to the ornithology collections at the Royal Ontario Museum. This course aims to impart practical skills that may be useful for obtaining employment as a biologist.

COURSE PREREQUISITS

BIOB50 and BIOB51 & one of the following: BIOC50, BIOC54, or BIOC61. All students are expected to have a basic understanding of ecological and evolutionary processes.

FIELD TRIPS AND OUTDOOR EVENTS

This course has a large outdoor field component. Outdoor activities include bird watching and mist netting activities on campus, as well as several field trips off campus. Proper clothing appropriate to the season should be worn during all outdoor activities. Long pants and a light jacket should be ideal for activities during September and early October. Warmer clothing should be worn during late October and November. Only tennis or hiking style shoes (no sandals or dress shoes) should be worn, while winter boots should be worn during days with snow. To ensure safety, all students will work together in groups of 3 during outdoor activities. If two members of a group do not attend an outdoor activity, then the remaining group member should contact the instructor or TA who will reassign the group member for the duration of the activity. All students will need to sign a legal release form in order to participate in outdoor activities both

on and off campus. Students with special needs or considerations (i.e. bee allergies etc.) should contact the instructor personally.

Transportation to off-campus field trip destinations (all of which occur near Scarborough or the downtown Toronto region) will require using local public transit and/or carpooling with other classmates and the instructor (to be arranged in class), and may require that students leave for the field site as early as 8am in order to arrive by 9 am. Every effort will be made to arrive back on campus by 12:00pm, but given local traffic conditions, this may not always be feasible.

EQUIPMENT

10 pairs of binoculars will be provided to students (at least one per group of three. Students are encouraged to bring a pair of binoculars that they have purchased or borrowed.

TEXTS AND READINGS

Lecture Text: F. Gill. *Ornithology 3rd Ed.* Freeman. (Most required readings are from this text)

Suggested Online Readings: For select lectures, I suggest online readings (that include videos) from the website of Gary Ritchison:

<http://people.eku.edu/ritchisong/ornitholsyl.htm>

Field Guide: Sibley. *The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Eastern North America.* 2003. (This text is essential for tutorials and field excursions)

STUDY TOOLS

Course Homepage: The homepage for this site is on the intranet:

<https://intranet.uts.utoronto.ca/>. On the homepage you will find all the information for the course including a copy of this syllabus, an outline of the course content, lecture slides, tutorial handouts, tutorial datasets and announcements.

Lecture slides: Lecture slides will be posted on the course homepage as PDF files the evening before lecture. These may be printed, brought to class and used to augment your note taking. You WILL still need to take notes, but printouts of lecture slides will mean that you do not have to write down everything during lecture.

Attendance at lectures: There is no web option for this course. Looking over the lecture slides in combination with the reading materials listed at the end of each lecture handout should provide you with the information you need to know if a lecture is missed, but this will require more work than simply attending lectures.

Tutorials: Tutorials will comprise 4 elements: 1) learning to identify 145 of the most common species in Toronto area, 2) observing wild birds while bird watching, mist netting, and during field trips to a migratory raptor monitoring site, and a bird banding site, 3) a visit to the collections at the Royal Ontario Museum, and 4) four tutorial assignments. Assignments will cover analyses of bird vocalizations and bird censusing methods. Tutorials will commence in BV 498 at 9AM.

EVALUATION

Test	Covers	Proportion of Final grade
Lecture final	All lectures	35%
Six tutorial identification Quizzes	Last 6 lecture days	10%
Tutorial final	Comprehensive final of tutorial material (including identification)	20%
Tutorial assignments and participation	Four assignments, birding journal	35%

Lecture final: The final lecture will cover all material presented during 12 lectures as well as several chapters of the textbook which will not be covered in class.

Tutorial identification quizzes: Students will be responsible for learning to identify 145 of the most common birds of the Toronto area. Students will be presented with tips on identifying 20 to 25 species during 6 identification tutorials. During the following tutorial (excluding days with off-campus field trips) students will be quizzed on the identification of species covered during previous tutorial sessions. Each quiz will contain 10 species, 8 of which will be from the previous tutorial session and 2 of which will be from earlier tutorials where applicable.

Tutorial final: The tutorial final will test student knowledge on the identification of all 145 species learned in tutorial as well as information covered in tutorial assignments, bird watching excursions (i.e. mist netting and blood sampling details) and field trips.

Missed Exams: Students unable to attend a tutorial quiz, exam, or field trip for religious reasons must notify the instructor by e-mail as soon as possible in order to make alternate arrangements. Students unable to attend these events due to sickness must contact the instructor by e-mail within 3 working days of the test, must present the instructor with a valid doctor's note and must complete a UTSC medical certificate (available via the registrar's website) which confirms their illness, and medical attention at the time of the exam.

Students who miss the Lecture final exam must petition to the registrar.

LECTURE TOPICS AND READINGS

Lecture	Date	Lecture title	Gill textbook reading	Ritchison suggested reading
1	4-Sep	Adaptive radiation and the diversity of birds	Chapter 1 Pg. 3-20	
2	11-Sep	Feathers	Chapter 2 Pg. 39-41	
3	18-Sep	Mechanics of flight	Chapter 5	Bird Flight I, Bird Flight II
	25 Sept	No Lecture		
4	2-Oct	Guest Lecture: Dr. Allen Baker (Royal Ontario Museum)		
5	9-Oct	Evolution of flight and origin of birds	Chapter 2 Pg. 5-39	Intro to Birds, Bird Flight I
6	23-Oct	Migration and Navigation		
7	30-Oct	Biogeography	Chapter 10	
8	6-Nov	Bird Vocalizations	Chapter 8	Vocal Communication
9	13-Nov	Mating Systems and Sexual Selection	Chapter 12, 13 (the latter is testable material even though only briefly covered in lecture)	Mating Systems
10	20-Nov	Guest Lecture: TBA		
11	29-Nov	Sex, nests, and young	Chapter 15, 16 (the latter is testable material even though only briefly covered in lecture)	Avian Reproduction I, II, III

TUTORIAL SCHEDULE

#	Date	Event	Event details	Identification Series	Lab Quiz	Guided Birdwatching	Outdoors event ¹
1	5-Sep	Tutorial (BV 498)	Introduction to class; Bird watching at UTSC	non-passerine landbirds	x	yes	yes
2	12-Sep	Tutorial (BV 498)	Introduction to Point Count Surveys; Bird watching at UTSC	Raptors, owls, nighthawk	quiz	yes (mist netting)	yes
3	19-Sep	Tutorial (BV 498)	Bird watching at UTSC or trip to nearby pond	passerines 1	quiz	yes (mist netting, blood samples)	yes
4	26-Sep	Field Trip 1	Field Trip to Tommy Thompson Park	x	x	yes	yes
5	3-Oct	Field Trip 2	Migratory raptor field trip			yes	yes
6	10-Oct	Tutorial (BV 498)	Sound lab 1 (intraspecific geographic variation)	passerines 2	quiz	yes	yes
7	24-Oct	Tutorial (BV 498)	Bird Collisions lab write-up	passerines 3	quiz	yes	yes
8	31-Nov	Tutorial (BV 498)	Sound lab 2 (song divergence in sympatry) Part 1	shorebirds	quiz	yes	yes
9	7-Nov	Tutorial (BV 498)	Sound lab 2 (song divergence in sympatry) Part 2	waterbirds	quiz	yes	yes
10	14-Nov	Tutorial (BV 498)	TBA	review	quiz	yes	yes
11	21-Nov	Field Trip 3	Royal Ontario Museum (collections)	x	x	x	no
12	28-Nov	Tutorial (BV 498)	FINAL TUTORIAL EXAM	x	x	x	No

1 Please wear appropriate clothes and footwear for outdoor activities as described above.