

**BIOD52 Special Topics in Biodiversity and Conservation**  
2020 Winter

- Instructor:** Nathan Lovejoy  
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- TA:** JP Fontenelle  
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Email: jp.fontenelle@mail.utoronto.ca
- Schedule:** Tuesday 12-2pm, BV355
- Calendar:** A seminar exploration of current topics in biodiversity and conservation, including genetic, organismal, and community levels. Examples include DNA barcoding, adaptive radiations, phylogenetic trees, and biodiversity hotspots. Skills development in critical thinking and interpretation of the primary literature is emphasized, with coursework involving group presentations, discussions, and written analyses.
- Prerequisite:** BIOC50H3 or BIOC63H3
- Goal:** The goal of this course is to develop in-depth knowledge and understanding of current topics in the fields of biodiversity and systematics. Work in these areas forms the basis for understanding how diversity in the natural world originated, is ecologically maintained, and is best protected. We will select topics that may be contentious, and should provide the basis for constructive analysis and debate. An objective of the course is to develop abilities in the analysis, evaluation, and presentation of primary scientific literature.
- Format:** This is a seminar class, where we will encourage lively discussion and debate on selected topics. We will rely on students to be fully prepared and to be active participants at each meeting. Scientific topics and related articles will be assigned for each week. Before class each week, students should: (1) read all the assigned papers, (2) prepare questions/comments, and (3) write a one page double-spaced summary of the readings to be handed in at the start of class.
- Each student will take part in leading two of the class topics (as part of a small group). The group responsible for presenting that week's topic (see below) will make a presentation and then moderate a discussion of the assigned material.
- Students presenting the week's topic will be responsible for facilitating and leading two of the class topics. For this, the student groups should: (1) consult additional sources of literature on the topic (approximately 5 journal articles), (2)

as a group, prepare an approximately 30 to 40 minute Powerpoint presentation of the week's topic. After the presentation, the group, assisted by the instructor, will moderate a discussion among members of the class. Instead of writing a one page summary for that week, the group should turn in their list of the additional sources of literature consulted.

**Final Paper:** Students will prepare and present a major research assignment on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor. This research paper should ideally be framed as an analysis or discussion of a topic, rather than a survey or overview. The paper should include approximately 3000 words of text (double spaced) with additional pages for figures/tables/references. To prepare this paper, students are expected to read (and cite) approximately 10 to 15 articles from the primary scientific literature. Additional instructions regarding content and format will be provided. The final paper is due on the last day of UTSC classes.

Grading scheme:

One page summaries of weekly readings:	20%
Participation in class discussions:	15%
Presenting and leading two class discussions:	30%
Final research paper:	35%

*AccessAbility:*

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the *AccessAbility* Services as soon as possible.

*AccessAbility* Services staff (located in AA142, Arts & Admin Building) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations 416-287-7560 or email [ability@utsc.utoronto.ca](mailto:ability@utsc.utoronto.ca).

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. The University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the processes for addressing academic offences. Potential offences in papers and assignments include using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement, submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor, making up sources or facts, obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

