COURSE DESCRIPTION
Familiarization with the various kinds of vertebrates through examination of morphological, physiological, and behavioral features characterizing each group; to gain an appreciation of biodiversity.

OUTCOMES: at the completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Discuss the geologic history of vertebrates regarding origin, evolution, adaptation.
2. Employ methods of capture, preservation, and identification of verts.
3. Understand the natural history of vertebrates as it relates to adaptation.
4. Attain an acquaintance to the scientific literature on vertebrates.
5. Gain an appreciation of economic, ecological and anesthetic value of conserving the biodiversity of vertebrates.

LECTURES
Lectures provide major guidelines for coordinating study and reading with the practical experience gained in the laboratories. Text and outside readings will be assigned to broaden perspective, provide examples when lecture time is insufficient, and to encourage a working familiarity with the basic literature on vertebrates. The required lecture text is:


LABORATORIES
Practical exercises will involve working with the university teaching collection, field trips, and collected specimens. Marks will be allocated for specimen preparation (preservation technique and correct data on tags and logbooks), and two practical exams (identification of species, morphological characteristics, natural history information, and preservation techniques).

Required references are:

Chaney, Alan M. *Keys to the vertebrates of Texas*. Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute.

In addition, any of the following books may be used (additional references will be given in the laboratory):


Dixon, James R. *Amphibians and reptiles of Texas with keys, taxonomic synopses, bibliography, and distribution maps*. Texas A&M University Press, College Station.


**COURSE GRADE**

1. **Lecture Exams**: 3 one-hour exams each worth 100 marks will cover lectures, assigned readings (text and supplemental), and laboratory exercises. 
   
   MARKS: 300

2. **Laboratory Exams**: two exams worth 100 marks each.  
   
   MARKS: 200

3. **Specimen Collection, Dissection, and/or Preparation**:  
   
   MARKS: 100

TOTAL MARKS POSSIBLE: 600

**FINAL MARK = TOTAL MARKS EARNED/TOTAL MARKS POSSIBLE X 100**

(100-90 = A; 89-80 = B; 79-70 = C; 69-60 = D; 59-0 = F)

Please note that an “F” will be assigned if a student withdraws from a course without completing the proper forms for dropping a course.

**HAVE AN ENJOYABLE AND REWARDING SEMESTER.**
Disability and Veterans’ Services: Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is committed to providing persons with disabilities an equal opportunity to access campus facilities, resources and programs. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Support and accommodations are also available for returning veterans who experience cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus. Our Office of Disability Services arranges such support and academic accommodations. To make a request, or for more information, call (361) 825-5816 or visit Driftwood 101. It is important to contact the Office of Disability Services in a timely fashion as it will take time for them to review requests and prepare accommodations and accommodation letters.

Grade Appeals: As stated in the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi University Rules and Procedures (Section B [Academic Program], Part 13 [Students]: 13.02.99.C2 [Student Grade Appeals] and 13.02.99C2.01 [Student Grade Appeal Procedures]), a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is on the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, consult the University Rules and Procedures specified above (accessible through the University Rules and Procedures website at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.
**SCHEDULE OF LECTURES, LABORATORIES, AND EXAMINATIONS**

This timetable may be modified due to unforeseen events, opportunities for field trips, and student interest in various topics. It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of changes in the schedule announced in class. Some of the field trips will be on weekends due to time constraints; departure and return times will be announced in lectures.

Lectures and laboratories are interdependent, complementary approaches towards understanding the same principles. Subject material from lectures and laboratories may appear together on any examination.

**AUG.** 25  Introduction: Info Sheets, Syllabus, Refs, Time, Taxonomy  
30  What is a vertebrate?

**SEPT** 01  Pisces: Classification  
   **Lab 1:** Lab Orient., Proc., Keying, Field Notebooks
06  Pisces: Classification  
08  Pisces: General Characteristics  
   **Lab 2:** Major Fish Types, Teleost Diversity; Lab Notebooks
13  Pisces: Special Characteristics  
15  Amphibia: Classification  
   **Lab 3:** Frogs, Toads, Salamanders, Caecilians
20  Amphibia: General Characteristics  
22  Amphibia: Special Characteristics  
   **Lab 4:** Turtles, Alligators, Crocodiles, and Lizards
27  **LECTURE EXAM I** (INTRO. -> AMPHIBS.)
29  Reptilia: Classification  
   **Lab 5:** Snakes; Collections; Review

**OCT.** 04  Reptilia: General Characters  
06  Reptilia: Special Characteristics  
   **Lab 6:** MIDTERM LAB EXAM (INTRO. -> REPT.)
11  Aves: Classification  
13  Aves: General Characteristics  
   **Lab 7:** Bird Skeletons and Skins
18  Aves: Special Characteristics  
20  Aves: Special Characteristics  
   **Lab 8:** Birding
25  **LECTURE EXAM II** (REPTILES -> BIRDS)  
27  Mammalia: Classification  
   **Lab 9:** Mammal Skins
NOV. 01 Mammalia: General Characteristics
03 Mammalia: General Characteristics

Lab 10: FIELD TRIP (FRI. -> SUN.)

08 Mammalia: Special Characteristics
10 Mammalia: Special Characteristics

Lab 11: Mammal Skeletons and Study Skins

15 Distribution
17 Distribution: Movements

Lab 12: Review

22 Distribution: Dormancy
24 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Lab 13: FINAL LAB EXAM (BIRDS AND MAMMALS)

29 Reproduction: Growth and Development, Population Dynamics

DEC. 01 LECT. EXAM III (MAMMALS-> TOPICS)

Lab 14: Last Day to Return Equipment

06 Life of Mammals

TBA FINALS MEETING