A. **COURSE INFORMATION**

   **Course number/section:** BIOL 4425.001; BIOL 4425.101 (lab)
   **Class meeting time:** Lecture – MWF 8-8:50 am; Lab – F 9-11:50
   **Class location:** Lecture – BH 202; Lab – CS 240
   **Course website:** currently unavailable

B. **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

   **Instructor:** Kim Withers
   **Office location:** NRC 3205
   **Office Hours:** 10-12 MW, 11-1 T
   **Telephone:** 825-5907
   **Email:** Kim.Withers@tamucc.edu
   **Appointments:** Call to set up an appointment outside of office hours

C. **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

   **Catalog Course Description**
   Systematics, anatomy, physiology, ecology, behavior, and field identification of birds. Prerequisite: BIOL 3414 or consent of instructor. SMTE 0091 is a co-requisite for this course. Documented completion of this safety training is required early in the semester for continued participation in this course. Safety training given during a laboratory meeting early in the semester is required for continued participation in the course.

   **Extended Course Description**
   Students in this course will investigate the natural history, biology, ecology, evolution, and conservation of birds around the world. The lab will be focused on bird identification in the field including visual, auditory, habitat, and behavioral traits and methods for studying birds in the field.

D. **PREREQUISITES AND CO-REQUISITES**

   **Prerequisites**
   BIOL 3414 Vertebrate Biology

   **Corequisite**
   SMTE 0091 Biological Laboratory Safety Seminar

E. **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS, READINGS, & SUPPLIES**

   **Required Textbooks**

   A *bird field guide—pick one of the following:*


   **Other Required References**

   Additional readings from the primary literature and other sources will be assigned throughout the semester.
Required Supplies

*Field Notebook*—**MUST be a Rite in the Rain notebook.**

- Best page format choices (from Amazon):
  - Rite in the Rain Spiral Notebook – Journal #393
  - Rite in the Rain Birders Journal #195

*Binoculars*—**MUST be 8X42 or 8X50**

- Recommendation
  - This is a very good, inexpensive, entry-level binocular. Eagle Optics has a great replace/repair/clean policy as well – if an Eagle Optics brand binocular breaks, they will repair or replace forever, and you can get them cleaned and maintained free, just have to pay to the postage.

Recommended Supplies

- Binocular harness system to replace standard binocular neck strap. You can get one from Eagle Optics - [http://www.eagleoptics.com/binocular-accessories/eagle-optics/eagle-optics-bino-system-harness-strap](http://www.eagleoptics.com/binocular-accessories/eagle-optics/eagle-optics-bino-system-harness-strap) and they are also available from Academy and other outdoor stores. Prices range from $18-$50. These harnesses (and there are several styles, just search on “binocular harness strap”) take the strain off your neck and make it much easier to spend long days in the field.

- Large fanny pack, multi-pocketed field vest, or something like a belted game bag or shell pouch ([http://www.flushandpoint.com/products.asp?id=36](http://www.flushandpoint.com/products.asp?id=36)) so that you can quickly and easily get your field guide, field notebook and water etc. in hand.

**F. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT**

The objective of this course is to provide students with an understanding of the varied roles of birds in ecosystems, how the environment has shaped their biology and ecology, and the issues and challenges of conserving birds.

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. **DEMONSTRATE** knowledge of biology and ecology of birds
2. **UNDERSTAND** the biogeography of birds and the reasons for their patterns of distribution
3. **UNDERSTAND** the biotic and abiotic interactions that shape bird communities
4. **UNDERSTAND** the challenges to and opportunities for bird conservation
5. **DEMONSTRATE** the ability to identify birds by sight and sound.
6. **PLAN & CARRY OUT** a field study on some aspect of bird ecology or behavior

**G. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS & ACTIVITIES**

Lecture, readings with discussion, case studies, and student presentations will be the bulk of the “lecture” portion of the course. For the lab, most of our time will be spent in the field observing birds, learning to identify birds, learning how to make behavioral and other research-oriented observations on birds in natural settings. There will be some in-lab activities associated with bird anatomy and physiology late in the semester or during bad weather days.
H. MAJOR COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING CRITERIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Student Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Points (% of Grade)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exams (3)</td>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>300 (33.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Studies (2)</td>
<td>1-3, 4</td>
<td>100 (11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Field Trip Presentation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50 (5.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification Practicals (3)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>300 (33.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Notebook</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50 (5.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Study Extended Abstract &amp; Presentation</td>
<td>5, 6</td>
<td>100 (11.2%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>900</td>
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</tbody>
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Grades will be assigned as follows:
A = 90% or greater
B = 80-89%
C = 70-79%
D =60-69%
F = <70%

I. COURSE CONTENT/SCHEDULE

J. COURSE POLICIES

Attendance/Tardiness
You are expected to attend every lecture and lab. Courtesy dictates that you will be on time for lecture. For case studies and associated discussion activities you will not get credit for the in-class portion if you do not attend class that day.

When we are working outside during lab, please arrive at the assembly point 5 to 10 minutes early. For activities on campus you may be able to catch up, but for field trips off campus you WILL BE LEFT BEHIND IF YOU ARE NOT ON TIME.

Late Work and Make-up Exams
Late work is not accepted.

For case studies and associated discussion activities you will not get credit for the in-class portion of the activity if you do not attend class that day.

Make-up lecture exams are only given in the case of extreme circumstances, such as hospitalization or death. Documentation of the circumstances through the appropriate on-campus division will be expected and arrangements must be made PRIOR to the exam for a make-up exam to be given.

There are NO make-ups given for lab exams

Extra Credit
There is no such thing as “extra credit” in this class. In the words of Spongebob Squarepants and Mrs. Puff:

Spongebob: “Mrs. Puff, I don’t feel like I really did anything.”
Mrs. Puff: “That’s how extra credit is supposed to feel.”

For more about my attitude toward extra credit, see this article by Jack Slay Jr. http://chronicle.com/article/No-Extra-Credit-For-You/44956

Cell Phone Use
Please turn off and stow your cell phone when you come to class.
Laptop Use
I think you are generally better off to take notes by hand and transcribing them later. I will tolerate laptop use in class as long as you limit yourself to taking notes. If I see you are doing other things, like surfing the web, I will ask you to turn the laptop off.

Food in Class
Food or drinks are allowed in the lecture classroom, but cannot be taken into the lab. You should bring water with you on days that we are in the field.

Missed Exam
See “Late Work and Make-up Exam” policies above.

K. COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity (University)
It is expected that university students will demonstrate a high level of maturity, self-direction, and ability to manage their own affairs. Students are viewed as individuals who possess the qualities of worth, dignity, and the capacity for self-direction in personal behavior.
See Full University Policy at http://catalog.tamucc.edu/content.php?catoid=10&navoid=313#Academic_Integrity

Classroom/Professional Behavior

Deadline for Dropping a Course with a Grade of W (University)
The grade of W will be assigned to any student officially dropping a course by November 6, 2015. No student is eligible to receive a W without completing the official drop process by this deadline. Visit the Office of the University Registrar for the Course Drop Form that must submitted. After November 6, 2015 a student will not be allowed to drop a course.

Grade Appeals (College of Science and Engineering)
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, 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 upon 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, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules website at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html, and the College of Science and Engineering Grade Appeals webpage at http://sci.tamucc.edu/students/GradeAppeal.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the chair or director of the appropriate department or school, the Office of the College of Science and Engineering Dean, or the Office of the Provost.

Disability Services
Disability Services (DS) is the hub for coordinating services and accommodations to ensure accessibility and utilization of all programs for all Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi students with disabilities. Our services are designed to meet the unique educational needs of enrolled students with documented permanent or temporary disabilities. DS provides intake and consultation services to students seeking to register with our office. DS reviews an individual’s documentation of disability and assesses eligibility for services and the determination of reasonable accommodations. For more information visit the Disability Services Office at 116 Corpus Christi Hall or go to http://disabilityservices.tamucc.edu/

GENERAL DISCLAIMER
I reserve the right to modify the information, schedule, assignments, deadlines, and course policies in this syllabus if and when necessary. I will announce such changes in a timely manner during regularly scheduled lecture periods.