Selected Topics: Texas State Aquarium Animal Care Operations
(BIOL 4590.004, 3 credits)
Department of Life Sciences
Summer Session I - 2019

A. COURSE INFORMATION

Course number/section: BIOL 4590.004
Class meeting time: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday (9:30 – 11:25 AM)
Class location: Texas State Aquarium (Conference Room)
Course Website: (Island Online/Blackboard Portal) https://bb9.tamucc.edu/

B. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor(s): C. Ed Proffitt, Ph.D., Jesse Gilbert (TSA), & John Scarpa, Ph.D.
Office location: Tidal Hall: Proffitt – Rm 139 and Scarpa – Rm 339.
Office hours: Monday - Thursday (2:00 - 4:00 PM) and by appointment
Telephone: (361) 825-2754 (office)
e-mail: Ed.Proffitt@tamucc.edu & John.Scarpa@tamucc.edu
Appointments: A student may make an appointment to see me at times other than the scheduled office hours listed above. If possible, make at least 24 hrs in advance by phone or e-mail. I am available for consultation and extra help, but it is the student’s responsibility to request such help. If I am unavailable or need to relocate during office hours, I will post a note on my office door.

C. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Catalog Course Description
BIOL 4590 - Selected Topics: Texas State Aquarium Animal Care Operations. 3 sem. hrs. (3:0). This course will examine the unique requirements that aquariums and zoos have for balancing animal care and health with public display for general education and conservation research. Classes will be held at Texas State Aquarium.

Extended Course Description
Aquariums and zoos have unique requirements that balance animal care and health with public display for general education and conservation research. Today's zoos and aquaria are an interface between humans and animals. Personnel are more than animal caretakers, as they assist in conservation efforts through studying organisms in their care for behavior, physiology, nutrition, reproduction, and disease issues to name a few, as well as educate the public through exhibit and outreach programs. This course will examine these requirements through case studies involving aquatic, terrestrial, and avian organisms at the Texas State Aquarium.
D. **PREREQUISITES AND COREQUISITES**

**Prerequisites**
Junior standing and above or permission of instructor.

**Corequisites**
Lab Safety course: SMTE 0091 – Biological Laboratory Safety Seminar. Although no laboratory is scheduled, students will interact with systems containing live animals, therefore, the lab safety course is necessary.

E. **REQUIRED TEXTBOOK(S), READINGS AND SUPPLIES**

**Required Textbook(s)**
None required.

**Optional Textbook(s) or Other References**
Reading materials, or links to materials, will be provided through Blackboard.

**Supplies**
None required.

F. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ASSESSMENT**

Assessment is a process used by instructors to help improve learning. Assessment is essential for effective learning because it provides feedback to both students and instructors. A critical step in this process is making clear the course’s student learning outcomes that describe what students are expected to learn to be successful in the course. The student learning outcomes for this course are listed below. By collecting data and sharing it with students on how well they are accomplishing these learning outcomes students can more efficiently and effectively focus their learning efforts. This information can also help instructors identify challenging areas for students and adjust their teaching approach to facilitate learning.

Upon completion of this course, the student will have, *increased his or her knowledge and understanding of scientific content and concept, developed critical thinking skills by using the scientific method and scientific analysis, and be able to:*

1. Describe the basic tenets and regulatory aspects of public aquaria and zoos for public education and conservation research.
2. List and identify anatomical parts, normal and abnormal behavior, and physiology of specific animal groups, especially as related to well-being and disease issues, including nutritionally and environmentally induced.
3. Describe and perform routine tasks and standard measurements (e.g., calculate feed amounts, measure environmental parameters) associated with specific animal groups.
4. Analyze and evaluate data from animal systems for effective reporting.
5. Design and present a conceptual exhibit for a specific animal group.
G. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND ACTIVITIES

Learning is more than just reading, taking notes, and memorizing. Reading and taking notes puts information in short-term memory where it is forgotten quickly unless you do something with it. Memorizing is important. However, memorization is only one step (often the first step) in the learning process. As university students, you should be able to link, combine, and synthesize the bits of data that you memorize into useful concepts. The instructor of this course will provide the students with: 1) information in the form of lectures, audio/visual information (including online information), handouts, assigned readings, and supplemental readings; and 2) advice, supervision and guidance. The student learning outcomes in section F will be achieved through attending lectures, completing assignments, and participation in class discussions.

H. MAJOR COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

The learning outcomes stated earlier will be assessed through a variety of methods as noted in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>% of FINAL GRADE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Examinations</td>
<td>40 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework Assignments</td>
<td>20 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation/ Discussion/Activities</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Presentation</td>
<td>30 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 %</strong></td>
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**Grading:** There will be two (2) written exams. Exams may be composed of any, or all, of the following: multiple choice, matching, fill in the blank, problem solving, short and long answer. The examinations are sequential (i.e., each examination covers material from one specific section of the course). The final presentation will indicate a comprehensive knowledge of the material (i.e., covers material from the entire course). No make-up exams will be given, except as noted below in policies. If the exam is not taken a grade of zero (0) will be entered. No extra credit assignments will be given. Class participation (attendance, discussion, activities) and homework (e.g., reports) will also be factored into your final grade as noted above. The grading scale is: A=89-100%, B=79-88%, C=69-78%, D=59-68%, and F=0-58%. All grades will be rounded to the nearest whole number, therefore, a grade of 88.50% would be rounded to 89% (A) and a grade of 88.49% would be an 88% (B). Last day to withdraw from class with a "W" is Fri, 21 June, and must be done by the student.

- I will rectify any clerical, mathematical and/or other errors that you note. You have only one (1) week to notify me of such errors after an assignment, quiz or examination is returned.
- I will *not* change a legitimate course grade just because you “need” it either (for financial aid, to get into professional school or program, etc.). Be sure you earn the grade you want. I reserve the right to curve, but doing so is usually not necessary. (Curves are based on statistical
analysis of the entire class’s performance, not on the needs of individual students.)

- The reasons for receiving a grade of “I” (incomplete) are clearly defined in the University Catalog; this “grade” cannot be used simply to prevent a student from receiving an unwanted grade in a class.
- I only discuss grades in person (i.e., I do not discuss grades or matters relating to grades over the telephone or by e-mail). If you wish to know your final grade before the official grade report is mailed to you, please see me in person or provide me with a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

I. COURSE CONTENT/SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week # - DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC(S)</th>
<th>READINGS / ASSIGNMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – June 3</td>
<td>Aquarium/zoo background &amp; TSA history</td>
<td>AZA accreditation standards-Rd. pgs. 1-35 Access to TSA news articles &amp; webpage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – June 4</td>
<td>Exhibit Design/Construction</td>
<td>TBD (journal and industry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – June 5</td>
<td>Administrative Operations (Records, Permits)</td>
<td>TSA Animal Care Manual – General Section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – June 6</td>
<td>Water Quality</td>
<td>Elasmo Husbandry Manual I – Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – June 10</td>
<td>Water Quality/Life Support</td>
<td>Elasmo Husbandry Manual I – Chapter 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – June 11</td>
<td>Marine Mammals</td>
<td>TBD (journal and industry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – June 12</td>
<td>Marine Mammals/ Exam 1</td>
<td>TBD (journal and industry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – June 13</td>
<td>Avian/Terrestrial Mammals</td>
<td>Animal Care Manual Ch. 8-9: Red-legged seriema</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 – June 17</td>
<td>Aquarium Animal Health (Whitaker)</td>
<td>TBD (journal and industry)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 – June 18</td>
<td>Fish Welfare (Whitaker)</td>
<td>TBD (journal and industry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – June 19</td>
<td>Fish/Herps (Manjarris)</td>
<td>TBD (journal and industry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – June 20</td>
<td>Fish/Herps (Manjarris)</td>
<td>TBD (journal and industry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – June 24</td>
<td>Wildlife Rescue and Rehab</td>
<td>TBD (journal and industry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – June 25</td>
<td>Disaster Planning Restart-ex. Hurricane Harvey</td>
<td>TBD (journal and industry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 – June 27</td>
<td>Chondrichthyes (Manjarris)/ Exam 2</td>
<td>TBD (journal and industry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – July 1</td>
<td>Open discussion/project questions/mock exhibit presentation</td>
<td>TBD (journal and industry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – July 2</td>
<td>Animal Behavior &amp; Enrichment</td>
<td>TBD (journal and industry)</td>
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### J. COURSE POLICIES

**Attendance/Tardiness**

Each student’s individual career experiences provide valuable perspective to their peers. Therefore, it is critical that you attend class regularly to be a partner in this learning environment. At each class meeting, attendance will be noted. It is each student’s responsibility to contact the instructor directly (phone or e-mail), in advance, if class will be missed. The instructor will not accept late work without valid reasons. It is your responsibility to find out what you missed, get notes, learn about changes in the syllabus, etc. Students with a university approved scheduled absence (athletics, military duty, etc.) must contact the instructor well in advance (>72 hrs) of a scheduled absence. Exams may be taken early (or late) in those specific cases. Students who do not arrange to take exams due to a scheduled absence will not be eligible for this special consideration. A written excuse note from the university department involved is required.

Students are encouraged to contact the instructor anytime they are not achieving their intended level of success, prior to taking any other action. Students who need to withdraw must complete an official form and submit it consistent with college policy no later than the official published date. “Incomplete” grades are awarded only when an emergency prevents a student from completing a minor portion of the course assignments. Active participation is a part of your grade. It includes (1) asking questions; (2) answering questions with supportive evidence; (3) responding to other student’s comments, etc. Students are expected to be on time for class, to address others with respect, and to project an attentive and concerned demeanor.

**Late Work and Make-up Exams**

Exams count toward your class grade as noted in the grading section of the syllabus. No make-up exams will be given. If the exam is not taken a grade of zero (0) will be entered. For some scheduled events (athletics, military duty, etc.), you may arrange to take a lecture examination at a different time, but no later than one week after the exam is given. You must obtain your instructor’s approval at least one week before you wish to take the test.) If you arrange to take any test at an alternate time and do not show for that appointment, then you receive a grade of zero (0). Students who do not arrange to take examinations in advance will not be eligible for this special consideration. “University-excused absences” are given mainly for University-sponsored events; and not all “legitimate” excuses are University-excused. A written excuse from the Athletics Office and/or Office of Student Engagement and Success (not from a teacher, student organization, etc.) is required for an
absence to be “University-excused.”

**Extra Credit**
No extra credit assignments will be given.

**Cell Phone Use**
The use of cell phones and other personal electronic devices (PEDs) are prohibited during class. All cell phone ringers must be turned off (i.e., set to silent or vibrate) during the class period. If you are emergency personnel (i.e., EMT, fire, or police) you may set your device to vibrate. Any student who uses a cell phone to make or answer a call, send and read text messages or e-mails (other than TAMUCC emergency text messages), or any other use of a personal electronic device during class may have that device confiscated and be asked to leave class, which will be considered an absence for that class. No student has the right to disturb the teaching and learning process. Voice recording of lectures is allowed, but no video or photography is allowed during class.

**Laptop Use**
Laptop computers and tablets may be used in the classroom for taking notes, as long as they are not a nuisance to other students. However, laptops shall not be used for items as noted above for cell phones or PEDs.

**Food in Class**
There is **NO** eating, drinking, or use of tobacco products (of any kind, including “smokeless”) in the classroom or associated animal areas.

**Missed Exam**
If an exam is missed or not taken a grade of zero (0) will be entered.

**Participation**
Two or more absences, with the exception of death in the nuclear family, sick child/spouse, or personal sickness may result in a failing grade at the discretion of the instructor. You must contact the instructor by phone message or e-mail before class to let the instructor know of your absence.

**Others**
**Cheating** is defined as:
- Copying to any extent the work of another student
- Intentionally assisting another student during an examination
- Having access to material related to an examination during an examination
- Possessing or having access to unauthorized copies of an examination
- Departing from any stated examination conditions
Cheating or other academic dishonesty for exams and assignments will not be tolerated and will result in a Failing (F) grade for the class and suspension.

**Plagiarism:** The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines plagiarism as "To pass off as
one’s own words or ideas of another.”

Plagiarism involves:

- Submitting another person's work as one's own
- Submitting work from any source that is not properly acknowledged by footnote, bibliography, or reference within a paper
- Submitting work pieced together from phrases and/or sentences from various sources without acknowledgement
- Submitting work with another person's phrase(s) rearranged without acknowledgement
- Submitting work that uses any phrase, sentence, or stylistic mannerism without acknowledgement
- Omitting quotation marks from any directly quoted material
- Failure to use three dots (…) to indicate omission of one or more words
- Any other actions deemed to be plagiarism

K. COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

- **Academic Integrity (University)**
  University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a failing grade.

- **Classroom/Professional Behavior**
  Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

- **Statement of Civility**
  Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.
• **Deadline for Dropping a Course with a Grade of W (University)**
  I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. **Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course.** Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. **Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class, but will result in a failing grade.** Please consult the Academic Calendar ([http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/calendar/](http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/calendar/)) for the last day 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](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](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**
  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. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call (361) 825-5816 or visit Disability Services in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

  If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816. [http://disabilityservices.tamucc.edu/](http://disabilityservices.tamucc.edu/)

• **Statement of Academic Continuity**
  In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course may
continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class
activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities
(i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing
of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor
has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

L. OTHER INFORMATION

• Academic Advising: The College of Science & Engineering requires that students
meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The
Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a
faculty mentor, and the department chair. Meetings are by appointment only; advisors
do not take walk-ins. Please call or stop by the Advising Center to check availability
and schedule an appointment. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in
Center for Instruction 350 or can be reached at (361) 825-3928.

• Methods of Achieving Success
  Achieving success in this course will require a time commitment outside of class that
averages three to six hours per week for reading and studying. Students benefit from
actively participating in classroom discussion and other activities.

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.