

Introduction and Schedule for Biology 519

Riparian/Wetland Ecology

Welcome to the Riparian/Wetlands Ecology course! Scientists, government agencies, university departments, and land developers define riparian areas and wetlands somewhat differently. Riparian/Wetlands areas along with grasslands have disappeared faster than any other kind of plant community. Politically, wetlands can be very complicated. Laws regulating wetlands are confusing. Riparian sites adjacent to water are popular for development. In this course, we will look at the biological aspects of these communities and why their conservation and preservation are important.

You will complete six components in this course:

- 1.) **Place Based Science**: Locate and describe one or two riparian/wetland study areas for your class project that could be used for your own classroom activities. (This could be a wildlife preserve, state park, ect.)
- 2.) **Riparian/Wetlands Top 10 Questions**: Research and answer the Top 10 Questions
- 3.) **Identification**: Identify 10 major plants in your study areas. Construct a dichotomous key to the plants or generate an identification guide.
- 4.) **Ethnobotanical Research**: Identify 10 indigenous plants in your study site(s) and discuss the early uses.
5. **Scientific Inquiry**: Conduct a field investigation comparing ecological features in your study site(s).
6. **Riparian/Wetlands Birding**: Observe and generate a list of birds in your riparian/wetland study site. Start this assignment early in the course!

This course will get you outside, investigating areas you find interesting and relevant to you and your students. It may be combined with Biology 513: Grassland Ecology, for observing and similarities and differences between communities.

The only books you may need to obtain are a guide to the local flora and fauna and a bird guide. Access to a thermometer to measure soil temperatures and binoculars will be helpful. You may need a rope or hula hoop for your field investigation.

Biology 519 Riparian Ecology Weekly Overview Summer 2015

Complete and submit Assignment 1- Part 1: Create a Bio or introduction of yourself.
Complete and submit Assignment 1- Part 2: Describe a local riparian/wetland area by the end of the week. Respond to others.

Complete and submit Assignment 2: Top 10 Riparian/Wetlands Questions.
Submit a response to Discussion Topic 2 by Wednesday. Respond to others.

Complete and submit Assignment 3: Dichotomous Key to Plants of Study Area or Identification Guide.
Submit a response to Discussion Topic 3 by Wednesday. Respond to others.

Complete and submit Assignment 4: Ethnobotanical Research Indigenous Plants and Native Uses.
Submit a response to Discussion Topic 4 by Wednesday. Respond to others.

Complete and submit Assignment 5: A Field Investigation. Compare ecological features in your study site(s).
Submit a response to Discussion Topic 5 by Wednesday. Respond to others.

Complete and submit Assignment 6: Birding in Riparian/Wetlands Zones. Observe and generate a list of birds by Friday.
For the last week of class, there will not be a discussion topic!

Grading:

Assignment 1 (Bio/Introduction 5 pts. **plus** a Description of Local Area 25 pts.)

Assignment 2 (Riparian Questions 50 pts.)

Assignment 3 (Dichotomous Key or I.D. Guide 50 pts.)

Assignment 4 (Ethnobotanical Research 50 pts.)

Assignment 5 (Field Research Paper 50 pts.)

Assignment 6 (Bird Observations 50 pts.)

Participation /Discussion (10 points each week... 50 pts total)

330 Total Points

Assignments:

Details for all assignments are located in the ASSIGNMENTS link on the homepage. Please submit all the assignments to me by using the **D2L Dropbox** by Sunday of each week. You should expect to see a grade and comment for your completed assignment no later than Tuesday of the following week. Assignments can be completed in a word .doc or Html. Please submit your assignment using your last name as the first word: JonesAssign1, for example.

Expectations for Weekly Discussions:

Each week you will respond to a discussion topic. I will post the topic under the DISCUSSIONS area. Plan to post your discussion by Wednesday and then respond to your classmates' comments toward the end of the week. Follow up responses are comments made responding to postings made by others. Do NOT post all of your responses in one day. We are attempting to build a learning community that requires participation and interaction from everyone. Furthermore, remember that part of your grade is determined by providing substantive responses to your fellow learners. If you wait until the last minute to post, your colleagues are left hanging. You can expect the instructor to read all of the postings.

You will be divided into groups according to geography (e.g., east, central, west). You are required to submit only to your own group, but discussions will be open to everyone for reading and commenting, and bringing ideas back to your own discussion group.

Substantive Comments:

Part of establishing a learning community is opening and facilitating multiple channels for the communication of ideas. The discussion forum provides a wonderful medium for ideas to be discussed. The more you and your classmates participate, the richer the class will be. A substantive comment is a comment that contains an idea relevant to the topic and facilitates others to express their relevant ideas.

Communication:

Post all questions in the discussion area unless it is a private message intended only for the instructor or another learner. For private messages use the Course Email function. Post your initial posting using Compose a Message. Then use the reply feature to participate in discussions so there is a "threaded" conversation. Be sure to set the arrow to the left of a posting to down so you see the entire thread. When replying to a message, type in a new subject that describes your response. Last, but not least, please preview and edit before posting. After clicking "Post" you will be taken back to the previous screen where you will click "Update listing."

Civility:

All students are expected to exercise self-discipline and respect for the rights of others at all times. Flaming (Posting personal attacks) and other disruptions that interfere with the business of the classroom or with an individual's ability to learn will not be tolerated. Remember treat others as you wish to be treated. Also, remember that smart people speak about ideas not other people-this includes administrators and teachers you have worked with.