

Biology 4944G Seminar in Ecology and Evolution

1. Course Information

Course Information

Biology 4944G

Winter 2025, 3-hour tutorial per week

List of Prerequisites

Restricted to Year 4 Honors Specialization in Biology and Scholars Electives.

Zoom and OWL will be the primary **interface** and video recordings for assessments if we go into another lockdown.

2. Instructor Information

Instructors	Email	Office	Phone	Office Hours
Dr. Graeme Taylor (Course Coordinator)	gtaylor8@uwo.ca	BG2066	81467	appointment

*Students must use their Western (@uwo.ca) email addresses when contacting their instructors. Office hours are by appointment. I prefer in-person meetings, and my second choice is Zoom if required.

3. Course Syllabus, Schedule, Delivery Mode

Course objectives and learning outcomes: This course's primary focus is to develop further the skills necessary to search, understand, synthesize, discuss, and present (written and oral) on current topics in evolution and ecology. After completing this course, you should be able to speak more spontaneously, instinctively, and directly with an audience in this subdiscipline and learn how to adapt the presentation's complexity for different audiences.

Course website: An OWL website will be established for this course. Items on this website include required readings, videos, announcements, grades, valuable URLs, and assignment instructions.

Classes begin: on January 8th,

Fall Reading Week: February 17th to 21st,

Classes end: April 2nd,

Exam period: no exam for this course

Date	Scheduled Topics	Assignment Due	Assig. value
Jan 08	Classes canceled - snow		Parti. ALL classes 10%
Jan 15	Intro & Journal talk picks		
Jan 22	Seminar topic picks & lecture		
Jan 29	Journal Club 01– 6		
Feb 05	Journal Club 7 – 14	Essay Proposal	10%
Feb 12	Journal Club 15 – 20	Journal Essay	10%
Feb 19	<i>Reading break</i>		
Feb 26	Seminars 01 - 04		
Mar 05	Seminars 05 - 07		
Mar 12	Seminars 08 - 11	Seminar Essay	35% & 35% for talk
Mar 19	Seminars 12 - 14		
Mar 26	Seminars 15 - 17		
Apr 02	Seminars 18 - 20		

4. Course Materials

There is no required text book or software. All course material will be posted to OWL:
<https://westernu.brightspace.com/>

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/>) regularly for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

Technical Requirements

On the chance that courses go online a stable internet connection and computer with working microphone and/or webcam.

5. Methods of Evaluation

Grading Scheme and Assessment Dates (see schedule for dates)

10% - participation and leadership

10% - 10 -minute talk

10% - Essay proposal 700-word essay

35% - 3000 to 4000-word research essay (word count refers to the main body of text)

35% - research presentation based on your paper

General information about missed coursework

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs* posted on the Academic Calendar:
https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf,

This policy does not apply to requests for Academic Consideration submitted for **attempted or completed work**, whether online or in person.

The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult [Accessible Education](#).

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:

https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All Academic Consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course. However, the following assessments are excluded from this, and therefore always require formal supporting documentation:

When a student *mistakenly* submits their one allowed Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** for the assessments listed above or those in the **Coursework with Assessment Flexibility** section below, the request cannot be recalled and reapplied. This privilege is forfeited.

Evaluation Scheme for Missed Assessments

Your assignment is due on the day specified, ending at 10 pm; submit your video recording to a shared folder on Western OneDrive. Your writing, both in WORD and as a PDF, for this assignment will be forwarded to an OWL portal, and it will be checked for plagiarism using Turnitin. Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day and the cut-off date is a week after the assignment was due, under such a case the work receives a grade of zero. All work must be completed and assignment-grades cannot to be reweighted to another assignment.

6. Additional Statements

Religious Accommodation

When conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request an accommodation for their absence in writing to the course instructor and/or the Academic Advising office of their Faculty of Registration. This notice should be made as early as possible but not later than two weeks prior to the writing or the examination (or one week prior to the writing of the test).

Please visit the Diversity Calendars posted on our university's EDID website for the recognized religious holidays:

<https://www.edi.uwo.ca>.

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Accessible Education, which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found at:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/Academic_Accommodation_disabilities.pdf.

Academic Policies

The website for Registrar Services is <https://www.registrar.uwo.ca/>.

In accordance with policy,

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/policies_procedures/section1/mapp113.pdf,

the centrally administered e-mail account provided to students will be considered the individual's official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at their official university address is attended to in a timely manner.

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Support Services

Please visit the Science & Basic Medical Sciences Academic Advising webpage for information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic-related matters: <https://www.uwo.ca/sci/counselling/>.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at

https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html.

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Please contact the course instructor if you require lecture or printed material in an alternate format or if any other arrangements can make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Accessible Education at

http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html

if you have any questions regarding accommodations.

Learning-skills counsellors at Learning Development and Success (<https://learning.uwo.ca>) are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

Western University is committed to a thriving campus as we deliver our courses in the mixed model of both virtual and face-to-face formats. We encourage you to check out the Digital Student Experience website to manage your academics and well-being: <https://www.uwo.ca/se/digital/>.

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.