Life Science 3R03
Indicators of Ecosystem Health: streams and wetlands
Spring 2013

Instructors:  Dr. Patricia Chow-Fraser (LS 224) chowfras@mcmaster.ca

Location:  Southern Ontario & Bruce Peninsula

Formal meetings:  April 29 – May 10 (more detail below)

Cost:  $450
(payable to McMaster University; $250 by March 1; balance by April 1)

Includes:
•  Transportation to field sites from McMaster campus
•  Accommodation in Bruce Peninsula
•  Some meals in Bruce Peninsula

Excludes:  Tuition at McMaster University for LIFE SCI 3R03
Co-registration in LIFE SCI 3RF0 required.

Required text:  Custom course manual containing species identification tools, methodologies, and course requirements.

Course objective:  Become familiar with basic ecological principles and field methods, identify native biota and use biological indicators to assess ecosystem health. By the end of the course, students should be able to apply their knowledge to a novel field situation to assess ecosystem health.

Course description:  A field-based course exposing students to native biota, their use as biological indicators and methods of ecological assessment in stream and marsh ecosystems of southern Ontario.

Grading scheme:  Participation  20%
Field journal  15%
Group presentation  25%
Individual presentation  10%
Final paper  30%
Most food and all of the accommodation while in the Bruce Peninsula is covered by the course fee.

We are in Hamilton from Monday, April 29 until the morning of May 3 when we travel to the field site. We are back on the afternoon of May 8th.

For the days that we are in Hamilton, when we are conducting local surveys, students will have to bring their own lunches/suppers as appropriate. There may also be some early morning outings and they would have to have their own breakfast and snacks.

The course fee pays for all travel to study sites while in Hamilton or away.

**Important Information:**

1. **Avenue to Learn** (http://avenue.mcmaster.ca/) will be used to communicate with students in this course and lecture handouts or supplements may be downloaded from Avenue. Please consult this regularly (daily) to keep up with updates and last-minute instructions regarding meeting instructions. You are also encouraged to use this to further your class discussions with classmates and myself. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

2. **Academic dishonesty.** You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. a grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

   It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at [http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

   The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:
   - Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
   - Improper collaboration in group-work.
   - Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

The following are some pitfalls experienced by previous students:
• If you use any information from the internet, verbatim or paraphrased, and you do not acknowledge the source, then you have plagiarized.
• If you work with a classmate and have an identical written answer (i.e. sentences or phrases have the identical wording or phrasing), then you have plagiarized.
• If you copy a photograph or a graph from the internet and do not acknowledge the source, you have plagiarized.

If you are found to have committed plagiarism, you will automatically receive a grade of zero for the given assignment. There will not be any exceptions to this rule.

3. **Policy on missed work, extensions, late penalties:**

   Appropriate documentation for illnesses or personal circumstances must be submitted to the Associate Dean’s Office (BSB – 129) for approval. Late assignments will be penalized by 10% per day.

4. The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.