MNS 320 - Marine Ecology – Spring 2016

Instructor: Dr. Chris Shank  (cshank@utexas.edu)
Office:  BIO 114AA
Office hours: Monday and Wednesday – 1000-1100 AM or by appointment

T.A.:  Emily Anderson  (meaghan.cuddy@utexas.edu)
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Office hours:  ?

Textbook:
Ebook is perfectly fine!!

Course objectives:
-gain broad view of marine ecology including interactions among organisms, habitats, and physical and biogeochemical processes
-acquire strong foundation in basic ecological principles
-develop mechanistic understanding of how marine ecosystems are structured and how they function

Course prerequisites:
Biology 311D, and Chemistry 302 or 302H

Course website:
The Canvas webpage for this course is accessible through UT Direct. You can log on directly to Canvas through http://canvas.utexas.edu.

Pre-class reading assignments & Canvas:
It is essential that you read the assigned pages or chapter before class! You will also find links to other web resources on Canvas, and these will be updated throughout the semester. Class announcements and reminders will be posted on Canvas so check the site regularly.

Class Grading:
25%  Reading Quizzes  25%  Group Concept Quizzes and Activities
25%  Midterm  25%  Final Exam

Grading Scale:
A > 93  A- = 90-92
B+ = 87-89  B = 83-86  B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79  C = 73-76  C- = 70-72
D+ = 67-69  D = 63-66  D- = 60-62
F < 60
**Reading Quizzes:**
Short (~15 min) reading quizzes will be given at the beginning of each Monday class. All quiz grades will be averaged to obtain 25% of the overall course average. Reading quiz material will not be cumulative; it will include only course material to be covered in Monday’s required reading assignment.

**Group Concept Quizzes and Activities:**
Concept quizzes/group activities will be given each Wednesday. Concept quizzes/activities focus on the synthesis and integration of material covered in the week’s reading and in-class lecture material. Concept quizzes/activities will be taken as a group (3-4 students) and are closed book – only a writing utensil and your brain are allowed! All members of a group will receive the same grade, and groups will change each week based on somewhat random drawings (by Shank). These activities are meant to be fun and educational! All group quiz/activity grades will be averaged to obtain 25% of the overall course average.

**Midterm Exam:**
The midterm exam will take place during a regular class period on Wednesday Mar 9. The midterm will likely consist of 3-4 sections: basic concepts (multiple choice, true/false), diagrams and data interpretation (reading graphs and figures), and synthesis (short answer questions applying knowledge to new scenarios).

**Final Exam:**
The final exam will take place during the university-scheduled exam period. The final exam will also likely consist of 3-4 sections: basic concepts (multiple choice, true/false), diagrams and data interpretation (reading graphs and figures), and synthesis (short answer questions applying knowledge to new scenarios).

**Attendance:**
Keep in mind that missing class results in missed quizzes and group activities, which can have a big impact on your overall grade. Studies have shown a significant positive correlation between class attendance and final grades (Street 1975, Gunn 1993), so I strongly encourage students to attend all of the classes. Absence for religious observances is allowed per the Holy Days policy.

**Missed Quizzes/Group Activities:**
No credit will be given for a quiz/group activity that is missed because of an unexcused absence. If a quiz/group activity is missed and a valid non-academic excuse (e.g. illness, formal event) is provided to Shank, the missed quiz/group activity will not be counted towards the final grade; instead, scores of remaining quizzes will be averaged to determine the final quiz grade.

**Re-grading policy:**
Requests for re-grading will be considered for one week after the quiz/assignment/test is returned. Requests must be submitted in writing (email) before the end of class (4:30 p.m.) one week after the graded item is returned. For example, if corrected quizzes were returned on Monday, you have until 2:30 p.m. on the following Monday to request reconsideration of one or
more points of the quiz. Shank will provide an answer within one week after the request is received. After 2:30 p.m. one week after the quizzes are returned, all grades become final.

**Email:**
In accordance with University policy regarding e-mail, information concerning this class may be communicated via email, and it is expected that e-mail messages will be received and read in a timely manner. E-mail will be sent to your official e-mail address, which can be updated in UTDirect. It is the responsibility of every student to keep the University informed of changes in his/her official e-mail address. Consequently, e-mail returned with "User Unknown" is not an acceptable excuse for missed communication. Students are expected to check e-mail frequently, recognizing that certain issues may be time-critical. It is strongly recommended that e-mail be checked daily. Undeliverable messages returned because of either a full inbox or use of a "spam" filter will be considered delivered without further action required of the instructors or teaching assistant. *When using e-mail to submit assignments or other work to be graded, we strongly suggest that you copy (cc:) the message to yourself or request a return receipt.*

**Drop dates:**

**4th class day: Dropping courses electronically:** During the first four class days, students may add and drop courses with the Registrar’s online registration service, ROSE

**12th class day: Dropping a class with possible refund:** During days five through twelve students may drop courses online, but must go to the department offering the course to seek permission to add a course. Be advised that some departments do not allow adds/drops after the fourth class day. For those departments that do allow adds/drops, the add-transactions before the twelfth class day will be processed in the respective department. Students who wish to add a class after the twelfth class day should be required to go to the Student Division of the Dean's Office (first floor of W. C. Hogg) to provide justification for the proposed change. The student must have written permission and documentation of class attendance from the instructor and departmental approval.

**49th class day (approximate): Last day to drop a course with approval:** After the 12th day of class, and until the deadline for dropping courses, a student wishing to drop a course will get the forms from the Dean's Office (WCH 1.106) or their departmental advising center and ask the instructor to sign the drop form. Instructors are also asked to indicate on this form the grade (A-F) that the student has earned in the class up to this point. In contrast to previous years, instructors are not asked or able to assign a Q vs F on this form; henceforth the students are completing this paperwork for a Q-drop.

*Nonacademic Q-drop:* After the last day for academic Q-drop, students with substantiated nonacademic reasons (as determined by the Dean’s Office) may be allowed to drop a course. Faculty will be asked to provide information on student performance up to the time of the nonacademic Q-drop request but are not responsible for making the decision about assigning a grade of Q. Please encourage students who experience significant nonacademic problems such as extended health-related problems or family emergencies to contact the Dean’s Office.

*New One-time Drop Policy:* Beginning this year, students have the option once in their undergraduate degree to drop a class or drop out of all classes in a semester right up til the last class day. This new policy was proposed and approved by UT Faculty Council on
May 9, 2011, and more information is available at http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/2010-2011/legislation/EPC_OTE.html. According to the policy as approved by the Provost, a student who has completed at least two long semesters here at UT can drop a class only if he or she has an average grade of D+ or below in the class at the time of the request and if there are no pending investigations of scholastic dishonesty for the course in question.

**Holy Days Policy:**
Students are excused from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. If you are absent from class or examination for the observance of a religious holy day, you will not be penalized for that absence, and you may turn in your assignment or take the examination within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who will be absent due to observance of a religious holy day *must provide written notice fourteen days prior to the class absence*. It must be personally delivered to the instructor and signed and dated by the instructor; sent certified mail with return receipt requested, or may be sent by email provided proper acknowledgment has been sent by the instructor. A student who fails to complete missed work within the time allowed will be subject to the normal academic penalties. For religious holy days that fall within the first two weeks of class notice must be given on the first class day.

**Disability Policy:**
The University of Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-6441 TTY.

**Academic Dishonesty:**
Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated as such behavior harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University. Discussion of the course material with your classmates is strongly encouraged. However, *the final product (assignment, paper, etc.) must be your own*. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Judicial Services web site at [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/).

Plagiarism is dishonest, both academically and professionally. Turning in an assignment that is not entirely your own work is plagiarism and will result in action commensurate with the policies stated in the University's Manual on Academic Honesty.

**Absence/Failing reports:**
Instructors are required to submit Absence/Failing reports for those students whose progress is at or below a failing level at the time of the reports. These reports will be submitted before the end of the Q period to assist students in evaluating their progress in the course. The reports are based on your grade to date in the course; however, given that the reports cover only about the first one-third of the class, there is often not much graded material on which to base the reports. If you receive a report and are concerned, please contact Shank
**Emergency Evacuation Policy:**
Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.


**Frequently Asked Questions:**

*What is the best way to get help?*
Come see me. It is hard for me to explain via email.

*What is my current grade and what do I need on the final to make an A, B,...?*
See Canvas and the grade breakdown info above. I have confidence you can figure it out!

*This is the first B I have ever received. Is there anything I can do to convert this to an A?*
No! Unless you have a time machine and can travel back in time and actually do better on the exams and quizzes. **PLEASE DO NOT ASK!!!!**

*Is there any extra credit?*
Nope, sorry (well, maybe once in awhile during class activities).

*What if my parents bought a plane ticket for me to go home before the final exam?*
Don’t do this! Don’t plan to leave until the very end of the exam period which is so nicely listed on the UT Academic Calendar online.

*What if I am about to fail this class and I will not graduate unless I pass this class? My grandmother is in town to see me graduate?*
Don’t let this happen! Plan to come to class, study and learn the material now. It is up to you to ensure Grandma is happy, not me!
Topic schedule:
The following schedule is a guideline to what we will be covering during the semester, and it may change a little if additional time is needed for particular topics. Updated schedules will be posted on Canvas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Pages</th>
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<td>Jan 20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction to Course</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sounding the Deep</td>
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<td>The Oceanic Environment</td>
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<td>Ecological &amp; Evolutionary Principles</td>
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<td>The Chemical and Physical Environment</td>
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<td>Feb 1</td>
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<td>Life in a Fluid Medium</td>
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<td>Feb 3</td>
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<td>The Water Column: Plankton</td>
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<td>Feb 8</td>
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<td>The Water Column: Nekton &amp; Vertebrates</td>
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<td>Feb 15</td>
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<td>Open Sea Processes: Plankton dynamics</td>
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<td>and Nutrients</td>
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<td>Feb 22</td>
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<td>Productivity, Food Webs, Climate Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 29 (leap day)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Reproduction, Dispersal, and Migration</td>
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<td>Mar 2</td>
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<td>Diversity of Benthic Marine Invertebrates</td>
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<td>Mar 21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Benthos Continental Shelf to Deep Sea</td>
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<td>Mar 23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Seaweeds, Sea Grasses, Benthic Microbes</td>
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<td>Mar 28</td>
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<td>Benthic Life Habits</td>
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<td>Sea Grasses, Rocky Reefs, Kelp, Corals</td>
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<td>Biodiversity &amp; Conservation</td>
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<td>Fisheries &amp; Food from the Sea</td>
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<td>Apr 25</td>
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<td>Environmental Impacts</td>
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<td>Apr 27</td>
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<td>May 2</td>
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<td>Catch up &amp; Marine Ecology Careers</td>
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<td>May 4</td>
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Group Activity – Midterm Review Session
MIDTERM EXAM – Wednesday Mar 9

Group Activity – Final Exam Review Session
FINAL EXAM