Instructor: Dr. W. Sue Fairbanks  Phone: 744-9842  
564 Agricultural Hall  email: sue.fairbanks@okstate.edu

Class Time:  MW 2:30-3:20 pm and F 8:30-10:20 am, Rm 009A Ag Hall


Course Description:  The importance of behavior of wild animals to their ecology, conservation, management, and evolution is beginning to be appreciated. Behavior directly and indirectly affects an animal’s ability to survive and reproduce in its environment, and therefore, an understanding of wildlife behavior is critical to conservation and management. In this course we will address some of the theory behind studies of animal behavior and explore how the information gained is important to population ecology, community ecology, conservation, and management. In addition to a few topics that I think are critical in a course like this (ex. habitat selection, foraging behavior, etc.), students in the class will choose topics of particular interest for the remainder of the class. Topics and readings will focus on both vertebrates and invertebrates, and may include both basic and applied research. The class will combine both lecture and discussion of current literature.

Grading:  Course grades will be calculated on the percentage of total possible points earned. There will be three exams during the semester, each worth 100 points, and none of them comprehensive. Exams will be essay-type questions requiring the ability to synthesize information, apply concepts, interpret data, and provide original thought.

We will also have discussions based on primary scientific literature that everyone will have read. Each graduate student will serve as discussion leader during the semester, for which you will receive up to 50 pts. Discussion leaders will be required to give a 10-15min summary of the assigned readings at the beginning of the discussion, and prepare questions and discussion points ahead of time. It may also require extra reading to enable you to answer questions from other students, and you may want to use handouts or figures on powerpoint to facilitate, or as background for, the discussion. Everyone is expected to read the assigned literature and contribute (meaningfully) to the class discussion. You will be graded on your participation – up to 10 pts per discussion. If you have a valid reason for missing class the day of the discussion and notify me on or before the day missed, I will arrange a time for you to discuss the papers with me.

Make-up exams will only be given if the student provides a valid excuse before the exam.

The following percentages will be the basis for assigning grades.

90-100 = A  
80-89 = B  
70-79 = C  
60-69 = D  
< 60 = F