Instructor:
Dr. Frank R. Hensley
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Office Phone: 601.925.7355 (I answer e-mail more promptly)
Office: Hederman Science Center 207
Office Hours: 10:00-11:00 MWF, other times by appointment

Meeting time: Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:00-1:15 PM and Thursdays, 1:30-4:30 PM in Hederman Science room 107

1. **Course Prefix, Number, Name and Credit for Lecture or Laboratory hours.**
   BIO 445 and 5445, Special Topics: Herpetology, 3 hours credit
   BIO 442 and 5442, Special Topics: Herpetology Laboratory, 1 semester hour credit

2. **Prerequisites for course.**
   Three semesters of biology and instructor's consent for BIO 445/442
   Graduate standing for BIO 5445/5442

3. **Course descriptions from the university catalogs.**

   BIO 445-446-447-448-449 Special Topics
   Credit 3 sem. hrs. Lecture and laboratory four to eight hours a week.
   Prerequisite: instructor's consent.
   A study of selected current topics in biology.

BIO 442-443 Special Topics
Credit 1 sem. hr. One week of integrated lecture, laboratory, and field experience.
Prerequisites: three semesters of biology and instructor's consent
Selected topics in field biology or natural history.

BIO 5445, 5446 5447, 5448, 5449 Special Topics
Credit 3 sem. hrs.
Prerequisite: Graduate standing.
A study of selected topics in Biology.

BIO 5442-5443 Special Topics
Credit 1 sem. hr.
Prerequisite: Graduate standing.
A study of selected topics in Biology.

4. **Rationale for Course.**
Herpetology is an integrative survey of the phylogeny, ecology, behavior, and adaptations of reptiles and amphibians. This course provides an opportunity for upper division students to explore two narrowly defined groups of organisms and to focus on specialized knowledge while emphasizing comparative methods, phylogenetic perspectives, and ecological relationships. Herpetology is an appropriate course for biology majors interested in whole-organism biology and helps prepare students for graduate study in wildlife conservation, phylogenetics, comparative anatomy, and other specialized disciplines. The course also enhances the education of pre-veterinary students by providing deeper and more detailed exposure to animal diversity, including aspects of anatomy, biomechanics, digestion, reproduction, respiration, gas exchange, osmoregulation and other physiological specializations. Herpetology is appropriate for any General Biology or Research Track biology majors because it provides depth and specialization not covered in other courses in the major.

5. **Student objectives and outcomes.**
    - Competently identify native and established species of reptiles and amphibians in Mississippi using field guides or dichotomous keys.
    - Describe and evaluate adaptations of amphibians and reptiles to their habitat and ecological interactions.
    - Describe the habitat, diet, lifestyle, reproductive mode, defensive behaviors, and ecology of selected species of native reptiles and amphibians.
    - Analyze primary literature about Mississippi amphibians and reptiles.
    - Competently and safely find, identify, and handle selected species of live amphibians and reptiles in their natural habitats.

6. **Academic Integrity Statement.**
Mississippi College students are expected to be scrupulously honest. Dishonesty, such as

cheating or plagiarism, or furnishing false information, including forgery, alteration or misuse of University documents, records or identification, will be regarded as a serious offense subject to severe penalty, including, but not limited to, loss of credit and possible dismissal. See the *Mississippi College Student Handbook* or Policy 2.19 for specific information regarding penalties associated with dishonest behavior at Mississippi College. Copies of the *Mississippi College Student Handbook* are available on the web and in the Office of the Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Nelson 313. Copies of policies are available on the Mississippi College web site.

7. **Outline of topics to be covered in course.**
    - Paleontology and Systematics
    - Anatomy
    - Reproduction and Life History
    - Physiological Ecology
    - Behavioral Ecology
    - Ecology and Conservation
    - Diversity of Reptiles and Amphibians of Mississippi

8. **Methods of Instruction.**
   Many class periods in the course will be used for traditional lecture presentations, but much of the instruction will involve working with specimens or encounters with live animals in the field. Discussion of assigned readings and field observations are central to instruction in the classroom, laboratory, and field.

9. **Required Practices.**
   Herpetology class requires reading of textbooks and primary literature, synthesis of information, and both in-class and out-of-class writing. Graduate students are required to lead in-class discussion of an assigned primary literature article. Field work is required and will include hiking through forested, brushy, and grassy habitats, wading in water above a student's waist and possibly deeper, and handling live amphibians and reptiles humanely and safely. Students will also be required to use traps, dipnets, and seines to sample habitats. Students will be required to handle fluid-preserved specimens of amphibians and reptiles. Safety equipment such as vinyl gloves, hip waders, gaiters, etc. will be provided.

   As with any course that has laboratory or field components, following the instructor's instructions regarding **safety is absolutely required**.

10. **Instructional Materials**

    Required texts:

    Herpetology, 4rd ed. by Vitt and Caldwell. 2013. Academic Press.

    A Field Guide to Reptiles & Amphibians of Eastern & Central North America (Peterson Field Guide Series) 4th ed. by Roger Conant & Joseph T. Collins. 1998. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

    Supplemental Materials:

    Standard Common and Current Scientific Names
    www.cnah.org

Mississippi Amphibians and Reptiles
http://museum.mdwfp.com/pdf/Mississippi%20Herpetology%20Checklist_013012.pdf
Key to the Herpetofauna of the Continental United States and Canada 2nd Edition Robert Powell, Joseph T. Collins, and Errol D. Hooper, Jr., February 2012, University of Kansas Press.

11. Methods of evaluating student progress.

Students will be evaluated by 3 exams (100 points each) and 10 quizzes (10 points each) plus their attendance and participation (100 points) (Undergraduate total = 500 points). Graduate students will also make 2 class presentations about data graphs taken from primary scientific literature (50 points each) (Graduate total = 600 points).

Absences from class will subtract 5 points from the attendance and participation grade. Absences from laboratory will subtract an additional 5 points. Thus, an entire week's absence incurs a penalty of 15 points. Attendance of additional evening or weekend field trips may provide bonus points that can be used to counterbalance absences, if the absence was excused. See the Attendance policy (15a) below for further details.

12. Accommodations statement

Special accommodations at Student Counseling Services:

In order for a student to receive disability accommodations under Section 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act, he or she must schedule an individual meeting with the Director of Student Counseling Services **immediately upon recognition of their disability** (if their disability is known they must come in before the semester begins or make an appointment **immediately** upon receipt of their syllabi for the new semester). The student must bring with them written documentation from a medical physician and/or licensed clinician that verifies their disability. If the student has received prior accommodations, they must bring written documentation of those accommodations (example Individualized Education Plan from the school system). Documentation must be current (**within 3 years).** The student must meet with SCS **face-to face** and also attend two (2) additional follow up meetings (one mid semester before or after midterm examinations and the last one at the end of the semester). Please note that the student may also schedule additional meetings as needed for support through SCS as they work with their professor throughout the semester. Note: Students must come in **each semester** to complete their Individualized Accommodation Plan (example: MC student completes fall semester IAP plan and even if student is a continuing student for the spring semester they must come in again to complete their spring semester IAP plan).

Student Counseling Services is located in Alumni Hall Room #4 or they may be contacted via email at: mbryant@mc.edu or rward@mc.edu or by phone at 601-925-7791.

13. Exam schedule.

Exam 1 – Thursday, September 26

Exam 2 – Tuesday, November 5

Final Exam – Saturday Dec. 14

14. Grading scale.

Undergraduates:
Minimum percentages required to earn letter grades:

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

Final percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percentage. For example, 89.50% rounds to 90% and earns an A, but 89.49% rounds down to 89% and earns a B.

Graduate students:
Minimum percentages required to earn letter grades:

A= 90-100%	B+ = 87-89%	C+ = 77-79%	D = 60-69%	F < 60%
	B = 80-86%	C = 70-76%		

Final percentages are rounded to the nearest whole percentage. For example, 86.50% rounds to 87% and earns a B+, but 86.49% rounds down to 86% and earns a B.

15. Other:

a. Attendance/Participation Regulations

Class attendance/participation is an essential part of university/graduate education, and students are expected to attend/participate regularly and punctually all classes and laboratories for which they are registered. Cumulative absences/non participation may result in a lowered grade or loss of credit for the course. Tardiness is also subject to penalty. Although some specific requirements may vary according to the nature and structure of the course, the following guidelines summarize institutional policy:

- Class attendance/participation is required, and accurate records are kept.
- A student receives a grade of F in any course immediately upon accumulating the following number of absences in that class: 8 in semester classes meeting 2 times per week. Any exception to this rule, granted only in extraordinary circumstances, must be approved by the Dean's Committee on Absences.
- For lesser number of absences/non participation, the student should expect a lowered grade in the course, with the maximum penalty of one letter grade for each week of absences (in a semester) or the equivalent. The calculation of the semester grade, including any penalty for absences, is the responsibility of the faculty member and may vary according to the nature of the course and the grading scale used. In some classes points will be deducted from the semester grade for unexcused

absences; in others, the penalty may be built into the grading scale by means of frequent pop quizzes, grades for class participation and the like.

  - See the Evaluation policy above for penalties for this course

- The faculty member will excuse a limited number of absences/non participation for serious illness, for field trips, for representing the University, and perhaps for other emergency reasons that the faculty member finds justifiable. Documentation is required for an absence to be excused.

- Whether an absence/non participation is excused or not, the student who is absent misses some learning that takes place in the class. Naturally, the faculty member is more inclined to assist the student in making up the work if the absence was excused. However, the responsibility for work missed rests entirely with the student.

- A student registering late will be charged for all absences/nonparticipation occurring prior to reporting to class, although these may be treated as excused absences.

b. Policy on make-up examinations.

For excused absences, makeup quizzes and exams will be taken within 1 week of the absence, or will receive a grade of zero points.

c. Makeup Classes:

- In the event that the professor must cancel a class session for any reason, a makeup class session will be offered. Makeup class sessions may be offered during early morning hours, evening hours, or weekends. If such a makeup session is offered, attendance is optional and absences will not count against a student's total attendance record. All students are responsible for any material taught during a makeup session, but attendance is optional.

d. Important college & course dates

9/2/13	Labor Day
9/5/13	Last Day To Drop A Full Semester Class With 100% Tuition Only Refund
9/26/13	Exam 1
10/7/13	Fall Break
10/8/13	Fall Break
10/16/13	MIDTERM
10/25/13	Last Day to Drop
11/5/13	Exam 2
11/27/13	Thanksgiving
11/28/13	Thanksgiving
11/29/13	Thanksgiving
12/12/13	Study Day

12/14/13 Final Exam 12:00-3:00

e. Other course expectations

See the Required Practices section above for course-specific information.

f. **Additional requirements for graduate students.**
Graduate students will select a contemporary article from primary literature and will write a research paper on the topic and lead a class discussion of the article. Undergraduates will be required to read the article prior to class discussion as part of their participation grade. Specific guidelines will be provided in class.

16. Acknowledgement:

By signing this statement I certify that I have read and understood the syllabus for this course, (BIO 445 or 5445, Special Topics: Herpetology, BIO 442 or 5442, Special Topics: Herpetology Laboratory) including the attendance policy, and grading policy.

_____

signature date

_____

printed name MC #