

BDE 315 Ecology Field Course

16 credits, first semester

Course coordinator: Dr Nasreen Peer

Lecturers: Prof Bruce Anderson, Prof. Mike Cherry

Demonstrators: Ms Nicole Martin, Ms Pamela Cristina Santana, Ms Kerry Grey, Mr Keanu martin

Aims: The aim of this module is to familiarize you with the basic principles of ecology, using both plant and animal models in fynbos, forest and marine habitats. On completion of this module you should be familiar with the following:

- Basic concepts in field ecology;
- The most important present-day research areas/techniques in behavioural, coastal and pollination ecology;
- Critical thinking;
- Information synthesis;
- Communication skills;
- Experimental design and associated statistical analyses;
- Writing a scientific article and delivering a seminar based on a published article;
- Use of a variety of field techniques in field ecology.

The course consists of a two week field course from 28 January – 11 February at Grootbos Private Nature Reserve (equivalent to 42 lectures and 14 practicals). In addition to experimental design and data collection and analysis for research projects, the course will include instruction in ecology theory in the form of student seminars and introductory lectures by staff. Student seminars will be based on the synthesis of selected journal articles which will be provided at the field camp. There are no lectures or practicals during the semester. This module is concept-driven, with emphasis on training students to think critically.

Date	Subject	Lecturer
28/01	Course overview Scout area for research projects	MIC, BCA, NP
29/01	Scout area for research projects Reading	MIC, BCA, NP
30/01	Scout area for research projects Reading	MIC, BCA, NP

31/01	Field work Reading Seminars	MIC
01/02	Field work Seminars Reading	MIC
02/02	Field work Reading Seminars	MIC
03/02	Reading Seminars Project proposals	MIC, NP
04/02	Field work Reading Seminars	NP
05/02	Field work Reading Seminars	NP
06/02	Field work Reading Seminars	NP
07/02	Field work Reading Seminars	NP
08/02	Field work Reading Seminars	NP/BCA
09/02	Seminars Field work Reading	BCA
10/02	Seminars Fieldwork Data entry and collation Farewell braai	BCA
11/02	Cleaning and packing Departure (1030)	BCA

Practical programme: The course is largely taken up by hands-on practical work. Students will design and conduct their own research project in groups under the guidance of staff and demonstrators. The process will include the design of a research protocol, obtaining data in the field, statistical treatment of data and presentation of results in written form.

Assessment: A system of *flexible assessment* will be used. The *Final mark* will be made up as follows:

Seminar.....	25%
Project draft	25%
Final project	25%
Theory Exam	25%

Final mark (total) 100%

Take note: In modules where flexible assessment is used, there are no second opportunities for examination.

Test and hand-in dates:

Theory test: Thurs 10 March at 09h00.

Project draft: Friday 8 April at 16h00.

Field Project report: Thu 5 May at 16h00.

Important information: In instances where a test or deadline is missed, a valid and original doctor's certificate is required within one week of the test or hand-in date. The certificate must be handed in to Nasreen Peer or to Shula Johnson. It is your own responsibility to determine the time and place of each test and deadline.