BDE 315 Ecology Field Course
16 credits, first semester

Course coordinator: Prof Allan Ellis
Lecturers: Prof Allan Ellis (AGE), Prof Theresa Wossler (TW); Prof Anton Pauw (AP)
Demonstrators: Dr Willem Augustyn, Ms Jurene Kemp (JK)

Aims: The aim of this module is to familiarize you with the basic principles of ecology, using both plant and animal models, highlighting topical issues in current ecological studies. 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 ecological studies;
- Critical thinking;
- Information synthesis;
- Communication skills;
- Experimental design which requires 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 11 January – 25 January at Geelbek, West Coast National Park (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. 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.

Programme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Lecturers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/01</td>
<td>Depart Stellenbosch 10h00; arrive Geelbek 12h00</td>
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<td>AGE/TW/AP/WA/JK</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-13/01</td>
<td>Course overview, Scout area for research projects, Proposal presentations</td>
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<td>AGE/TW/AP/WA/JK</td>
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<td>14-16/01</td>
<td>Field work, Reading, Seminars</td>
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<td>AGE/WA/JK</td>
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<td>17/01</td>
<td>Field work, Data consolidation, Reading, Seminars</td>
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<td>AGE/WA/JK</td>
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<td>18-20/01</td>
<td>Field work, Reading, Seminars</td>
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<td>AP/WA/JK</td>
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<td>21/1</td>
<td>Field work, Data consolidation, Reading, Seminars</td>
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<td>AP/WA/JK</td>
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<td>22-24/01</td>
<td>Field work, Reading, Seminars</td>
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<td>TW/WA/JK</td>
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<td>25/01</td>
<td>Data consolidation, Cleaning and packing, Departure 11h00</td>
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<td>TW/WA/JK</td>
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Practical programme: The course is largely taken up by hands-on practical work. The students will design and conduct their own research project under the guidance of staff and teaching assistants. These projects 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 continuous assessment will be used. The Final mark will be made up as follows:

- Proposal presentation .................. 5%
- Poster .................................. 10%
- Seminar .................................. 15%
- Participation during seminars .......... 5%
- Project draft ............................ 25%
Final project .....................................15%
Theory Exam ....................................25%
**Final mark (total).......................... 100%**

**NB** In modules where continuous assessment is used, there are no supplementary examinations.

**Test and hand-in dates:**
- *Theory test:* Tue 21 February at 09h00.
- *Project draft:* Tuesday 4 April at 16h00.
- *Poster:* Friday 28 April at 16h00.
- *Field Project report:* Fri 12 May at 16h00.

**Important information:** Projects handed in late will have 10% deducted per day. In instances where a test is missed, a valid and original doctor’s certificate is required within one week of the test. A sick test is likely to take the form of an oral. The certificate must be handed in to Prof Ellis. It is your own responsibility to determine the time and place of each test and hand-in.

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**Comment [AG1]:** Shula/Thereas - How do we get a slot for this test which doesn’t clash with students other courses?

**Comment [AG2]:** This will give us until 18 April return the proposals (including a week of varsity recess).