



University  
of Regina



Faculty of  
Science

## BIOL 316 – CONSERVATION BIOLOGY (FALL 2025)

**Course Instructor:** Dr. Christopher Somers  
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Office: RIC 327

**Lectures:** Mon, Wed, Fri 12:30-13:20 in RIC 208 (STARTS *September 3<sup>rd</sup>*).

**Peer learning sessions:** Mon 13:30-14:20 in RIC 208 (STARTS *September 8<sup>th</sup>*).

- Both the lecture and Peer learning components are **mandatory**
- Lecture and Peer learning course components are **in-person**

**Office hours:** Please drop by and I will meet with you if I can. You can also email to set up an appointment.

**Course description:** Conservation Biology will examine processes that affect global biodiversity. The ultimate goal of the course is to apply principles of ecology and evolution to better understand the importance of biodiversity and the significance of recent human-induced changes. Supporting management and policy frameworks are a key emphasis of the course. Case studies and focused discussions on conservation concerns in Canada and worldwide will provide students with a chance to explore both local and international issues. The course will take concepts from a variety of biological disciplines (ecology, evolution, genetics, management, etc.), and integrate them under the theme of preserving biodiversity in a human-dominated world.

### **Learning outcomes:**

1. Understand the framework for the current global biodiversity crisis.
2. Demonstrate a sound knowledge of factors that affect extinction risk.
3. Understand how species are assessed and listed by conservation agencies.
4. Demonstrate applied knowledge regarding how to help species at risk of extinction.
5. Wield both biological information and species assessment tools to classify extinction risk.
6. Link human activities to biological factors affecting extinction risk for other species.

**Prerequisites:** BIOL 100, 101, 275; STAT 100.

**Textbook:** there is no required textbook for this course; material will be provided in PowerPoint slides and via website links as needed.

**Additional requirements:** A computer and stable internet connection will be required for the weekly conservation challenge and quizzes in this course, which will be completed online.

## Grading

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| 1. <i>Assignments</i> - conservation challenges done online (6 x 5%)     | 30 % |
| 2. <i>Media presentation</i> – group project delivered in seminar        | 15 % |
| 3. <i>Midterm Quiz</i> – all course content; written online (UR Courses) | 15 % |
| 4. <i>Peer learning Quiz</i> – topics covered in the group sessions      | 10%  |
| 5. <i>Final Exam</i> – take-home exam, applied knowledge                 | 30 % |

Note: grades posted on UR Courses for assignments and quizzes are unofficial and subject to review/approval. Course grades for all students are calculated using the same components and a common rubric, and therefore grades of individual students cannot be arbitrarily changed by the instructor. A passing grade for the course is 50%.

**\*\*Mandatory Course Components:** (1) media presentation; (2) at least 3 conservation challenge assignments; (3) final exam. These minimum components are required to pass the course and are mandatory. A student who does not complete these components will receive a final grade of “NP”.

## Quizzes and Exams

*Midterm Quiz* (15%) - will occur during the **regular lecture period on October 17, 2025**.

Students will write the quiz **online** through the UR Courses page. The quiz can be written from the classroom, at home, or in a place of your choosing; however, you must work alone and adhere to the University of Regina's policies on academic misconduct. You will need a stable and fast internet connection to write the quizzes.

*Peer learning Quiz* (10%) - will occur during the **regular Peer learning period on December 1, 2025**. Students will write the quiz **online** through the UR Courses page. The quiz can be written from the classroom, at home, or in a place of your choosing; however, you must work alone and adhere to the University of Regina's policies on academic misconduct. You will need a stable and fast internet connection to write the quizzes.

*Final Exam* (30%) – the final for Biol 316 is a take-home exam that will require students to apply knowledge obtained during the course. The exam will be posted on or about the last day of classes and will be due (electronic submission) on the scheduled final exam date **December 17, 2025 by 5:00 p.m.**

## Assignments

*Conservation Challenges* (30%) – During 6 weeks of the semester (see Table below) a simple conservation quiz or problem set will be posted on the UR Courses page. Generally, the challenge will be posted on a Wednesday and the answer will be due (**online**) by the end of Friday each week. Students should provide the answer / solution online via the UR Courses page, carefully following the instructions provided. The weekly challenges will vary in complexity and will almost always require a few minutes of research to complete. The goal of the weekly challenge is to keep students engaged in the course material on a regular basis and

to foster a strong sense of continued connection with conservation biology.

Challenge #	Date Posted	Date Due
1	September 10	September 12
2	September 24	September 26
3	October 8	October 10
4	October 22	October 24
5	November 5	November 7
6	November 19	November 21

*Media Presentation* (15%) - Students will have the opportunity to share their knowledge and insight via a presentation to the class (15%). This assignment is meant to develop a peer-learning environment, in which key, topical course material is presented and taught by students. The details are below.

- The assignment is a 20-minute group presentation on a key conservation issue, followed by a discussion period in tutorial. It should be presented using PowerPoint (or similar).
- Students will work in groups of 2 to present.
- You will sign up for a news article from popular media. Your assignment is to research the topic covered in the article so that you can teach it to the class.
- A topic sign-up sheet will be available in the first weeks of tutorial.
- The presentation should provide the following:
  - A summary of the article and its key points.
  - An explanation of why this topic is important enough to make the news.
  - An explanation of the key conservation issues addressed in the article.
  - A discussion of any ethical issues or value-driven components of the issue.
  - The perspective of the group on the issue.
- You should consult resources beyond the media article assigned as required to develop the knowledge and understanding required.
- The media article introduces you to the topic, you must provide additional information to teach the subject to the class.
- The presentation will be followed by a question & answer period and short discussion. Groups should prepare to lead the discussion and guide the class.
- Grades will be based on content, presentation style, identification of key learning points, and engaging the class.
- Groups must **post a short summary on a UR Courses** forum that lists key learning points and take-home messages.
- Presentations will take place weekly during Peer learning sessions **September 22 to November 24**.

**Lecture topics:** all dates and topics are subject to change.

Week of	Topic	Items of note
September 1	Introduction to Conservation Biology	
September 8	Vulnerability to Extinction	Seminar meetings start; Conservation Challenge 1
September 15	Vulnerability to Extinction	
September 22	Biological Diversity	Student seminars begin Conservation Challenge 2
September 29	Valuing Biodiversity	
October 6	Extinction	Conservation Challenge 3
October 13	Extinction	Midterm Quiz October 17
October 20	Problems with Small Populations	Conservation Challenge 4
October 27	Problems with Small Populations	
November 3	Applied Population Biology	Conservation Challenge 5
November 10	FALL BREAK	No Classes
November 17	Revisiting Vulnerability to Extinction	Conservation Challenge 6
November 24	Habitat Loss	
December 1	In Situ Conservation Strategies	Peer learning Quiz Dec 1
December 17	Take-home exam due	Submission by 5:00

**Late assignments/missed exam policy:** Late assignments will be assigned a grade of zero and not receive feedback unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. If you miss a test, contact the Instructor immediately to make alternative arrangements.

**Attendance policy:** Attendance at lectures is expected for all students but will not be actively recorded. Attendance at weekly Peer learning meetings will be actively recorded and incorporated into the participation grade.

**Peer Learning Meeting Schedule:** Mondays @ 13:30; all dates and topics are subject to change.

Week of	Topic	Speaker
September 8	Introductions and nature connection	Class discussion
September 15	North American Wildlife Management Model	Instructor
September 22	Group 1 & 2	Biol 316 students
September 29	Group 3 & 4	Biol 316 students
October 6	Group 5 & 6	Biol 316 students
October 13	No Class	Biol 316 students
October 20	Group 7 & 8	Biol 316 students
October 27	Group 9 & 10	Biol 316 students
November 3	Group 11 & 12	Biol 316 students
November 10	No Meeting; Fall Break	
November 17	Group 13 & 14	Biol 316 students
November 24	Group 15 & 16	Biol 316 students
December 1	Peer learning quiz (online)	

**Academic integrity:** Academic integrity requires students be honest. Assignments and exams are to help students learn; grades show how fully this goal is attained. Thus, all work and grades should result from a student's own understanding and effort. Acts of academic misconduct violate academic integrity, and are considered serious offences by the University. Examples include, but are not limited to, cheating on tests or exams, plagiarizing, copying from others, falsifying lab results, etc. Instances of academic misconduct will be reported to the Associate Dean Academic for investigation. Full details are provided in the [Undergraduate academic calendar](#). Students are encouraged to understand your obligations as a student, as well as your rights. In this course, **you are not permitted to use generative artificial intelligence (AI) programs** in your assignments or exams. Any work suspected of using generative AI will be reported for investigation of academic misconduct.

**Accommodations:** The Centre for Student Accessibility upholds the University's commitment to a diverse and inclusive learning environment by providing services and supports for students based on disability, religion, family status, and gender identity. Students who require these services are encouraged to contact the Centre for Student Accessibility to discuss the possibility of academic accommodations and other supports as early as possible. For further information, please email [accessibility@uregina.ca](mailto:accessibility@uregina.ca).