Course Description
The goal of this course is to give you a solid foundation of core concepts and principles of conservation ecology, emphasizing current topics/debates in this field. The course uses readings from a current textbook (Groom et al. 2006) as a foundation for concepts and builds on that with primary literature to cover both the science and application of conservation ecology.

This course is designed for upper level undergraduates as well as first or second year graduate students. Students’ grades will reflect their experience level. All course activities (lectures, discussions, short writing exercises, computer work) will require you to synthesize and integrate the concepts from lectures/readings and apply this information to novel settings/questions. Some students find this difficult, because their previous learning strategies of rote memorization do not work well. You must digest and understand course content, as well as think logically about how this information can inform conservation decisions and science when no easy solution exists or when information is incomplete.

Course Format
Lectures, punctuated by 3 exams, computer exercises and discussions, an oral presentation, and a SHORT review paper (1-2 pages).

Materials
We will be relying on primary literature supplemented by a textbook. The Textbook is Principles of Conservation, 3rd edition. Groom et al. 2006
Primary literature readings are listed on course schedule and will be provided to all students on Blackboard.

Course Objectives
The goal of this course is to give you a solid foundation in the core concepts, principles and application of conservation ecology, emphasizing current topics and debates. We will not explicitly discuss the philosophical, ethical, or cultural aspects of conservation. However, these aspects are intrinsic components of conservation in practice and we will touch upon them during our discussions.

Specific course objectives are to:
• Understand the core concepts of conservation ecology covered in the lecture and labs/discussions
• Be able to synthesize and integrate concepts of conservation ecology
• Think critically about current research and understand how it relates to or redefines the science of conservation ecology
• Stimulate discussion and evaluation of conservation science
• Encourage students to engage in discussion and debate
• Learn how to review and synthesize primary literature using short writing assignments and oral presentations

CONTACTING ME
I encourage you to set up a time for us to meet if you have any concerns or would like to talk with me outside of class times.

When can we meet? My office hours are by appointment. I encourage you to email or call me immediately if you have any concerns or questions about the course.
Where is my office? Physical Sciences (PS) 157A, inside my lab PS157.
How can I contact you? If the lab door is locked, knock LOUDLY. Other students work in my lab, so if you stop by when I’m not there, please don't rely on them to pass verbal messages on to me. You can leave a note on my office door or in my mailbox in the Biology office. Better yet, email me!

How long until I answer emails? I am very prompt in email correspondence. If you email me late at night or on the weekend, I may or may not answer you right away. I will always email you back on the following school day.

EXPECTATIONS
I expect all course participants (students and instructor) to be:
• Prompt
• Prepared
• Respectful (This includes having all communication devices off or silent)
• Engaged in discussions
• Honest

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THESE EXPECTATIONS ARE NOT MET?
Part of your grade will be based on your preparation and participation in class, so a failure to do either will be reflected in your grade. Disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY
Cheating has rarely been a problem in my classes, and warning you about the consequences may seem unnecessary. Nevertheless, to avoid any confusion, this is the course policy: If you are caught cheating in an exam or on an assignment, you will receive a zero on the exam or assignment. In addition, the event will be reported to campus judicial authorities and may lead additional actions from the University. For more information on the consequences of academic dishonesty, please see: http://www.sa.sdsu.edu/srr/judicial/CheatingDisruption.html

Remember, your academic work must be your own words. If you need clarification on what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, and other inappropriate conduct, please see: http://science.widener.edu/svb/essay/plagiar.html

ASSIGNMENTS
To be prepared for lectures, you will need to have read and be ready to discuss/ask questions on assigned readings. All assigned readings are listed on the course schedule and will be available on Blackboard
Lab/discussion sections will include readings, student-led discussions, in-class writing, and computer exercises/activities. To be prepared for lab/discussions, you will need to have read and be ready to lead a discussion/discuss these papers, or write about assigned readings (short answer format). Again, all required reading are listed on the course schedule and will be available on Blackboard.

**Policy on Late or Missed Assignments**
If you miss an assignment or are late, you are running the risk of missing the points for that assignment (this applies to every type of graded assignment, exams included). I will work with you wherever possible (see Emergencies section) to help you. However, if you do not contact me **24 hours in advance** of the due date/exam date, you may not have the opportunity to complete the assignment. With 24 hours advance notice, I will work with you to re-schedule the due date if possible.

**Review Assignment: Current Topics in Conservation**
We won’t be doing any major writing assignments in the course. Instead, each person will be in charge of given an oral presentation on an approved topic. The oral presentations will represent a substantial review of research material on an approved topic using a minimum of 5 peer-reviewed literature sources (you can use 1 paper already on the syllabus). Each person will be expected to give a formal 15 minutes oral presentation of their review topic to the class during the last 3 lab sessions (we’ll talk a lot more about the format of both the written review and oral presentation during class). Oral presentations will be evaluated by the entire class.

You will also write a SHORT and polished summary of your presentation (1-2 pages). Each person will submit a concise summary and synthesis of their presentation. I will evaluate the written summaries.

There are two goals of this assignment:
1) It will allow you to explore a current topic/debate in conservation in more depth than our lectures and discussion. I encourage you to pick a topic that is relevant to your research interests. You must choose a review topic by Oct 18th. If you are having trouble picking a topic, please schedule an appt. with me no later than Oct 1st.
2) The second goal of the assignment is to encapsulate how one constructs a peer-reviewed paper, with an emphasis on flow and presentation of ideas. However, instead of writing the review, you will be presenting it orally.

**Grading**
Although the general requirements are the same for both undergraduate and graduate students, expectations of graduate/FSS student performance will be higher. Thus, graduate students will have to demonstrate a more sophisticated comprehension of material. Their answers will need to be more comprehensive, and I will grade exams and other assignments accordingly.

You will be graded on:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graded assignments</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam 1</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam 2</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lab assignments</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing assignment</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>6</td>
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**Final exam**  
100 22

**TOTAL**  
450 100

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**  
Students who need accommodation of disabilities should contact me privately to discuss specific accommodations for which they have received authorization. If you have a disability, please contact Student Disability Services at 619 594 6473, Calpulli Center, Suite 3101 before making an appointment to discuss this with me.

**EMERGENCIES**  
Emergencies, by definition, are unexpected. I cannot accommodate individual schedules, but for genuine emergencies I will work with you to ensure you can complete assignments, projects, tests etc... on time. However, I will only do so if you come talk to me immediately when such a situation arises.

If you have any questions about this material, I would be happy to talk with you about it (my contact information is listed on the first page). When you are clear on the information covered in this syllabus, please read, sign, and date the following statement and return it to me.

**I have read the Bio 540 Course Syllabus. I understand and accept its contents. I also understand that work in this course must be my work and all required assignments, projects, and tests must be completed to receive a passing grade for this course.**

_________________________________________  
Signature  
__________________________  
Date

__________________________  
Printed name *(neatly please so I can read it)*