

## BIOL305-15SU1 (C)

### Practical Field Botany

0.125 EFTS 15 Points

Summer Course

#### Course summary

Practical Field Botany is an intensive, 8-day summer course designed to teach students and professionals basic skills in field botany. It is targeted at students who intend to seek employment in areas such as field ecology, conservation, biosecurity, taxonomy and systematics. It is also of interest to members of the workforce who need to acquire or upgrade taxonomic skills, e.g., from Crown Research Institutes, the Department of Conservation, local and regional councils, and botanic gardens, and those with employment in horticulture or education. The course is designed to accommodate participants with various entry levels: from students with limited plant knowledge to experienced career professionals.



#### Intended learning outcomes and associated assessment

*At the end of the course, students are expected to be able to:*

- Spot-identify c. 80 species that are commonly found in various ecosystems in the Southern Alps (assessment tasks: quiz and final exam)
- Use traditional and online taxonomic keys to identify plants and to confirm identifications using a herbarium collection, literature and online resources (assessment tasks: quiz and final exam)
- Carry out Recce vegetation surveys (assessment task: unmarked assignment)
- Construct taxonomic keys (assessment task: unmarked assignment during workshop)
- Collect and prepare botanical specimens for scientific purposes and to record associated ecological data (assessment task: voucher specimen preparation assignment)
- Independently prepare and develop a reference collection with notes about diagnostic characters and ecological characteristics that serves as a practical aid to plant identification and recognition (assessment task: field reference collection assignment)
- Make decisions regarding plant collecting that are in accordance with regulations and ethical considerations and that minimise environmental impact (assessment task: final exam)
- Find the currently accepted scientific name for a plant, understand classifications and name changes and use names to access information about New Zealand plants (assessment task: final exam)
- Taking and editing high-quality photographs of plants for scientific purposes and plant identification (assessment task: final exam and unmarked assignment during workshop)
- Understand basic ecological and systematic concepts and processes that are relevant to understanding patterns of botanical diversity in the Southern Alps (assessment task: final exam)

## Skills register

### *The following skills are developed in this course:*

- Collecting biological field data. Important for research and in governmental and non-governmental organizations.
- Plant identification. Essential in organismal biology, conservation, and biosecurity.
- Collecting, documenting, and preserving biological specimens. Key in, amongst others, ecology, systematics and conservation.
- Independent and self-motivated learning. A life-skill that is important in any career.
- Finding, understanding, and using information in literature and on the internet. These are very general skills that are essential in many careers.
- Verbal communication. Expressing yourself clearly and concisely is important when you are attending meetings, having a telephone conversation, giving presentations, or teaching/training.
- Written communication. Many employers require employees to have good written communication skills.

## Venue and area

The venue for the Practical Field Botany course is the University of Canterbury Cass Mountain Research Area, 105 km west of Christchurch in the mountains of the Waimakariri Basin. It is located near a wide range of habitats with a huge diversity of plants and animals. The field station provides comfortable accommodation, laboratory facilities, and internet access with the natural world at the doorstep. The course includes field excursions to the Waimakariri Basin, Southern Beech forest, Otira Valley, and the Cragieburn Forest Park.

## Time table

-Tuesday 20 January 2015, afternoon: travel from UC campus to Cass  
-Wednesday 21 – Tuesday 27 January 2015: field excursions and other course work  
-Wednesday 28 January 2015, morning: final exam and handing in course work; afternoon: travel back to UC campus (UC provides all transportation to, from, and at the Cass region)



## Recommendations

*“Thanks for a great course – I got a lot out of it! - and am looking forward to putting my ID skills to use helping with DOC’s Tier One monitoring for most of Feb and March”:* Sue Lake, Ranger Services, DOC.

*“Thanks for a great week, I thoroughly enjoyed myself and am still dreaming of plant families! I appreciate the effort put in by yourself, Matt, Julie, Laura and Reijel throughout the course. The concept of an intensive field based course was exactly what I needed to improve my botanical knowledge and confidence”:* John Skilton, Park Ranger/Project Manager Travis Wetland, Christchurch City Council.

*“I’m totally hooked on botany now, I absolutely loved the course! I have my first botanical survey to do next week, great timing!”:* Marcia Dale, Ryder Consulting Limited.

*“Thank you for a fantastic class! I just finished six days of tramping in Mt Aspiring National Park- it was great to be able to recognize most of the plants there”:* Xin Cheng, Auckland.



**Fees** (include all course materials, transportation, accommodation, and food)

-Domestic fee \$777. An additional Student Services levy of \$372.50 applies to non-UoC students, but participants with site codes N (Nelson), R (Rotorua), T (Tauranga) or Y (New Plymouth) can apply for a partial rebate. Please see <http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/enrol/fees/levy.shtml> for more information.

-International fee \$3,563.

**Course coordinator and lecturer**

Dr Pieter Pelsler, SBS2 Building 530,  
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**Course technician**

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**Enrolment opens 7 October 2014**



**BIOL305 Feedback from Course Survey**

**Results of Course and Teaching Survey 2011 / 2012 / 2013 / 2014**

*Key: 1. Strongly disagree; 2. Disagree; 3. Neither agree or disagree; 4. Agree; 5. Strongly agree*

1. This was a well organised course **3.6 / 4.0 / -- / 5.0**
2. Course helped to stimulate my interest in the subject area **3.8 / 4.71 / -- / 4.67**
3. The course workload was appropriate to my achieving the course aims -- / **4.57** / -- / **4.33**
4. The course provided effective opportunities for active student participation -- / **4.71** / -- / **5.00**
5. The assessments measured my learning effectively **3.4 / 4.0** / -- / **4.33**
6. I received helpful and timely feedback on my progress **3.5 / 4.57** / -- / **4.00**
7. The teaching methods used in this course were effective in helping me to learn -- / -- / -- / **5.00**
8. The course resources assisted my learning -- / -- / -- / **5.00**
9. There was a good balance of theoretical and practical material in this course -- / -- / -- / **4.67**
10. The assessments were relevant to the course aims -- / -- / -- / **5.00**
11. The course aims and requirements were clear to me -- / -- / -- / **4.33**
12. Overall, this was a good quality course **4.2 / 4.83** / -- / **4.67**
13. The classes/field days were well organised **3.8 / 4.56 / 5.0 / 4.67**
14. The lecturer was able to communicate ideas and information clearly **4.2** / -- / **5.0 / 4.83**
15. The lecturer stimulated my interest in the subject **3.8** / -- / **4.5 / 4.5**
16. The lecturer's attitude towards the students was good **4.6 / 4.89 / 5.0 / 4.83**
17. The lecturer demonstrated his/her own enthusiasm for the subject -- / -- / **5.0 / 5.0**
18. The lecturer made good use of examples and illustrations (and other resources) to explain difficult concepts -- / -- / **4.75 / 3.83**
19. The lecturer's resources were a valuable aid to my learning -- / -- / **4.75 / 4.67**
20. Overall, the lecturer is an effective teacher **4.4 / 4.78 / 4.5 / 4.5**



## RULES, REGULATIONS, AND WHAT TO DO WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

**If in doubt:** ASK! The course co-ordinator is happy to field questions at any time. All staff involved in the course are generally available for advice on specific issues.

### What do I do if I'm sick?

If you feel that illness, injury, bereavement or other critical circumstances have prevented you from completing an item of assessment worth 10% or more of total course assessment or have affected your performance in a test or exam, you should visit a doctor within 24 hours and submit the application form within 7 days. The application form is available on-line or from the Student Health Centre. You should also notify the course co-ordinator. For further details on aegrotat applications, please refer to the University's website - <http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/exams/aegrotats.shtml>). **The aegrotat provisions are intended to assist students who have covered the work of a course but have been prevented by illness or other critical circumstances from demonstrating their mastery of the material or skills at the time of assessment – they do not excuse you from doing the assessment.** If the examiner cannot assess your aegrotat application because of lack of other evidence, you may be asked to sit a special assessment if you miss a final exam. You should also expect to be required to submit additional work if you miss a major assignment (e.g. a field trip for which a major write-up is required). **Please note: acceptance of the grounds for an aegrotat application does not simply excuse you from completing items of assessment if you are requested to do so. You will be given reasonable time to complete any such work.**

### What do I do if I have to miss something?

In rare cases you may not be able to sit a test or exam, or attend a field trip, because of involvement in international or national representative sport or cultural groups. In such cases see the course co-ordinator, and a course of action (usually the sitting of an equivalent test or exam at a different time, or submitting an equivalent piece of written assessment) will be arranged. This should be done well in advance of the set date for a missed exam/test/assignment. **Please note – holiday trips, weddings, birthday parties etc. are not given special status in the University policy, so please do not ask for special consideration in these circumstances.**

### Plagiarism

It is essential that you are aware that plagiarism is considered a very serious offence by the Academic community, the University and the School of Biological Sciences. Plagiarism is defined as taking content from another work or author and presenting it, without attribution, as if it is your own work. Content here includes text (sentences or major parts of sentences), display items (graphs and tables), and overall structure (the detailed sequence of ideas). Plagiarism includes:

- re-use of previous assignments (even if each individual sentence has been rephrased to say the same thing in different words, if the overall structure is re-used)
- copying of another student's work (with or without their consent)
- the unreferenced use of published material or material from the internet e.g. cutting and pasting of paragraphs or pages into an essay.

For most pieces of in-term assessment you will be given information concerning the use of direct and indirect quotes from previously published work. If you are in any doubt about appropriate use of published material, please speak with a member of academic staff. If you are still unsure what plagiarism is, then seek advice.

It is a School policy that courses may request you submit work electronically for subsequent analysis of originality using *Turnitin*. Students agree that by taking courses in BIOL, required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Use posted on the Turnitin.com site.

### Where do I hand in assignments and then collect them once marked?

All assignments should be placed in the designated collection box in the foyer of the 2nd floor of the School of Biological Sciences (near the main office), unless directed otherwise by the course co-ordinator. All assignments must be accompanied by a cover sheet signed by you stating that the submitted work is not plagiarised. Cover sheets are available on top of the collection boxes, or you can download one from the Biology website (under Undergraduate). In addition, you may also be asked to submit your work electronically (via Learn) for analysis in *Turnitin*. You will be given instructions on how to do this in the assignment handout.

Marked assignments can be collected from the Secretaries' Office between the hours 9.30-10.30am and 1.30-2.30pm, unless directed otherwise by the course co-ordinator. Teaching staff will endeavour to return work as soon as possible, and should contact you if there are likely to be any delays that will prevent return within the maximum 4-week timeframe.

### What if I can't get it finished in time?

Reports and assignments should be handed in on time. Extensions may be granted if you have a valid reason. **If you require an extension, you should request one from the course co-ordinator** (or the lecturer responsible for marking the work), with as much notice as possible. Please do this BEFORE the deadline for the assignment. **If you have been given an**

**extension you should hand the work DIRECTLY to the course coordinator** (do not put it in the drop box as it may not be cleared after the due date).

If an extension has not been granted:

- work must be handed in by the due date to gain full credit
- work handed in up to 7 days after the deadline will be marked, but the marks will be discounted 25% before they are recorded to the student's credit
- any work handed in more than 7 days after the deadline date will not be marked or earn credit.

#### **What if I have written more than the word or page limit?**

If there is a word limit on an assignment, it is usually there to stop you doing too much work and to encourage you to write succinctly. It also makes things easier to assess. You can be up to 10% over without too much worry, but if the length increases beyond that your mark may suffer due to failure to follow the requirements. If you find yourself way over the word limit have a chat to the lecturer concerned about how to trim your assignment to an acceptable length.

#### **What if I fail part of the course?**

In BIOL, we require a satisfactory level of achievement in both the theoretical aspects of the discipline and in practical activities. This means you must attend all class activities and submit all items of assessment unless you have a very good reason not to (e.g. medical reasons). **A student must attain an average score of at least 40% for in-course assessment and average score of at least 40% in the course exam/test, AND score at least 50% overall for the course, to be awarded a passing grade.**

#### **What's the best way to give feedback?**

We welcome constructive feedback at all times – help us to make this a valuable course for you. We endeavour to remain approachable at all times. If you would rather give feedback anonymously, please use the on-line course survey or talk to lab demonstrators, or your class rep (who will all report back to the staff-student liaison committee that includes a representative from each of the undergraduate classes). Class representatives will be selected from each class at the start of course.

#### **What's the best way to complain?**

If you feel you have not been fairly treated during this course, please raise the issue with the lecturer or course co-ordinator in the first instance. Other avenues include your class rep., who can raise issues anonymously, or the UCSA education coordinator.

#### **SBS Grading**

A+	90% or above
A	85 – 90
A-	80 – 84
B+	75 – 79
B	70 – 74
B-	65 – 69
C+	60 – 64
C	55 – 59
C-	50 – 54

A restricted pass (R) may be awarded to those who are close to a pass (i.e. an overall score of 48-49.9%) AND who have achieved at least a 40% overall score in both in-course assessment and tests/exams. If an R grade is awarded you gain credit for the course but **cannot continue into papers that require this course as a pre-requisite**. NB. The R grade is only available at 100 and 200 level - it cannot be awarded for third year papers.

Failing grades: D 40-49      E 0-39