

Fall 2020

BIOL 338-001: Ecology of Dining Hall

Maria Stanko

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Stanko, Maria, "BIOL 338-001: Ecology of Dining Hall" (2020). *Biology Syllabi*. 59.
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Mondays and Wednesdays 9:00 AM - 10:20 AM

Instructor: Maria Stanko Email: mstanko@njit.edu Phone: 973-642-7246

Office: CKB 340E

Office Hours: Mon 2:30-4:00, Tues 10:00-11:30, or by appointment.

Course website: canvas.njit.edu/

Description: This course will examine the on-campus ecosystem of the dining hall as a framework for learning about a number of ecological concepts. We will investigate topics such as food webs, nutrient cycling, microbial ecology, and agroecology as they apply to the organisms and biological processes present in our dining hall. Course work will involve extensive reading and discussion of scientific and popular literature.

Prerequisite: BIOL 205&206 or permission of the instructor.

Text: No required textbook. Extensive required readings from a variety of sources, including scientific and popular literature, will be posted on the course Canvas site.

Synchronous Online Course: This course is offered in the synchronous online format this semester. There will be no in-person requirements for this course. The expectation for the synchronous class meetings is that students will join the online meeting sessions via the link of the course Canvas page during class times and participate in the discussion.

Learning Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Apply the ecological concepts taught in class and understand how the ecosystem of the dining hall is connected to other systems.
- Read critically and be able to form and articulate opinions on complex issues in ecology.
- Independently conceive of and execute an investigation-based final project.

Course policies:

- Course materials are provided for your own use only. No posting/sharing anywhere.
- You must check Canvas regularly and ensure that you regularly check the email address associated with your Canvas profile.
- Make-up exams and quizzes permitted only upon verification of documentation from the Dean of Students or with prior approval.
- Late assignments are accepted but penalized 10% per day late, with a maximum 50% deduction.

Disability Statement: Please let me know if you need accommodations for a disability. If you are in need of accommodations due to a disability please contact Chantonette Lyles, Associate Director of the Office of Accessibility Resources & Services (OARS), to discuss your specific needs:

<https://www.njit.edu/studentsuccess/accessibility>

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Grade scale: Grades will be determined by the percentage of the possible points earned, following the standard grade scale (90%+ A, 85%-89.4% B+, 80%-84.4% B, etc.).

Assignments	60
Participation	20
Journal (7x5)	35
Presentation	50
Quizzes (2x30)	60
Final Exam	75
Total points	300

Assessment of Learning:

Assignments - Students will submit periodic assignments related to course content via Canvas.

Participation – This course involved extensive discussion of course topics and readings. Participation will be assessed via verbal discussion, relevant participation in chat during class, and contribution to discussion worksheets.

Journal - Students will keep a bi-weekly journal (on Canvas) throughout the semester describing observations, questions, and thoughts related to course material. Writing prompts will occasionally be given, but free entries are encouraged.

Presentation of final project - Your assignment for the final project is to research any topic that interests you that meets the following criteria: your topic must involve FOOD and ECOLOGY and require some DATA COLLECTION (for example, from the dining hall, a grocery store, or a literature survey). The final product of your project will be a 10-minute presentation to the class sharing what you've learned (50 points).

Quizzes and Final Exam - There will be two quizzes and one final exam that cover the application and understanding of the material covered in the course. Quizzes and exams will be open-note, open-book exams that must be completed independently during the scheduled class time (quizzes) and the scheduled final exam time (final exam). The final exam will be cumulative, with a heavier emphasis on content not previously covered on quizzes.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at: <http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>. Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu.

COVID-19 Safety Requirements: All persons physically present in any department facility or classroom shall comply fully with the NJIT COVID-19 safety policy at all times. Masks must be worn before entry to all department facilities, and social distancing guidelines must be followed. Individuals who are unable to wear a face mask due to medical reasons should contact the Office of Disability Services or Human Resources. Students who enter a classroom without wearing a mask properly, or remove their mask, will be cautioned by the instructor. The same is true for students who disregard the seating order or guidelines for social distancing. Students with obvious symptoms of respiratory illness should not come to campus and will be asked to leave. Students who do not comply with a request by a department instructor to adjust their behavior, in accordance with the University Policy, will be subject to disciplinary actions. Instructors have the right to expel the student or terminate the class session at which any student fails to comply with the University Policy.

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Schedule:

A more detailed schedule including readings and assignments will be posted to the course Canvas site.

Date	Topic	Due dates
Wed 9/2	Introduction / What we eat / Eating plants	
TUES 9/8	Food choice	Assignment 1 – Introduction
Wed 9/9	Early agriculture	
Mon 9/14	Eating animals	
Wed 9/16	Student presentations of animal foods	Assignment 2– Animal foods
Mon 9/21	Evolution of diet	
Wed 9/23	Biodiversity of crops	
Mon 9/28	Energetics of cooking	
Wed 9/30	Microbial ecology – beneficial microbes	Assignment 3 – Kitchen diversity
Mon 10/5	QUIZ 1	QUIZ 1
Wed 10/7	Microbial ecology – food safety	
Mon 10/12	Microbial ecology – food pathogens	
Wed 10/14	Pollination and agriculture	Project proposal due
Mon 10/19	Pollination and agriculture	
Wed 10/21	Trophic ecology – food webs	
Mon 10/26	Trophic ecology – human effects on food webs	
Wed 10/28	Nutrient cycling – Carbon	
Mon 11/2	Nutrient cycling – Nitrogen	Assignment 4 – Trophic ecology
Wed 11/4	Nutrient cycling – Phosphorus	
Mon 11/9	QUIZ 2	QUIZ 2
Wed 11/11	Genetically modified foods	
Mon 11/16	Genetically modified foods	
Wed 11/18	Agroecology	Assignment 5 – Dirt questions
Mon 11/23	Food waste	
Wed 11/25	NO CLASS – NJIT on Friday schedule	
Mon 11/30	Student presentations	
Wed 12/2	Student presentations	
Mon 12/7	Student presentations	
Wed 12/9	Student presentations	
12/15-21	Final Exam, TBD*	

*Do not schedule travel during the final exam period until after the NJIT final exam schedule has been posted here: <https://www.njit.edu/registrar/exams/>