

PLB/iBio 849, Evolutionary Biology

Spring 2021 Schedule

10:20 - 11:40 TTh by Zoom

Instructors: Jeff Conner (he/him/his; [connerj@msu.edu](mailto:connerj@msu.edu)) and Acer VanWallendael (he/him/his; [vanwall1@msu.edu](mailto:vanwall1@msu.edu))

Jan 19	Conner	Introduction, Brief History
Jan 21 – Feb 25	Conner	Basic Population and Quantitative Genetics
Mar 4 - 9	Conner	Evolution and Development
Mar 11 – Apr 1	VanWallendael	Speciation
Apr 6 - 20	VanWallendael	Macroevolution

Text: Conner, J. K. and D. L Hartl 2004. *A Primer of Ecological Genetics*. Sinauer Associates, Sunderland, MA (Available at the [MSU bookstore](#), [Oxford University Press](#), or [Amazon.com](#)). Consistent with MSU policy, Jeff donates an amount larger than royalty proceeds from this class to the Lauff Graduate Scholarship Fund at KBS.

**Grading:** 50% each Conner and VanWallendael assignments. Details on assignments will be given at the beginning of each instructor's section; there will be a short assignment (1-page or less) for most class days, and one 2-page assignment due on the last class day (20 April). The assignment points are all of equal weight and will be summed for the 50% of your grade from each part of the class. Note that this course is certainly graded on a curve, so any given percentage right or wrong does not translate into a particular grade. We give mostly 3.5 and 4.0 grades in this course; typically the only people that get 3.0 are those that don't hand in assignments and/or miss class frequently (see below).

The **learning objectives** of this class are to introduce students to many of the fundamental concepts in evolutionary biology, enable students to critically evaluate the primary literature, and improve students' ability to think like a scientist, that is, to make judgments based on evidence.

**Respect for each other:** Our classroom will strive to be a place where diversity in all its dimensions is accepted and valued. The differences between class members will be embraced. Language that degrades an individual or group for any reason will not be tolerated, including but not limited to gender identity, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, religious preference, sexual orientation, or intellectual ability. Similarly, differences in opinion about scientific concepts discussed in class are encouraged, but comments should be directed at the concept rather than the individual. The instructors will strive to clarify misconceptions in a constructive manner.

**Course website:** [d2l.msu.edu](http://d2l.msu.edu). All class materials will be posted to the course's D2L website including lectures, readings (except the text above), and assignments, which will be submitted and handed back on D2L.

**Course format:** Zoom! Lectures will be delivered synchronously via Zoom and will also be recorded and uploaded to D2L. There will be a different Zoom room for each of the two halves of the course, the links to which will be posted on D2L. During lecture, questions can be asked using Zoom's Raise Hand feature, or entered in the Zoom chat function; if the instructor doesn't respond in about a minute, please interrupt verbally – we may not see the hand or chat! Student group work will be facilitated using Zoom Breakout Rooms.

**Course expectations, COVID, and you:** Obviously, this course is happening at a strange and difficult time. Although we will try to bring a semblance of normalcy to our teaching and this course, we appreciate the unique challenges that you may be facing during this pandemic and the many disruptions it has dumped on our lives. Please let us know if there is anything we can do as instructors to facilitate your learning; we will strive to be flexible and accommodating. Finally, thank you in advance for your patience, grace, and understanding as we all navigate this together.

**Absences: This semester will be more challenging than usual owing to the pandemic, but attendance will still be essential to your success.** If you have to miss class, you are still responsible for any assignments or presentations due that day. As assignments may not be posted in advance, it is your responsibility to check D2L and confer with peers to see what you missed and turn in any assignments in a timely fashion.

**Mental Health Resources for Students:** As your instructors, we care about your well-being and we encourage you, when needed, to access resources that are available to help you cope with life's struggles. These resources include:

MSU Counseling Center:

Web: [caps.msu.edu](http://caps.msu.edu)

Email: [counseling@cc.msu.edu](mailto:counseling@cc.msu.edu)

Phone: 517-355-8270

MSU Olin Student Health Center

Web: [olin.msu.edu](http://olin.msu.edu)

24/7 phone nurse: 517-353-5557

Listening Ear Crisis Center – Lansing, MI

(517) 337-1717 (24-hour Crisis Line)

(517) 337-1728 (Business Line)

2504 E Michigan Ave., Lansing, MI

**Learning Continuity:** If you fall ill or have other reasons that you are unable to attend this online course for an extended period of time, you will need to contact the instructor as soon as possible. Your health is essential to learning! We will work with you to make sure to accommodate your individual situation.

**Course Continuity:** If either Dr. VanWallendael or Dr. Conner falls so ill that they cannot teach this course online, the other will take over to teach both sections. In the unlikely event that neither professor can teach, the course will be put on hiatus. The course will resume where it left off on the same order of lectures. If possible, we will combine lectures to cover all material as originally intended, and issue a revised schedule ASAP.