

Biology 330-276 -Cultural and Economic Botany

Lecture – T, R 12:30-1:45 Shn 130

Lab - R 2-4:50, Shn 322

Professor - Dr. Rich Niesenbaum, 305 Shankweiler; 821-3258, email: niesenba

Office hours - M 9-10; W 10-11. Please confirm your intention to come to office hours by email or to make an appointment at another time.

Biology 276, Cultural and Economic Botany, is a survey of the diversity of plants and their relationships with people. We will focus on cultural and economic uses of plants from international, historical, and contemporary perspectives. The scientific process, and agricultural and environmental issues will be closely examined. **This is a botany course!** The focus is on plants. Please be advised that there are other Biology courses that satisfy the Group III requirement that focus on animals or other topics that may be of interest to you. Feel free to discuss with me whether this course is the most appropriate one for you.

Readings - The primary required source for this course is *Plants and Society* by Levetin and McMahon. The course schedule recommends readings that pertain to each lecture. You will be held responsible for the relevant chapters in this book. Additionally, *Tales of a Shaman's Apprentice* by Mark Plotkin is required reading for this course. This is a very enjoyable book that you should begin reading at the start of the semester. This book will be referred to in class discussions, midterms, and the final exam. You are also required to obtain Newcomb's Wildflower Guide, and the Medicinal Plant Guide is recommended.

Academic Behavior Code - Please be familiar with our Academic Behavior Code. Any violations of this code, including plagiarism and the use of old materials from this class, will be dealt with accordingly.

Class - Attendance is required and essential for success. I would also appreciate your active participation in class, and welcome alternative views. Also, please no late arrivals and no mid-lecture walks. Lectures and labs consist of learning exercises that can not be made up or experienced elsewhere. I promise to make class fun, exciting, and very worthwhile!!!

Help - Please don't hesitate to ask questions or come to me for help. A number of additional steps can be taken if you are having trouble. These include personal assistance from myself, and designated Biology Tutors. If you are having difficulty understanding the material please come to me early. If you are having problems with writing please use the **Writing Center**.

Grades - You will have the opportunity to earn points as follows:

Midterm Quizzes (2 X 50 points) - Exams are scheduled for 2/13 and 3/29. These exams will focus on the readings, lectures, and lab exercises.

Plant of the Day (25 points) - Each student will pick a plant species (either a crop plant or medicinal plant) and give a brief 5-7 minute presentation at the beginning or end of lectures starting on 1/25. A schedule of assigned presentation dates will be handed out early in the semester. The presentation should include a brief scientific and taxonomic description, and then cover the relationship between this plant and humans. Slides, specimens, samples, and demonstrations are encouraged. Let's have fun with this.

Paper Presentation (50 points) - This will be a well organized, rehearsed 15 minute presentation (10 minutes + 5 minutes for discussion). The presentation will be a summary of the key issues covered in your final paper. A topic, outline, and preliminary bibliography are due on 3/22, presentations begin on 4/3 and will be grouped by topic.

Final Paper (100 points) - This will be a 5 to 10 page paper based on a project that you conduct or some issue that relates to cultural and economic botany. A paper topic, outline, and preliminary bibliography are due on 3/22, and that paper itself is due on 4/26. More information will be provided during the semester, but it is never too early to start thinking about this assignment

Participation (25 points) - I would like all aspects of this course to be discussed. Whether you follow the teachings of Don Juan or Rush Limbaugh your views are welcome and you are encouraged to speak out and ask questions. This is especially important during student presentations, and in the informal lab and field environment. Lab and field activities will be evaluated and counted under participation.

Herbarium sheet (25 points) - Each student will create an herbarium of 25 field collected plants. In addition to the usual information placed on a herbarium specimen, a description of how humans use or have used this plant is required. You will have time during the lab period to work on this project.

Greenhouse Garden (10 points) - A class garden will be planted and cared for in the greenhouse. Types of plants will include: 1) Crop plants, 2) Medicinal plants, 3) Herbs & Spices, and 4) Wildflowers & Ornamentals. Some seeds will be provided, but you may wish to shop for or collect your own. Each plant must be labeled with scientific and common name & a small summary of its uses should be provided. You will be evaluated on the quality of your efforts in this activity.

Final Exam (100 points) - The final exam will be cumulative and will emphasize material from all course activities including lectures, lab and field exercises, and student presentations. The exam will be as scheduled during the final exam period.

Grades will be calculated as a percentage of total points earned.

Final Note: We all came to Muhlenberg to interact, so let's do it. I will have you all over to my

house. Please ask me to lunch, and encourage me to attend your events. I will make every effort to attend.