

Ichthyology Lab
BIOL 4131 – 01L (1 credit hours)
Texas A&M University – San Antonio, College of Arts and Sciences
Fall 2026 Syllabus

Instructor Contact Information

Name: Rebbekah Watson

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Office : STEM 311Z

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 12:30 pm – 2:00 pm, Wednesday 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm, or by appointment

Class Meeting Times and Location

Thursday 3:30pm - 6:15pm in CAB 310

Contacting Your Instructor

I will typically respond to emails from students within 24 hours. However, over the weekend and holiday periods responses may be delayed.

Required Course Materials

- Spiral notebook or composition book
- Pens and pencils
- Colored pencils (optional)

Course Description and Prerequisites

This course offers hands-on experience in ichthyology, the study of fishes. Students will learn the principles of fish taxonomy, morphology, and ecology through laboratory exercises and specimen identification. The course emphasizes key techniques for classifying and understanding the diversity of fishes with a focus on local species. Prerequisites: C or better in BIOL 1307 or BIOL 1309.

Corequisites: BIOL 4331.

Learning Outcomes

This course is to familiarize the student with the basic principles of ichthyology, and the interrelationship between fishes and their environment, including interactions with other organisms that leads to a diversity in form and function on Earth. This course is to give the student hands-on experience with specimens to illustrate the anatomy and diversity of fishes.

- Students will be able to use and understand the primary scientific literature of science,
- Students will gain a familiarity with core concepts of biology from genetics, evolution, and a diversity of biotic systems over the course of the semester, and
- Students will gain experience in using current technologies associated with the biological sciences.

Grading

The table below provides a summary of the graded work in this course. Note: Course grades for lecture and lab are separate.

Summary of Graded Work

Assignment	Grade Percentage
Lab Practicals (3)	50%
Lab Notebook	30%
Lab Quizzes	20%
Total Percent	100%

Current Grade

Your current grade will always be up to date in the BlackBoard Gradebook

Final Grade

Final letter grades are given by the percentage earned in class:

A = 90-100%, B = 80-89%, C = 70-79%, D = 60-69%, F = below 60%

Description of Graded Work

Type	Description
Lab Practicals 50%	Lecture Exams (3) are composed of questions covering lecture material. Each exam will have questions ranging from multiple choice, short answer, true/false, drawing, matching, fill-in-the-blank, etc. Not all types of questions will be on every exam. Exams are closed book and will be completed in-person during the first half of the class period. The third exam will serve as the final exam but will mainly cover material from the last unit. However, it will include some general concept questions about material that has shown up all semester just to make sure you learned the basic concepts.
Lab Notebook 30%	Working in pairs, you will select a primary research article related to the week's Ichthyology topic. You will briefly present the study to the class, providing an overview of the research question, methods, major findings, and significance of the study. You will then lead the class in a discussion of the paper, encouraging your classmates to critically evaluate the research, interpret the findings, and connect the study to concepts covered in class. Your grade will come from your presentation as well as your weekly participation with your classmates' presentations.
Lab Quizzes 20%	You will complete an ePortfolio using Google Sites. The ePortfolio will cover information regarding three (3) fish that you will choose or will be assigned to you. You will work on the ePortfolio over the semester. More details will be given in class regarding this assessment.

Make-up and Late Work Policy

University excused absences will not cause point deductions as long as you get in touch with me **within 24 hours of the absence** and is one approved by TAMUSA policies. Documentation will be required.

Exams

You may make up an exam only if:

- you contact me within one day (24 hours) of the scheduled exam
- your absence is one approved by TAMUSA policies (illness, death in the family, other immediate-family emergencies). Documentation will be required.
- Again – if I do not hear from you within 24 hours of the scheduled exam, you have forfeited the right to make up the exam.

Literature Discussions

You are required to be present when it is your week to present with your partner. There are no make-ups for the presentation portion.

- If you miss participating in a discussion due to an absence, one missed participation will be dropped.

Fish ePortfolio

There is no make-up or late work accepted.

In-Class Participation:

As mentioned above, any activities or assignments we conduct in class cannot be made up as they require your presence and will usually be conducted as a group.

- However, if you miss for an excused reason, we can discuss the reason why and then you will be exempt from the points given in class. Only one absence will be exempted/ dropped.

Attendance

Lecture Attendance:

I will take attendance at the beginning of every class period. Remember that your In-Class Participation and part of your discussion grade depends on your attendance. If you need to miss class, please notify me and get with a classmate to obtain missed materials. It is your responsibility to look at the lecture slide decks and keep up-to-date on what is due.

I understand that life happens; therefore, I will drop one (1) participation grade and one discussion grade (regardless of whether it is excused or not). If you have an issue with absenteeism, you will need to think about taking this course at another time when you can be available to attend all lectures.

Additional Course Policies

Do's and Do not's

- Do come to class regularly and on time – it affects your grade, not because of points assessed, but because of understanding the material.
- Do take notes, either on the print outs of my lectures or in a separate notebook.
- Do ask questions in class.

- Do seek out help from me and your peers.
- Do be respectful to others
- Do NOT have your cell phone out during class unless asked to do so.
- Do NOT use your laptop or computer during class unless instructed by me.
- Do NOT leave early without talking to me prior to class beginning

Email Etiquette

Professional email etiquette is a requirement when communicating with me (or anyone) online.

- Please do not write emails as you would text or include the entire email body in the subject heading.
- Also, please use proper grammar (punctuations!!) so that your email is easy to understand and follow.
- Finally, please be respectful to all.

Tentative Outline of Topics

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • History of ichthyology | • Reproduction |
| • Systematic ichthyology | • Behavior and communication |
| • Form and movement | • Cycles of activity and behavior |
| • Respiration | • Zoogeography |
| • Buoyancy and thermal regulation | • Communities and ecosystems |
| • Sensory perception | • Conservation |
| • Nutrition | |

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

University Email Policy and Course Communications: All correspondence between professors and students must occur via university email accounts. You must have your Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the help desk at helpdesk@tamusa.edu or at 210-784-HELP (4357). If you don't hear back within 48 hours, contact them again. They have many requests during the first part of the semester, so you may need to follow up with them.

Academic Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us at the [website](#) or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. All students are encouraged to discuss their academic accommodation with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center: All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the *Tools* section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202. Online tutoring is also available for after hours and weekend assistance.

While tutoring hours may change based on tutor schedules and availability, the current tutoring hours for MATH in the ALC are as follows:

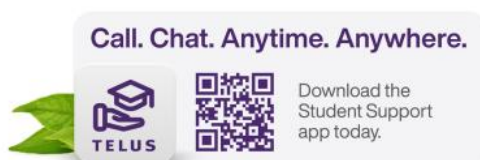
Appointments available MATH Walk in Tutoring – No appointment needed

	Appointments available	Walk in Tutoring – No appointment needed
MONDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
TUESDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
WEDNESDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
THURSDAY	8 am – 6 pm	9 am – 5 pm
FRIDAY	8 am – 5 pm	11 am – 4 pm

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, visit our website, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM.

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. *Crisis support is available 24/7/365 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 or through the TELUS student support App.*

The TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including 24/7/365 support for in the moment distress, crisis support, an anonymous peer-to-peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.



Emergency Preparedness: JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification system. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>. More information on emergency response may be found at: [Emergency Operations Plan](#) and the [Emergency Action Plan](#). Download the SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900.

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended by the published Census Date (the first week of class). Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend prior to the published Census Date (the first week of class) will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Jaguar Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center (WLDCC): The WLDCC provides support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Writing tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. The WLDCC offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. Students can schedule appointments with the WLDCC in JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on “Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center” to make your appointment. Students wanting to work in realtime with a tutor can schedule an “Online Appointment.” Students wishing to receive asynchronous, written feedback from a tutor can schedule an “eTutoring” appointment. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our [website](#) . The WLDCC can also be reached by emailing wldcc@tamusa.edu.

Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to submit a [CARE report](#) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources. A food pantry is available on campus; click [here](#) for hours and contact information.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots’ Casa building, room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military.va@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances: Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the wide variety of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or course work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student’s GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as “F” grades and will impact the student’s GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual on our campus and within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees are to be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the University’s Civil Rights Officer at 210-784-2061 or titleix@tamusa.edu.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking based on sex, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio’s Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in

navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other related sex-based misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu, 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Pregnant/Parenting Students: Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide such reasonable accommodations to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status (titleix@tamusa.edu; 210-784-2061; CAB 439K).

Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

Young Jaguars can support parenting students with daycare if students meet this criteria: (1) must be enrolled in classes at Texas A&M-San Antonio in the current semester, (2) must be Pell eligible or a single parent, (3) child(ren) must be aged 3 to 12-years-old, and (4) child(ren) must be enrolled in Pre-K-3 through 6th grade. Hours of operation is Monday-Thursday 3:30pm-9:00pm. For more information, please contact Young Jaguars at youngjaguars@tamusa.edu or call (210) 784-2636.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, and pregnancy/parenting or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.

- Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

- A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty, and administration.
- A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, [Student Code of Conduct](#), on our website, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with federal, state, and local laws.
- A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
- A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
- A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, or disability. Conduct that infringes on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the [Student Code of Conduct](#) or visit the resources available in the [OSRR website](#)

Important Fall 2026 Dates:

Dates	Event
August 20	Tuition & Fee Payments deadline
August 24	First day of class
September 7	Labor Day Holiday – No Classes / University Closed
September 9	Census Date – Students not paid in full or enrolled in a payment plan by 4:59 pm may be dropped for non-payment
October 5 – October 16	Midterm grading period
November 13	Last day to drop with an automatic “W”
November 25	Study Day – No classes
November 26-November 28	Thanksgiving Holiday – No Classes / University Closed
November 30	Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the University
December 4	Last day of classes
December 5 – December 11	Final exams
December 15	Commencement

The complete [academic calendar](#) is available online

Use of Generative AI Permitted Under Some Circumstances or With Explicit Permission

There are situations and contexts within this course where you may be asked to use artificial intelligence (AI) tools to explore how they can be used. Outside of those circumstances, you should not use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any student work (assignments, activities, discussion responses, etc.)

that is part of your evaluation in this course. Any student work submitted using AI tools should clearly indicate with attribution what work is the student's work and what part is generated by the AI. In such cases, no more than 25% of the student work should be generated by AI. If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, students should reach out to their instructor for clarification before submitting work for grading. Use of AI-generated content without the instructor's permission and/or proper attribution in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.