

Plant Ecology Research Paper Assignment
Biology 5325-001, Fall 2009

The research paper assignment is designed to encourage your synthesis of any topic in plant ecology relevant to your own research and/or of interest to you. There are two possible approaches: 1) synthesize at least six recent journal articles on a specific topic or 2) synthesize the history of a concept in plant ecology since first investigated to present day. Hopefully these papers will contribute to the literature review for your thesis/dissertation. I am happy to discuss your paper with you at any time during the semester, particularly if you would like to discuss the topic before the outline is due. I will also read drafts of your paper up until 10 Nov.

6 Oct

Outline Due

The outline can be as detailed as you like, but should include a list of the core papers you will be using. You may also want to include an abstract to organize your thoughts.

17 Nov

Paper Due

The paper should be 10-12 pages of text, double-spaced, 11 or 12 point font. You may include figures or tables from the papers you read, or summary tables or figures, to illustrate your points (but be sure to cite the sources). You must include a literature cited section; you may follow any citation convention as long as you are consistent. Papers will be graded for content, clarity, and level of synthesis of the topic. The paper constitutes 15% of your overall course grade.

In addition to handing in a hard copy to me, you will e-mail an electronic copy to Belinda Zollotuchen in the Biology Department (belinda@uta.edu). She will post the papers on-line for the rest of the class to read.

17 Nov-1 Dec

Papers will be available on-line and should be read by everyone in the class (undergraduates and graduate students). You are responsible for reading each other's papers before 1 Dec, and having at least one discussion point or question for each student to address during the question period following each presentation. Your questions and discussion will count as part of your class participation grade.

1 and 3 Dec

Class Presentations

Each graduate student will give a 10-12 minute, formal presentation on her/his paper followed by a 5 minute question/answer period. Since everyone in the class will have already read your paper, this is an opportunity to expand on one particular idea rather than simply summarize your entire paper. Remember that you will be speaking to a knowledgeable audience. Presentations will be graded on preparation, content, clarity, and style; this grade constitutes 10% of your overall course grade.