

Course Specifications

From the academic year 2017-2018 up to and including the

Course size (nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)
Credits 4.0 Study time 120 h Contact hrs 35.0 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2018-2019

A (semester 2)	English	microteaching	7.5 h
		guided self-study	12.5 h
		lecture	15.0 h

Lecturers in academic year 2018-2019

Leliaert, Frédéric	WE11	lecturer-in-charge
Larridon, Isabel	WE11	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2018-2019

	crdts	offering
Master of Science in Biology	4	A
Exchange Programme in Biology (master's level)	4	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

(Inter)national agreements on biodiversity (Convention on Biological Diversity, Millenium Ecosystem Assessment, CITES, IUCN, Traffic, WCMW-UNEP), management and organisations (FAO, ICLARM), sustainable use of natural resources (e.g. fisheries, woodlands), examples from air, soil and water, bio-indicators and monitoring, management and threats on biodiversity (ecotourism as a sustainable resource for a realistic biodiversity management?).

Position of the course

Students will obtain knowledge about the actual management rules regarding the protection of biological diversity (including genes, species and habitats); with this information, relevant research questions should be formulated taking into account actual socio-economic problems. Fundamental biological knowledge will be translated into socially relevant problems (conservation of rare species, invasive species, alien species and their role in ecosystems, sustainable management of natural resources, ...).

Contents

General aim of the course:

Discuss and formulate examples of fundamental and applied research that are relevant for international biodiversity policy in order to maintain biological diversity and ecosystem health.

General overview of the course:

- What is biodiversity? How is it perceived by the public, valued, and measured?
- Why is biodiversity important?
- What are the main concerns surrounding biodiversity?
- What are the main causes of biodiversity loss?
- Wat are the International agreements (conventions) on biodiversity.
- Resources and tools for biodiversity research.

Introduction: what are the biodiversity problems?

Overview of the document "Ecosystems and Human well-being – Biodiversity Synthesis" is used as the red line through the introduction (<http://www.millenniumassessment.org/>).

Following questions are treated : What is biodiversity and why is biodiversity important ? Wat are the recent insights in applied biodiversity within a socio-economic context ? What are the scientific challenges for applied biodiversity ?

Causes of biodiversity loss: habitat change, climate change and overexploitation:

Based on recent scientific knowledge, the effects of climate change is discussed in phenology, natural resources (fisheries), water management, deforestation, habitat use in relation to socio-ecological indicators

What is the legal context: national / international?

History of the legal framework of protection of biodiversity; what are the local, regional and international differences?

Goods and services of biodiversity and monitoring:

How can biodiversity be used and valorised? What is the socio-economic importance of biodiversity? Which bio-indicators are best for use in applied biodiversity?

Trade induced loss of biodiversity:

- *Biodiversity of the trade*: biodiversity in the trade for consumption (fisheries, bush meat, aquaculture), pet trade (ornamentals, trade in rare reptiles, etc.), sports (fishing, trophy hunting) and products (fur, leather, etc.).

- *Organisations controlling the trade*: governmental organisations (FAO, UNEP-WCMC, CITES, EU-CITES regulations); non-governmental organisations (WWF, IUCN, TRAFFIC, MAC, Bush meat task force).

- *Control activities*: CITES activities, UNEP-WCMC review reports).

- *Effects of the trade*: direct and indirect effects.

Resources and tools for Applied Biodiversity Research:

- *Zoological taxon-specific databases*: comprehensive, invertebrate, fish, amphibian, reptile, bird and mammal databases.

- *Trade related databases*: CITES, IUCN, TRAFFIC, Bushmeat, Global Marine Aquarium Database.

- *Other databases*: European fauna, ITIS, Science information database.

- *Overview of the actual rules regarding conservation of biodiversity*: Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Millenium Ecosuystem Assessment (MA), ... EU policies.

- *Causes of reduction of biodiversity* (mainly about the use of natural resources by humans: e.g. fisheries, tropical woodlands, ...)

- *Protection of rare species* (reduction of trade and other activities: e.g. CITES, ...)

- *Importance of biological diversity and conservation of the production of the natural resources* (e.g. examples from fisheries, tropical wood, aquarium trade (including the effects on the non-target species). Failure of the policy on fisheries, antropogenic pressure without taking into account the ecological consequences, ...)

- *Position of Flanders, Belgium, Europe, and other continents*: comparison of the importances and conflicts; impact of the socio-economy on the sustainable use of biodiversity

Visit to Botanic Garden Meise

Plant biodiversity conservation

- 1 Plant biodiversity conservation: why?
- 2 Distribution of plant biodiversity
- 3 Efforts towards plant conservation
- 4 Important actors in plant conservation
- 5 Plant biodiversity conservation
- 6 Botanic gardens and conservation
- 7 Resources and tools for biodiversity conservation
- 8 Molecular tools for measuring and monitoring biodiversity
- 9 Modelling climate and ecological niches
- 10 Plant re-introductions
- 11 Invasive alien species
- 12 Conservation and use of agricultural plant biodiversity (agrodiversity)
- 13 Industrial applications of plants and their properties
- 14 Importance of plant biodiversity conservation for medicine

Initial competences

Basic knowledge on ecology and biodiversity (bachelor level)

Final competences

Students can translate their fundamental knowledge of biodiversity (genes, species, habitats) into relevant social problems (protection of rare species, invasive species, alien species and their role within ecosystems, ...) and use this knowledge to advise policy makers.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Guided self-study, lecture, microteaching

Extra information on the teaching methods

Lectures

Group work: students work in group on a case study

Microteaching: students present their work to the group

Learning materials and price

Presentations, recent literature and course materials are available via Minerva.

Visit to Botanic Garden Meise (public transport): cost c. 20 EUR.

References

Recent scientific and legal literature

Why People Need Plants (2010). Edited by C. Wood & N. Habgood. The Open University. Kew Publishing, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Leadley E, Jury S (eds) (2006) Taxonomy and Plant Conservation: the cornerstone of the conservation and the sustainable use of plants. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Course content-related study coaching

Interactive support through Minerva, email (discussion platforms).

Evaluation methods

end-of-term evaluation and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the first examination period

Written examination with open questions, assignment

Examination methods in case of periodic evaluation during the second examination period

Written examination with open questions, assignment

Examination methods in case of permanent evaluation

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent evaluation

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

Permanent evaluation: The students prepare in group (4-6 students) a case study related to a recent topic in which the knowledge of applied biodiversity is important. The students are evaluated based on the content, the oral presentation and the group activity they have performed.

Periodic evaluation:

1. The students individually prepare a policy text concerning the conservation status of a threatened species and hand in this assignment on the day of the exam.

2. Each student, on an individual basis, will formulate a written answer to a case study related with biodiversity. The student can use digital information during the exam.

Calculation of the examination mark

The presentation of the case study counts for 40% of the total score; the written exam for 50% of the score and the assignment for 10% of the total score.