

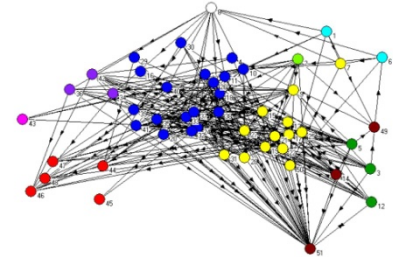
Ecology of the Dining Hall
Tuesdays & Thursdays 1:00-2:25, Central King Building 317

Biology 338, Fall 2015

Instructor: Maria Stanko
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Phone: 973-642-7246

Course website: moodle.njit.edu/
Office: CKB 340E
Office Hours: Mondays 2:00-4:00pm

Description: This course will examine the on-campus ecosystem of the dining hall as a framework for learning about a number of ecological concepts. We will investigate topics such as food webs, nutrient cycling, microbial ecology, and agroecology as they apply to the organisms and biological processes present in our dining hall. Course work will involve extensive reading and discussion of scientific and popular literature, supplemented by trips to the dining hall and related on-campus facilities.



Prerequisite: BIOL 205&206 (Foundations of Biology: Ecology & Evolution) or permission of the instructor



Text: No required textbook. Extensive required readings from a variety of sources, including scientific and popular literature, will be posted on the course moodle site.

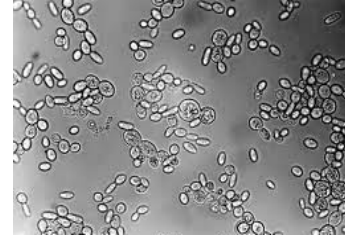
Schedule:

| Week of: | Topic | Notes |
|-----------------|--|-------------------------------|
| 8/31 | Introduction / What we eat and why | |
| 9/7 | Biodiversity in the dining hall | NO CLASS TUES 9/8 (Mon sched) |
| 9/14 | Biogeography and origins of crops | |
| 9/21 | Energetics of food and eating | |
| 9/28 | Microbial ecology – beneficial microbes | |
| 10/5 | Microbial ecology – food safety | Quiz 1 Tues 10/6 |
| 10/12 | Pollination and agriculture | Project proposal due |
| 10/19 | Food webs | |
| 10/26 | Nutrient cycling | Journals due |
| 11/2 | Agroecology | |
| 11/9 | Genetically modified foods | Quiz 2 Tues 11/10 |
| 11/16 | Climate change and food | |
| 11/23 | Institutional solutions: incorporating ecology into the dining hall and beyond | NO CLASS THURS 11/26 |
| 11/30 | Student presentations | |
| 12/7 | Student presentations | Final paper & Journals due |
| Dec 15-21 | Final Exam, TBD | |

*A more detailed schedule including readings and assignments will be posted to the course moodle site.

Grade scale: Grades will be determined by the percentage of the possible points earned, following the standard grade scale.

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| Assignments | 50 |
| Participation | 20 |
| Quizzes (2x20) | 40 |
| Journal | 50 |
| Final exam | 100 |
| <u>Final project</u> | <u>100</u> |
| Total points | 360 |



Make up exams, quizzes and late assignments: Make up exams and quizzes will be possible only with a doctor's or a dean's letter or with prior approval. Late assignments will be penalized 10% of the points available for each 24-hour interval that they are late.

Journal: Students will keep a weekly journal (on moodle) throughout the semester describing observations, questions, and thoughts related to course material. Writing prompts will occasionally be given, but free entries are encouraged.

Final project: A large portion of the points in this course are associated with an independent final research project. Your assignment for the final project is to research any topic that interests you that meets the following criteria: your topic must involve FOOD and ECOLOGY and require some DATA COLLECTION (for example, from the dining hall, a grocery store, or a literature survey). The final products of your project will be:

- A 5-10 page paper about your subject (70 points).
- A 10-minute presentation to the class sharing what you've learned (30 points).

Academic dishonesty: The course has a zero tolerance policy for academic dishonesty, including plagiarism and cheating. Please note that we often work together in this course, but all work you turn in must be your own. Instances of dishonesty will be punished by a zero on the assignment and consultation with the office of the Dean of Students to determine if further action is required. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, please ask me or refer to the academic integrity code: www.njit.edu/academics/integrity.php.

Learning Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Apply the ecological concepts taught in class and understand how the ecosystem of the dining hall is connected to other systems.
- Read critically and be able to form and articulate opinions on complex issues in ecology.
- Independently conceive of and execute an investigation-based written project.