

Ecology of the Dining Hall
Mondays and Wednesdays 10:00 AM - 11:20 AM

Biology 338, Fall 2022
Faculty Memorial Hall 209

Instructor: Maria Stanko **Email:** mstanko@njit.edu **Phone:** 973-642-7246
Office: CKB 340E
Office Hours: Mondays 11:30-2:30 or by appointment.

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.

Prerequisite: BIOL 205&206 or permission of the instructor.

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

Course website:
canvas.njit.edu/



Learning Objectives: Students will be able to:

- Apply ecological concepts to understanding food systems.
- Explain how the ecosystem of the dining hall is connected to other systems.
- Read critically and form and articulate opinions on complex issues in ecology.
- Independently conceive of and execute an investigation-based final project.

Course policies:

- Course materials are provided for your own use only. No posting/sharing anywhere.
- You must check Canvas regularly and ensure that you regularly check the email address associated with your Canvas profile.
- Make-up exams and quizzes permitted only upon verification of documentation from the Dean of Students or with prior approval.
- Late assignments are accepted but penalized 10% per day late, with a maximum 50% deduction.
- Compliance with current NJIT Covid-19 policies or other safety policies is required.

Disability Statement: Please let me know if you need accommodations for a disability. If you are in need of accommodations due to a disability please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources & Services (OARS) to discuss your specific needs: <https://www.njit.edu/studentsuccess/accessibility>

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Grade scale: Grades will be determined by the percentage of the possible points earned, following the standard grade scale (90%+ A, 85%-89.4% B+, 80%-84.4% B, etc.).

Assessment of Learning:

Assignments - Students will submit periodic assignments related to course content via Canvas.

Hypothesis Reading Annotations – Some assigned readings will have an associated Hypothesis Reading Annotation assignment. This is a tool accessed via the course Canvas page. Students make annotations on assigned readings in conversation with other students.

Presentation of final 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 product of your project will be a 10-minute presentation to the class sharing what you've learned (50 points).

Quizzes and Final Exam - There will be two quizzes and one final exam that cover the application and understanding of the material covered in the course. Quizzes and exams must be completed independently during the scheduled class time (quizzes) and the scheduled final exam time (final exam). The final exam will be cumulative, with a heavier emphasis on content not previously covered on quizzes.

Category	Points
Assignments	50
Hypothesis Reading Annotations (10x5)	50
Presentation	50
Quizzes (2x30)	60
Final Exam	75
Total Points	285

Academic Dishonesty: Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited and devalues the degree that you are working on. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to protect your educational investment by knowing and following the academic code of integrity policy that is found at:

<http://www5.njit.edu/policies/sites/policies/files/academic-integrity-code.pdf>. Please note that it is my professional obligation and responsibility to report any academic misconduct to the Dean of Students Office. Any student found in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade of F, and/or suspension or dismissal from the university. If you have any questions about the code of Academic Integrity, please contact the Dean of Students Office at dos@njit.edu.

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Schedule:

A more detailed schedule including readings and assignments is available on the course Canvas site.

Week	Date	Topic	Due dates
1	Wed 9/7	Introduction / What we eat / Eating plants	
2	Mon 9/12	Food choice	
	Wed 9/14	Early agriculture	
3	Mon 9/19	Eating animals	
	Wed 9/21	Student presentations of animal foods	Assignment 1 - Animal foods
4	Mon 9/26	Evolution of diet	
	Wed 9/28	Biodiversity of crops	
5	Mon 10/3	Energetics of cooking	Assignment 2 – Dining hall diversity
	Wed 10/5	Microbial ecology – beneficial microbes	
6	Mon 10/10	QUIZ 1 / Sauerkraut fermentation lab	QUIZ 1
	Wed 10/12	Microbial ecology – food safety	
7	Mon 10/17	Microbial ecology – food pathogens	
	Wed 10/19	Pollination and agriculture	
8	Mon 10/24	Pollination services	Assignment 3 - Project proposal due
	Wed 10/26	Trophic ecology – food webs	
9	Mon 10/31	Trophic ecology – human effects on food webs	
	Wed 11/2	Nutrient cycling – Carbon	
10	Mon 11/7	Nutrient cycling – Nitrogen	Assignment 4 - Trophic ecology
	Wed 11/9	Nutrient cycling – Phosphorus	
11	Mon 11/14	QUIZ 2 / Genetically modified foods	QUIZ 2
	Wed 11/16	Genetically modified foods	
12	Mon 11/21	Native American food systems	
	Wed 11/23	NO CLASS (NJIT on Friday class schedule)	
13	Mon 11/28	Agroecology	
	Wed 11/30	Food waste	
14	Mon 12/5	Student presentations	
	Wed 12/7	Student presentations	
15	Mon 12/12	Student presentations	
	Wed 12/14	Student presentations	
	12/16-22	Final Exam, TBD*	

*Do not schedule travel during the final exam period until after the NJIT final exam schedule has been posted here: <https://www.njit.edu/registrar/exams/>