# THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT ASHEVILLE FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number <u>6218S</u>
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Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

APC Document 55 (ENVR): Add two new courses to Environmental Studies:

ENVR 302, Field Ornithology ENVR 351, Herpetology

**Effective Date: Fall 2018** 

1. Add: On page, new course, ENVR 302, Field Ornithology:

#### 302 Field Ornithology (2)

Students will learn field identification of southern Appalachian birds by sight and sound. Class periods will include field trips to a variety of local habitats. Summer.

**Impact:** We propose adding Field Ornithology as a permanent offering every summer. This course is an elective and will increase the diversity of electives from which students may choose, along with increasing scheduling flexibility for students who wish to take advantage of a summer course.

There are no supply or equipment expenses related to this course. Students will have access to binoculars the Environmental Studies Department already owns, and students purchase their own field guides and recordings of bird songs.

The teaching load for Field Ornithology is 2 contact hours, which do not count towards any faculty member's Fall or Spring 12-contact-hour teaching load. The course instructor is paid from Summer School funds, based on course enrollment. Expenses for local field trips in university vehicles are paid from the Environmental Studies Department Summer School budget, and are comparable to field trip expenses for other summer field courses taught in our department.

**Rationale:** Bird identification is an important skill for field ecologists. At one time, BIOL/ENVR 340, Ornithology, and ENVR/BIOL 348, Avian Ecology and Conservation were taught in alternating spring semesters, giving students an opportunity each year to study birds. Ornithology was sunset upon Jim Petranka's retirement from the Biology Department several years ago, leaving Avian Ecology (taught every other spring) as the sole bird-specific ecology course on campus. Field Ornithology taught during Summer term each year will ensure one additional opportunity for students wishing to learn bird identification skills.

Field Ornithology has been taught as a Special Topics course (ENVR 372) during the last three summer terms: 2015 (12 students enrolled); 2016 (5 students enrolled); and 2017 (9 students enrolled).

The course has been taught by Reed Rossell, an ornithologist and field biologist who has worked with UNCA students on funded and unfunded undergraduate research projects since the 1990s. If Reed is unable to teach the course in the future, it could be taught by another local ornithologist (there are many in the Asheville area with advanced educational degrees), or by Andrew Laughlin (Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies). The addition of this course allows students majoring in Environmental Studies and Biology a greater diversity of upper-level Ecology electives from which to choose while completing their majors.

The course is held in May, after Commencement, but before Summer Session I begins, as this is the period of peak bird migration. Thus, it does not interfere with the scheduling of any other course at UNCA except for Field Herpetology, which is a travel course taught every other summer, and possibly other travel courses the Biology Department might offer during May. Travel courses cost more for students, as they have to pay travel and lodging costs, in addition to summer tuition. Since Field Ornithology includes only local field trips, it provides a more economical field experience for students during the summer, and allows them to work at local jobs during the time period covered by the course.

## 2. Add: On page, new course, ENVR 351, Herpetology:

#### 351 Herpetology (4)

Students will examine the extant reptile and amphibian families of the world. Topics will include classification (phylogeny), anatomy, physiology, ecology, and threats to the continued survival of these species. Prerequisites: ENVR 241 or BIOL 210. Odd years Fall.

**Impact:** We propose adding Herpetology as a permanent offering to be taught every other Fall. This course will serve as an upper-level Ecology course in the Environmental Studies Department. The addition of this course will not change the number of hours required for graduation, but will increase the diversity of lab classes from which students may select electives for the Ecology concentration.

The teaching load for Herpetology will be 6 contact hours every other Fall. Landon Ward has taught this course as a Special Topics course three times, and it was fully enrolled each time: Fall 2014 (23 students enrolled); Fall 2015 (19 students enrolled); and Fall 2017 (20 students enrolled).

Rationale: The addition of this course allows students majoring in Environmental Studies a greater diversity of upper-level Ecology electives from which to choose while completing their majors. Even with this course, nearly every upper-level ecology lab elective fills during registration each semester. Herpetology will explore important topics such as classification, anatomy, physiology, population declines, and many other topics of interest. Environmental Studies students will benefit from taking this course, as herpfauna are indicator species and are some of the first species to show declines when environmental quality becomes impaired. Knowledge of herpfauna is required or highly beneficial for many jobs in the ecology field. There is increasing global conservation interest in these species, and students in environmental fields will benefit from having herpetological experience.

### 3. Delete: On page 156, in the Concentration in Ecology and Environmental Biology:

"...18 hours of Ecology and Biology electives chosen from BIOL 210 or 211 (whichever is not selected above), 320, 322, 323, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 340, 350, 351, 356, 357, 360, 442; or ENVR 312, 322, 323, 341, 343, 346, 347, 348, 349, 358, 360, 390, 391, 396."

**Add:** On page 156, in place of deleted entry:

"...18 hours of Ecology and Biology electives chosen from BIOL 210 or 211 (whichever is not selected above), 320, 322, 323, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 340, 350, 351, 356, 357, 360, 442; or ENVR 302, 312, 322, 323, 341, 343, 346, 347, 348, 349, 351, 358, 360, 390, 391, 396."