FIELD HERPETOLOGY
BIOL 4970/5970 – Sec. 052
July 24 – August 4, 2017

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will provide an overview of methods, techniques and standards for the collection, management and analysis of herpetological field data for various applications. On local field trips we will collect amphibians and reptiles while covering the basic diagnostic (morphological, ecological, and behavioral) characteristics of observed species. Students will participate in group research projects in which they will be required to collect summary data on habitat characteristics, species lists, and diversity indices for various field sampling sites. Students will also complete an individual project on a herpetological topic of their choosing.

SCHEDULE
The course activities will be flexible and opportunistic. They will include various sampling techniques, field trips, application of current amphibian sampling methods for the prevention of amphibian infectious diseases, application of environmental DNA techniques for monitoring rare and endangered species classroom/laboratory sessions, group discussions, and occasional evening herp walks and road cruising.

REQUIRED MATERIALS AND READING
A Field Guide to Oklahoma’s Amphibians and Reptiles, Greg Sievert and Lynette Sievert, Oklahoma Dept. Wildlife Conservation, University Oklahoma Press, 2011. ISBN: 061542788X. Select research papers and pamphlets on herpetological field techniques will be distributed to class participants. Students will be required to read these materials before we discuss them in class. Students will be required to keep a field notebook detailing animals collected throughout the duration of the course. A Rite-in-the-Rain field notebook is required for this purpose.

In Field Herpetology, we will spend most of our time outdoors hunting for reptiles and amphibians. This involves looking under rocks, digging through leaf litter, mucking about in ponds, and hiking around at night, all in the late summer heat! It is just important to remember that this is a true field course and you should expect to get wet, muddy, filthy, and sweaty during various activities of the course. As a result, I recommend the following additional items be added to your packing list:

1. Bug spray or lotion
2. Ball cap or sunhat
3. Sunscreen
4. Work or garden gloves (easier to roll logs or dig in dirt if your hands are covered!)
5. Headlamp or flashlight
6. Clothing that can get dirty and/or ripped; bring some long pants due to poison ivy.
7. Shoes that can go in water (like Keens or Chacos or “muck boots”)
8. Optional: chest waders are available from the OU Biology stock on main campus; more details provided after enrollment

GRADING and DUE DATES
Grades for undergraduate students will be determined using a 100-point grading scale, and will be based upon performance in the following: individual research project and presentation; lab practical and written exam; field notebook; group project; literature discussion; class participation. Graduate students will additionally be required to submit a written report on their individual research project.

1. Individual Research Project and Presentation (10 points); July 31, 2017
2. Lab Practical and Written Exam (25 points); August 3, 2017
3. Group Project (25 points); August 3, 2017
4. Field Notebook (15 points); August 4, 2017
5. Classroom and Field Work Participation (25 points)
INSTRUCTOR
Jessa Watters, Instructor, jwatters@ou.edu

Reasonable accommodation
Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent the full demonstration of his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities.

Adjustments for pregnancy/childbirth related issues
Should you need modifications or adjustments to your course requirements because of documented pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss. Generally, modifications will be made where medically necessary and similar in scope to accommodations based on temporary disability. Please see www.ou.edu/content/eoo/pregnancyfaqs.html for commonly asked questions.

Title IX resources
For any concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, stalking, or intimate partner violence, the University offers a variety of resources, including advocates on-call 24.7, counseling services, mutual no contact orders, scheduling adjustments and disciplinary sanctions against the perpetrator. Please contact the Sexual Misconduct Office 405-325-2215 (8-5) or the Sexual Assault Response Team 405-615-0013 (24.7) to learn more or to report an incident.

Religious holidays
It is the policy of the University to excuse the absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required classwork that may fall on religious holidays.