

Assignment

You will write two short papers explaining two ecological papers you read in peer-reviewed journals. In each, your objective is to summarize an original scientific study in a concise fashion, providing a sense of what the objectives and hypotheses were, how the study was performed, what was found, and what the major conclusions were. In addition, you must put the findings into context and explain how the study relates to discussions in our class and readings in the text.

Four times throughout the semester you will search for and read an original scientific article from a peer-reviewed journal and come to class prepared to discuss it. Review articles do not count. Your two essays will be based on **two of these journal articles**. Due dates are listed on the syllabus.

Format

All papers must be **single-spaced** with 2.5 cm margins, two hard-returns between each paragraph, and your name, pledge, date, and title at the top of the first page (no title page). **Submit all papers electronically.** You will also submit a copy of the abstract of the article (if you have a PDF file, you may submit the entire article as an e-mail attachment, or use the snapshot tool to cut and paste the abstract into an appendix in your essay file).

Plagiarism and Citations

Read carefully the Department of Biology's Statement on Plagiarism (<http://www.bio.davidson.edu/dept/plagiarism.html>). In addition to information on plagiarism, this document discusses when and how to cite sources and what information to include in a Literature Cited section. **Do not use footnotes**; use the author and year system shown on this website. Citations should be in a standard and consistent format. Cite your chosen article and cite the textbook and any other sources as appropriate.

The Draft Process

I am willing to examine a polished draft of your paper (a rough draft that has clearly not been edited by you will be returned without comment). If you want to take advantage of this option you must turn the draft in to me not less than one week before the final due date, and earlier for your first essay, of course. That will give me a couple of days to look at it and you a few days to edit it. Good writing habits include completing multiple drafts, whether you turn it in a draft to me or not. You should also seriously consider using the Writing Center.

Assessment

These exercises are worth 100 points – 50 points per essay (~8.3% of your grade for each). You will be graded on accuracy, integration of ecological principles, as well as your writing skills. Papers will be assessed using the following criteria:

- Paper is a primary literature article relevant to ecological concept as specified in syllabus.
- Opening paragraph specifies thesis, objectives, importance, relevance
- Hypotheses of researchers, summary of experiment, results, and conclusions
- Accurate content and description of ecological experiment
- Integration of ecological concepts and class material into Essay
- Well-written, and a presentation that flows well
- Organized, strong, and logical analysis of study/experiment
- References: You must cite the main article in the text and list it in a reference section. You will probably find it necessary to include other citations.