

### **Instructor Contact Information**

Dr. Ashley B. Morris ([ashley.morris@mtsu.edu](mailto:ashley.morris@mtsu.edu)) / SCI 1067 / (615) 494-7621

### **Office Hours**

Scheduled office hours are Mondays and Wednesdays 1PM - 3PM. I have an open door policy, but if you are coming to campus specifically to speak with me outside of scheduled office hours, I recommend you make an appointment by email.

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### **Course Description**

This course provides an introduction to the forest types of eastern North America, past and potential climatic influences on forest structure and assemblages, and emphasizes identification of Tennessee native tree species.

### **Expected Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Identify major tree and shrub species native to the Central Basin of Tennessee based on living specimens and preserved herbarium material;
2. Describe higher taxonomy of study species based on APG III;
3. Use dichotomous keys to identify unknown species;
4. Describe major uses and habitat requirements of study species;
5. Describe physical and biological features associated with major forest types in Tennessee and Eastern North America;
6. Interpret, synthesize, write, and publicly present information about trees.

### **Course Materials**

#### *Course Website*

All course materials will be provided online through **D2L** (<https://elearn.mtsu.edu>) or as handouts in class. Links have already been posted for a number of downloadable PDF keys, websites, and virtual herbaria, all of which you may find useful throughout the semester. I will also post any slides or other handouts from class as we progress.

#### *Text*

You will need at least one of the following texts:

Kirkman LK, Brown CL, DJ Leopold (2007) Native trees of the Southeast: an identification guide. Timber Press, 372 pp.

Wofford SE, Chester EW (2002) Guide to the trees, shrubs, and woody vines of Tennessee. University of Tennessee Press, 272 pp.

Additional resources have been posted as weblinks on our D2L course page.

### *Equipment and Clothing*

We will frequently go outside, sometimes off campus, during our class period. You should dress appropriate for the weather for every class period. No flip flops or sandals will be allowed in class. Appropriate footwear (tennis shoes, hiking shoes or boots) is required. If you are sensitive to bug bites of any kind, you may choose to use repellents, particularly for off-campus trips.

You should also bring water and a snack (if needed). You are not allowed to eat or drink in the classroom; these items will be for outside use only.

You will need a small notebook for taking notes in the field. You may also choose to have a 10X hand lens for observing small morphological structures.

### **Grades**

Grades in this course will be based on weekly ID quizzes, a team presentation, a mid-term exam, a final exam, and a herbarium collection. Point values and descriptions of each assignment are provided below.

<b>Graded Item</b>	<b>Points per Item</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Total Points</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
ID Quizzes	20	9	180	31
Team Presentation	50	2	100	17
Mid-term Exam	100	1	100	17
Herbarium Collection	200	1	200	34
Total Points			580	

*Grading Scale:* I do not use a plus / minus grading scale. The following grading scale will apply to your final grade:

A = 90%-100%    B = 80%-89%    C = 70%-79%    D = 60%-69%    F ≤ 59%

*Policy on Borderline Grades:* Final grades are rounded to the nearest whole number (e.g., 89.44 = 89, while 89.50 = 90). A borderline grade, such as an 89, will remain a B. I will not round up to improve letter grades. The grade you earn is the grade you will receive.

What to expect for graded items: Refer to the summaries below for expectations on format and grading of individual graded items outlined in the table above.

*ID Quizzes* - An ID quiz will be held every Thursday beginning Week 4 (9/19). These quizzes may be inside using live or dried specimens, or they may be outside on living material. Each quiz is worth 20 points and will typically include 10 species. You may be asked to identify the species, family, leaf morphology, or other basic ID characteristics or economic uses as discussed in class. Each quiz will be partially cumulative, such that the majority of species (~7) will be new, while some (~3) will be from previously tested material.

*Team Presentations* - Teams of two students will prepare a short slide presentation on a selected family, using class references and any additional references preferred. The primary objective is to describe the family, defining morphological characteristics, and present at least two woody species native to our region (includes TN or more localized Central Basin). Species should be briefly described and photos provided, along with information about habitat requirements, economic uses, and potential threats. This assignment is worth 50 points. Points will be determined on the basis of content (is information correct?) and proper use of terminology (20 pts); organization and clarity (10 pts); species ID - clear display of plant and definitive characters (10 pts); and professionalism (10 pts). Teammates will receive the same grade.

*Mid-term Exam* - This exam will include questions similar to those experienced on weekly quizzes, as well as short essay questions on ENA Forests / TN Physiographic Provinces. The exam is scheduled for Tuesday, 10/8, and is worth 100 points.

*Herbarium Collection* - See attached documentation on collection project.

### **Other Academic Policies**

Below you will find my stance on attendance, academic dishonesty, and personal responsibility. As a student enrolled in this course, you are responsible for understanding and abiding by these policies.

*Attendance:* I will not take attendance, and attendance itself will not be included in your grade. However, much of what we do in this class requires you to be present to earn your grade. As an adult about to enter the work force or additional academic training, you are expected to present yourself in a professional manner and represent yourself in a way best fitting a potential job candidate.

*Make-up Points:* Weekly quizzes and exams cannot be made up except under special circumstances. Being late or skipping class will not suffice. Acceptance of excuses are solely at the discretion of the instructor. Late work is not accepted.

*Disruptive Behavior:* You are expected to be seated and ready for active participation in class no later than the scheduled start time. Being consistently late to class is disruptive for myself and

other students, and it shows a lack of respect for all of us. If you arrive after I have started class more than once, I will bring the issue to your attention. If this behavior continues, I will ask to not return to class until you can arrive on time. Other disruptive and disrespectful behaviors during the class period could result in your removal from the classroom. Such behaviors include: sleeping, conversation extraneous to class discussion, texting or other handheld device use extraneous to class discussion, verbal or physical outbursts towards me or other students, and other behaviors that I determine are generally rude or disrespectful towards me or other students. **Tobacco products of any kind are not allowed in the classroom.** Electronic cigarettes or other forms of non-tobacco cigarettes are also prohibited.

*Personal Responsibility:* As a student enrolled in this course, you are acknowledging that you have read this syllabus, and you acknowledge and abide by all policies stated herein. As a student at MTSU, you are also acknowledging that you have read the MTSU Student Handbook, and that you acknowledge and abide by all policies stated therein. Failure to abide by all mentioned policies could have a negative impact on your grade in this class, or could potentially result in your removal from this class.

### **Disabled Student Services**

Students who have a disability and who may require assistance or accommodation or students who have questions related to any services are encouraged to contact the Disabled Student Services office. Disabled Student Services is located on the first floor of the Keathley University Center in Room 120. For more information: Mr. John Harris, KUC 120, 898-2783.

### **Do you have a lottery scholarship?**

To retain Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship eligibility, you must earn a cumulative TELS GPA of 2.75 after 24 and 48 attempted hours and a cumulative TELS GPA of 3.0 thereafter. You may qualify with a 2.75 cumulative GPA after 72 attempted hours (and subsequent semesters), if you are enrolled full-time and maintain a semester GPA of at least 3.0. A grade of C, D, F, or I in this class may negatively impact TELS eligibility. Dropping a class after 14 days may also impact eligibility; if you withdraw from this class and it results in an enrollment status of less than full time, you may lose eligibility for your lottery scholarship. Lottery recipients are eligible to receive the scholarship for a maximum of five years from the date of initial enrollment, or until a bachelor degree is earned. For additional Lottery rules, please refer to your Lottery Statement of Understanding form, review lottery requirements on the web at [http://www.mtsu.edu/scholarships/telsconteligibility\\_scholarships.php](http://www.mtsu.edu/scholarships/telsconteligibility_scholarships.php), or contact the Financial Aid Office at 898-2830.

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

*Weekly quizzes begin Thursday, 18 Sept*

*Mid-term exam is Thursday, 9 Oct*

*Plant collection is due Tuesday, 2 Dec*

## **MAJOR PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCES OF TENNESSEE**

Mississippi River Valley  
Coastal Plain  
Western Highland Rim  
Central Basin  
Eastern Highland Rim  
Cumberland Plateau  
Valley and Ridge  
Unaka Mountains

## **SOME MAJOR PLANT FAMILIES COVERED IN THIS CLASS**

Altingiaceae  
Anacardiaceae  
Betulaceae  
Cupressaceae  
Cornaceae  
Fabaceae  
Fagaceae  
Hamamelidaceae  
Juglandaceae  
Magnoliaceae  
Oleaceae  
Pinaceae  
Rosaceae  
Sapindaceae  
Ulmaceae