

Major Writing Assignment #2

During the semester you should attend at least two talks on subjects in ecology. A lot of ecological research occurs at Cornell, and this leads to an abundance of talks offered through a variety of departments (Ecology and Systematics, Neurobiology and Behavior, Entomology, Natural Resources, and more). The talks you attend must be on a topic dealing with the science of ecology (talks dealing primarily with policy issues are not appropriate for this assignment) and must be given outside of this or any other course for which you are registered. I will give you lists of some of the appropriate talks as they become available, but also feel free to look for talks on your own. If you are unsure whether the topic of a given talk is appropriate for this assignment, check with me for approval prior to writing the paper.

For **each** of the two talks that you attend, you should write a short report. This report should be aimed at your peers -- people with some science and ecological background, but not experts on the topic of the talk. Your report should include both an explanation of the talk and a brief discussion of your analysis of the investigation. In the first part you should give the title of the talk and the speaker's name and affiliation. Explain the question being investigated, how the investigation was done, what results were obtained, and the conclusions made in the talk. In your analysis you might discuss what, if any, points were very weak or very strong, what further questions were left unanswered, and whether you find the implications of the talk far-reaching or not and why.

Caution: If you go to a lecture that you really do not understand at all, you will probably have a difficult time writing a good report on it. If this happens, it is probably to your benefit to attend a different talk for the purposes of writing the report.

Aim for about three (3) double-sided, typed pages for each of the two reports.

DEADLINE: beginning of section, **December 3**. However, you should feel free to turn them in earlier, either one at a time or together. I will grade them as I get them.

METHOD OF GRADING: Check/Check-Plus

