

Syllabus



This course investigates the fundamental issues addressed by scientists studying tropical rain forests, including what gave rise to their remarkable biodiversity, the drivers and consequences of deforestation, why people are fascinated by rain forests, cultural stereotypes about the tropics, and if forest conservation is compatible with socioeconomic development. *By the end of the course students will be able to:*

- Recognize and describe stereotypes about rain forests & their residents
- Analyze rain forest tropes in art, literature, & popular culture
- Discuss & evaluate hypotheses for the origins and maintenance of tropical biodiversity
- Explain & compare human history in rain forests
- Review contemporary threats to rain forests
- Analyze and visualize data on deforestation
- Review and contrast strategies for rain forest conservation & restoration
- Identify rain forests in their daily lives & set personal goals for advancing their conservation
- Produce materials for communicating about rain forests to family and peers

When & Where

When: Tuesdays 3:00-3:50 and Thursdays 3:00-4:55

Where: LIT 0231 (both days)

Instructor & TA

Instructor: Dr. Emilio M. Bruna [embruna@ufl.edu, (352) 846-0634]

Teaching Assistant: Priyanka Hari Haran [phariharan1@ufl.edu, (352) 846-0527]

Credits & Prerequisites

Credits: 3

Prerequisites: None

Quest Program: Quest 2

GenEd Designation: International

A minimum grade of C is required for Quest and General Education credit. Courses intended to satisfy Quest and General Education requirements cannot be taken S-U.

Minors & Certificates

This course counts towards:

- The Minor & Certificate in Latin American Studies. See <https://www.latam.ufl.edu/academics/undergraduate-programs> for more information.

Required Materials

Materials and Supplies Fees: None.

Textbooks to purchase: None.

- All materials, including readings and videos, will be made available on the course Canvas page.
- *Students should sign up for free online access to the New York Times and Wall Street Journal by following the instructions at [this UF Libraries Website](#)¹.*

Office Hours

When

- **Instructor:** Wednesday & Friday 1:30-3:00 pm or by appointment. I am happy to meet either in-person or online. You can drop- or log-in at any time during the session or guarantee a specific time slot by signing up for a specific time here: <https://embruna.youcanbook.me>.
- **Teaching Assistant:** Tuesday 1:00-2:30 pm or by appointment (in-person & online).

Where

- **In-person:** The Tropical Ecology & Conservation Lab is located next to the Rawlings Hall bus stop (711 Newell Drive, a 5 minutes from Turlington Plaza). For a map to our location click the “Contact” link at BrunaLab.org.
- **Online:** use the zoom link on the course Canvas page. We are online the entire session.

💡 Can you give me **one good reason** why I should go to Office Hours?

I can give you **ten**.

1. To introduce yourself.
2. Get clarification on assignments.
3. Argue about a topic that came up in class.
4. Grab a (free) tea, coffee, or espresso in our lab kitchen.
5. Make sure you understood the key points from a class session.
6. Ask for feedback on ideas for course projects.
7. Get advice on successfully navigating academic life at UF.
8. Discuss how to gain experience for your post-graduation goals.
9. Request help arranging a study group.
10. You don't need a good reason...just come on by.

¹Some of the assigned readings from these sources have dynamic multimedia data visualizations or video that can't be appreciated in the .pdf versions posted to canvas.

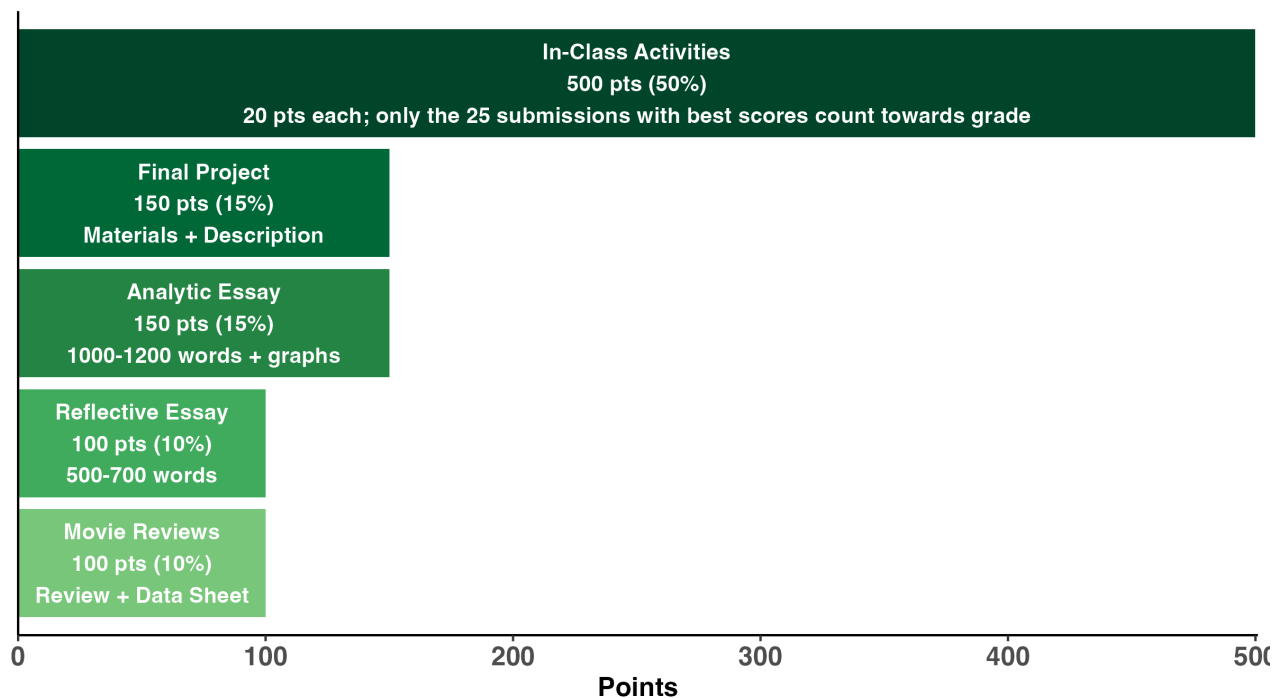
Grades & Attendance

Learning in our class is achieved with an diverse array of methods ranging from data analysis to essays to projects. In most class sessions you will also be working with small groups of students to complete an in-class assignment that reinforces the major themes of the day's topic. In keeping with the philosophy of the Quest program, this course also has *Experiential Learning and Self-Reflection Components*.

💡 Important note regarding class discussions & group work.

We will explore some challenging, important problems and increase our understandings of different perspectives and approaches for addressing them. These conversations may not always be easy; we sometimes will make mistakes in both how we communicate our perspective and what we hear other say. There may be times when we need patience, courage, imagination, and of course mutual respect to engage our texts, classmates, instructors, guests, and our own ideas and experiences. *Disrespectful or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated*. And always remember that as scholars we rely on critical thinking, data, prior scholarship, and expert opinion when interrogating assigned readings and discussing course content with classmates and instructors.

Assignments (1000 pts)



Grading

In-class Assignments are due by the following class session. Late assignments will lose 10 pts.

Regrades: Requests for re-evaluation of assignments must be accompanied by an explanation for why you think you deserve additional credit and the number of additional points you think you deserve. The deadline for submission is one week after the work was returned.

Grades & Attendance

Grade Assignment (based on % of total points earned): A = 94–100%, A- = 90–93%, B+ = 87–89%, B = 84–86%, B- = 80–83%, C+ = 77–79%, C = 74–76%, C- = 70–73%, D+ = 67–69%, D = 64–66%, D- = 60–63%, E < 60

Grade Points: For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Attendance

Though attendance is not required, many of the sessions we will be completing activities in class that count towards your grade. Most of these can be completed independently, but by doing them in class you will benefit from working collaboratively with the other students.

Some of the in-class activities can only be completed in that day's class session. If you miss class on one of these days, that is why the grade for in-class activities is based on a subset of the total activities; you can also elect to make up lost points with extra-credit assignments. ***If you need to miss class for any reason, please let me know as soon as possible.*** We will make arrangements for you to complete any assignments and go over any material you will be missing. I would much rather you focus on your health, attend your conference, or support friends and family in need than struggle to turn in assignments.

Participation

Consistent informed, thoughtful, and considerate class participation is encouraged (and in some cases required). *If you have personal issues that prohibit you from joining freely in class discussion (e.g., shyness, language barriers, medical condition): no problem.* let us know and we will discuss alternative modes of participation.
