

BIOL 3720L: FIELD ANIMAL BEHAVIOR

University of Georgia

Fall 2018

Costa Rica

MEETING TIMES:

Lecture: 1-2X Weekly

Laboratory: Daily

3 credit hours

INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. Kimberly Andrews

kma77@uga.edu

Material and field excursions will also be covered by naturalist, guides, local experts, and videos.

PREREQUISITES: BIOL 1108/1108L or BIOL 2108H/2108L

COURSE STRUCTURE:

This class is part of UGA's Fall Semester in Costa Rica and is taught primarily at the San Luis campus located in the Monteverde cloud forest. This course is taught in concentration over approximately 4 weeks within the semester. This is an intensive, 3-credit-hour course that will take place predominantly in the field although some lectures and classroom exercises will be included. Several lab periods throughout the course will begin with a lecture to provide background information on animal behavior theory relevant to the lab exercises. Daily time in the classroom and the field will vary with topic, class location, and weather. Some of the course time will be self-directed although directed assignments will be expected from these sessions. The class schedule will be posted in the teaching lab at UGA – San Luis and on eLC.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This class will explore the behavioral aspects of animal communities that drive their emergent strategies and evolutionary adaptations. Through field observations, interactive modules, and lectures, students will observe a diversity of wildlife in an array of tropical habitats in Costa Rica, Central America. Independent thought and creativity will be required of students for open discussions and contemplation as to *why* particular behavioral strategies may or may not be advantageous to the reproduction and survival of different animal species or taxonomic groups. As part of the class, we will conduct surveys in freshwater, forested, and marine habitats for aquatic, terrestrial, and avian wildlife communities.

Students will conduct observations both independently and as a group and will participate in longitudinal studies where they record observations in **field journals**, constructing mini-studies at the different sites into **weekly field reports**. As related exercises, students will develop **weekly communication exercises** (5-7 minutes) that involve oral deliveries (props not necessary but allowed) on an interesting field observation or scientific article that they encountered that week. The purpose is for students to practice short communications to both scientific and non-scientific audiences. For each week, each student will select their topic matter and targeted audience for

their oral presentation. Feedback will be provided from both instructors and students, although the grade will be based solely on the instructors' review.

COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

This course will provide students with a hands-on field study of animals living in a diversity of tropical habitats. This experiential field course will illustrate behavioral principles and provide the students with methods and techniques used in animal behavior research. Students will collect field data and gain experience on data analysis and written communication of results to both scientific and non-scientific audiences. Specifically, the students will have the opportunity to:

- Learn various approaches and methodology used in field studies of animal behavior with aquatic and terrestrial organisms in Costa Rica;
- Have first-hand experience with diverse invertebrate and vertebrate organisms, many of them unique to tropical systems;
- Explore a range of concepts fundamental to the field;
- Learn basic statistical procedures commonly used in behavioral data analysis;
- Hone skills in written scientific communication.

REFERENCE TEXT:

No textbook is required, although directed readings will be distributed electronically, and students will also conduct online research for and contribute to course readings. You are responsible for all of the material that is covered in class, presented during field excursions, in sections covered in the text and in assigned readings.

READING AND ADDITIONAL MATERIAL:

Additional peer reviewed readings may be provided by the instructors or students in the course. Some readings may be distributed to the course for group discussion and others may be selected for individual focus based on your interests. You are responsible for all of the material that is covered in class, presented during field excursions, and in assigned readings.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

The Odum School of Ecology adheres to the University's standards in defining academic honesty; you are bound by the rules governing academic honesty at UGA. Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Judicial Programs. Ignorance of what constitutes plagiarism or dishonest work is no excuse. Conviction will result in a grade of "F" for the course and may incur additional penalties from the University. Please refer to the UGA Academic Honesty Policy, located on the web at: www.uga.edu/honesty/ahpd/culture_honesty.htm

COURSE GRADING:

Course grades will be based on: a field journal worth 15% of the total grade; four field reports each worth 5% of total grade (20% combined total); four oral communication exercises each worth 5% of the total grade (20% combined total); four quizzes covering the lecture material each worth 5% of the total grade (20% combined total); and one exam worth 15% of the total grade. The final 10% will be graded based on the student's preparation for lab, participation in classroom and field, and overall professionalism. Late assignments will have an automatic 10% off the assignment's grade and an additional 5% each subsequent day. The plus/minus grading system will be used, according to UGA policy. The following is a general guide for letter-grade assignment in this course. The exact

correspondence between calculated number grades and assigned letter-grades is at the discretion of the course professors.

		89.99 – 87.00	B+	79.99 – 77.00	C+	69.99 – 60.00	D
100 – 93.00	A	86.99 – 83.00	B	76.99 – 73.00	C	< 60.00	F
92.99 – 90.00	A–	82.99 – 80.00	B–	72.99 – 70.00	C–		

A couple of important points:

We will often have to get up early, follow tight schedules, work outside in adverse environmental conditions, and visit areas where you must act in a courteous and professional manor.

Please respect differences of opinion—those of your classmates, lecturers, and the various people that you will meet. You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen and consider other perspectives with respect. Consider your place and position in all dimensions. As stated in your pre-course reading please demonstrate culturally appropriate behavior always.

**Separate documents have further information on these activities and a rubric detailing how you will be assessed.*

CELL PHONES AND OTHER PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES:

Cell phones should be silenced during lecture, lab, and field activities. Please be considerate of your fellow classmates and your instructors, and don't engage in phone conversations or texting during class.

Laptops are permitted during lectures, but their use should be restricted to appropriate class-related activities (e.g. note-taking). Laptop use in the classroom is a privilege, not a right, and this privilege may be revoked if it is abused.

SYLLABUS DISCLAIMER:

This course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Updated lecture schedules and other changes will be announced in class and posted on eLC as necessary. Information posted on eLC takes precedence over all previously announced or posted information.

SPECIAL NEEDS:

Students with disabilities who may require assistance should consult with the instructor as soon as possible.