

## **Syllabus: Tropical Field Ecology, ECOL 3100/ 3100L (4 hrs)**

**OASIS title: TROPICAL FIELD ECOL**

**Fall semester 2009**

**Instructor:** Dr. Diana Lieberman

### **Course description:**

An interdisciplinary field program in tropical habitats, exploring and comparing tropical environments, their natural history, their biological wealth, and the ecological patterns, processes, and interactions that characterize tropical systems. Students will develop competence in recognition and observation of tropical organisms in the wild. Analysis of the interplay of tropical nature and human society, the threats to tropical biodiversity, and current conservation approaches in the tropics.

**Prerequisite:** BIOL 1108 and 1108L; permission of department

### **Course learning objectives**

1. Understand the major patterns of geology, geography, population, climate, soils, vegetation and agriculture of the host country.
2. Gain proficiency in natural history and the observation of wildlife. Develop skills of analysis and critical thinking.
3. Be aware of the interplay of structure, function, and behavior in the evolution and ecology of plants and animals, with a particular focus on plant ecophysiology; bird flight; and fish behavior.
4. Recognize the major groups of tropical flora and fauna; become familiar with the common plants, insects, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals, and identify them in the field.
5. Apply skills of observation and field taxonomy on visits to new areas, identifying unfamiliar species. Use standard reference works on taxonomy of local plants and animals.
6. Work competently and safely within various tropical environments, including forest, stream habitats, and agricultural zones; understand risks to health and safety, and apply measures to minimize those risks.
7. Appreciate the history of Costa Rica's national park service and the underpinnings of the world-renowned conservation movement in Costa Rica.

### **Assessment and grading (A-F; traditional):**

Level of effort and standard of performance in classroom, laboratory, and field tasks and on the road ...	15%
Midterm exam ...	25%
Final exam ...	30%
Journal quality: annotated record of travel, observations, personal firsts, analyses, class /field notes ...	25%
Participation, professionalism, contribution to group dynamics ...*	5%

**Academic honesty and plagiarism:** All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. For full details, consult [www.uga.edu/honesty](http://www.uga.edu/honesty).