OEB 167: Herpetology

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Office hours: Th 2:45–4:45p

Classroom and time: Lecture: Tu/Th 1:30–2:45p, MCZ 101
Lab: W 3:00–5:45p, MCZ G022 (E. E. Williams Library)

Lecture exams: Thursday, March 23rd (regular lecture slot)
TBD (final exam slot, May 4th–13th)

Lab practicals: Wednesday, March 8th
Wednesday, April 26th

Prerequisites: LS 1b or OEB 10 recommended; students who haven't taken either course may require additional study on topics with which they are unfamiliar. **Freshmen may lack sufficient background and are discouraged from taking the course. They should consult with the faculty before enrolling.**

Textbook: Pough, F. H., et al. 2015. *Herpetology*, 4th ed. Sinauer Associates, Inc. Available in hardback for purchase or rent and as an eBook. See also Companion Website.

Course website: https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/112422

Readings: Readings and videos to be viewed out of class will be posted on the course website and announced during lectures.

Spring break field trip: We will go to Costa Rica over spring break. This optional trip, expenses paid by the course, will leave Saturday, March 11th, and return in the wee hours of Sunday, March 19th. **Students must declare intent and commit to go on the trip no later than Wednesday, January 25th.** If the trip is oversubscribed, priority will be given first to OEB concentrators and graduate students over other FAS students, prioritizing upperclassmen and graduate students, and then to other students. Students planning to go must show they have a valid passport or immediately apply for one.

Other trips: Students will visit Mount Auburn Cemetery during the spring semester to observe salamander migrations and collect data to be used in lab. Students will have the opportunity to choose the date they attend. **All students will be expected to visit the cemetery at least once and take advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.** Other trips may be arranged as opportunities allow.

OEB 167 is an introduction to the biology of amphibians and reptiles. Students will gain familiarity with the diversity of amphibians and reptiles, as well as a deep understanding of their anatomy, physiology, behavior, ecology and evolution. A mandatory, weekly laboratory will provide the opportunity to witness the diversity of amphibians and reptiles firsthand.

OEB 167 meets for lectures twice a week, beginning at 1:30p on Tu/Th in MCZ 101. Labs meet Wednesdays from 3:00 to 5:45p in MCZ G022 (E. E. Williams Library); they primarily, but not entirely, entail examination of museum skeletal and alcohol-preserved specimens. **All students are expected to attend every lecture and every lab session.**

Course evaluation will be based upon the following:

Lecture exams (2):	22.5% each
Lab practicals (2):	15% each
Fieldtrip project (due March 3rd):	5%
Course project (due May 3rd):	20%

For the **fieldtrip project,** each student will choose one Costa Rican amphibian or reptile species and prepare a short oral presentation (iMovie) on that species, to be delivered to the rest of the class in Costa Rica or, for those not attending, after the trip. Deadline is Friday, March 3rd.

There are three options for the **course project,** which is due at the end of Reading Period, May 3rd:

1) A 10–15-page term paper on a herpetological topic. These are meant to be research papers that investigate a controversial topic, review the arguments, and present a thesis. Sample topics: To what group of lizards are snakes most closely related? What is the cause of the current amphibian extinction crisis?

2) A mini-documentary on a herpetological topic using iMovie or some other video software. These works should entail in-depth literature research to the same extent as a term paper, but the final product will be presented audiovisually, rather than in writing.

3) A species account for *AmphibiaWeb*. Choose a species that does not yet have an AmphibiaWeb account; the content/depth of coverage should be equivalent to that of a term paper. For an example of a fairly complete account, see the pages composed by undergraduates who took OEB 167 in previous years; e.g., *Colostethus panamansis*.

Please consult the teaching staff to discuss these options. Students will be expected to declare their project type and topic by March 31st, but preferably earlier.