



BIO 405

Ecosystems of Costa Rica

Semester: Winter, 2015
 Days: N/A; variable
 Room: N/A
 Lab – day: N/A
 Lab–Room: N/A

Number of credits: 3

Prerequisite:
 Biology 133

Instructor: Dr. Carol Gibbons Kroeker
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 Phone: 403-410-2000, 5910
 Office: A 2156
 Office hours: By appointment
 Tues / Thurs 11-1

Course Description:

This course will introduce the students to several unique and vulnerable ecosystems within Costa Rica, including tropical rainforest, cloud forest, marine, and the transition zone in an active volcano zone. After completion of the course, students will have an opportunity to work with researchers at Selve Verde Rain Forest Research Station, and with Park Rangers on service projects at Manuel Antonio National Park.

Further Course Information:

This course will involve independent study, prepared lectures, and presentations by the students in the course.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will study the rainforest, estuary, cloud forest and marine ecosystems in Costa Rica
2. Students will work on a collaborative research project and present it to the group.
3. Students examine volcano transition zones and see the impact of plantations on the ecosystems

Important Dates:

First day of classes: January 7, 2015
 Registration revision period: January 18, 2015
 Last day to request revised examination: March 2, 2015
 Last day to withdraw from course: March 20, 2015
 Last day to apply for time extension for coursework: March 30, 2015
 Last day of classes: April 10, 2015

Final Exam: N/A
Time:
Room:

Outline:

Topics to be covered in the prepared lectures:

- Costa Rica Bio-diversity
- Overviews of each of the unique ecosystems
- Risks to each of the ecosystems and to the biodiversity seen there

Ecosystems to be covered include:

- Estuary
- Rainforest
- Cloud Forest
- Volcano succession
- Marine

Term papers and presentations

- Overview of the ecosystems of Costa Rica
- Overview of the Biodiversity of Costa Rica
- Specific topics on: animals at risk, Banana Plantation effects, Pineapple industry, Rainforest status

Requirements:

Each student will be required to complete assigned readings (journal articles) in addition to the textbook. They will complete two term papers on topics of their choice (chosen from a list), in addition to 4 smaller assignments on topics assigned to them. In addition, there will be an oral presentation to be made on a topic chosen by the professor and student together.

Attendance:

While there are no formal lecture times, there will be scheduled lectures that students must attend. In addition, you must be present at other student presentations.

Evaluation:

Mark Distribution	:	2 term papers	44%
		4 Assignments	36%
		Oral Presentation	20%

Grade Summary:

The available letters for course grades are as follows:

Grade	Percent	Grade Point Value	Description
A+	96-100	4.00	Outstanding
A	92-95	4.00	Excellent - superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.
A-	88-91	3.70	
B+	83-87	3.30	
B	78-82	3.00	Good-clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.
B-	73-77	2.70	
C+	68-72	2.30	
C	64-67	2.00	Satisfactory – basic understanding of the subject matter. Grade point average below 2.00 is not sufficient for promotion.
C-	60-63	1.70	Minimum grade required if needed as a prerequisite course
D+	55-59	1.30	
D	51-54	1.00	Minimal pass – marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.
F	<50	0	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.

Textbook:

- Wild Costa Rica - The Wildlife and Landscapes of Costa Rica, 2008. Adrian Hepworth. Summerfield Books.
- Field and Laboratory Methods for General Ecology, by James Brower, Jerrold Zar, Carl N. von Ende, McGraw-Hill, 2008.

Policies:

All students have received an Ambrose e-mail account upon registration. It is the student's responsibility to check this account regularly as the Ambrose email system will be the professor's instrument for notifying students of important matters (Cancelled class sessions, extensions, requested appointments, etc.) between class sessions. If students do not wish to use their Ambrose accounts, it is highly recommended that they forward all messages from the Ambrose account to the other account.

During the **Registration Revision Period** students may to enter a course without permission, change the designation of any class from credit to audit and /or voluntary withdraw from a course without financial or academic penalty. These courses will not appear on the student's transcript. Courses should be added or dropped on the student portal by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees.

Students intending to withdraw from a course after the Registration Revision Period must apply to the Office of the Registrar by submitting a Request to Withdraw from a Course by the **Withdrawal Deadline**, please consult the List of Important Dates. Withdrawal from courses after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. A grade of "W" will appear on the student's transcript.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

Students, who find a conflict in their exam schedule must submit a **Revised Examination** Request form to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. Requests will be considered for the following reasons only: 1) the scheduled final examination slot conflicts with another exam; 2) three final exams within three consecutive exam time blocks; 3) the scheduled final exam slot conflicts with an exam at another institution; 4) extenuating circumstances. Travel is not considered a valid excuse for re-scheduling or missing a final exam.

Electronic Etiquette

Students are expected to treat their instructor, guest speakers, and fellow students with respect. It is disruptive to the learning goals of a course or seminar and disrespectful to fellow students and the instructor to engage in electronically-enabled activities unrelated to the class during a class session. Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during class. Laptops should be used for class-related purposes only. Please do not use iPods, MP3 players, or headphones. Do not text, read, or send personal emails, go on Facebook or other social networks, search the internet, or play computer games during class. The professor has the right to disallow the student to use a laptop in future lectures and/or to ask a student to withdraw from the session if s/he does not comply with this policy. Repeat offenders will be directed to the Dean. If you are expecting communication due to an emergency, please speak with the professor before the class begins.

Academic Policies

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Academic Calendar. Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.

Extensions

Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a “**Course Extension**” from the Registrar’s Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise “due to circumstances beyond the student’s control”.

Appeal of Grade

An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

Academic Integrity

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else’s ideas, words, or work as one’s own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to give credit to another person’s ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student’s permanent record.

Students are strongly advised to retain this syllabus for their records.

Other

Classroom Etiquette:

It is expected that students will take an active role in the learning process. This includes: (a) regular class attendance, (b) reading course material in advance of class, and (c) engaging in discussions during class.

In respect to the professor and to your fellow students, we ask that you:

- a) Turn your phone off during class and that you don’t use it for texting during lecture or lab
- b) Not have conversations with the people beside your during lecture – it is very distracting to the people around you
- c) Use your laptops for lecture material and assignments only – that you are not using the internet or facebook during class time.
- d) Arrive to lecture and lab on time
- e) Don’t come to class or lab with your ipod or equivalent.

These will help to maximize the learning experience for you and your fellow students (and will keep your professor in a good mood).