

PROPOSED SYLLABUS

FORS 4280/6280 Field Studies in Natural History. 4 hours. Repeatable for maximum of 8 hours credit.

Oasis Title: NAT HIST FIELD STUDY

Prerequisite: FORS 3010/3010L and FORS (ECOL) 3580-3580L or permission of school.

Field studies to explore the ecology and natural history of plant and vertebrate communities in a variety of biomes and ecosystems. Identification and field study skills will be emphasized.

Non-traditional format: The course will include an extended field experience and series of lectures combined with seminars, presentations, and/or student projects.

Offered summer semester.

Objectives

To introduce students to grassland prairie, desert, and mountain ecosystems,

To study animals and plants in each of these ecosystems, and

To explore issues related to conservation in numerous ecosystems.

Description

By spending several days each in multiple ecosystems, meeting with local land management experts, and observing and collecting plants and animals, students will gain insight and knowledge of each area. Exposure to various ecosystems will increase students understanding of natural resource conservation. Students will use standard field research methods to begin learning and understanding the nature of plant and animal communities in these environments. Students will observe and study several biotic communities of the mid-west, west or northeastern US. Students will learn to identify dominant plants and common animals in each ecosystem

Requirements

Students will be assigned several readings on natural and cultural history prior to field trip. Students will make a collection of common plants and gain knowledge of identification and ecology of each plant. Students will collect or observe common vertebrates. Students will prepare museum quality specimens of plants and animals. As a class, a collection of approximately 100 species of common plants will be made as well as a class collection of approximately 30-40 species of mammals or observations of birds, amphibians and reptiles. Study skins and skulls or photographs as appropriate will be required.

Grading

Test on readings	10%
Collection	20%

Field Journal	15%
Field Quizzes	20%
Final Exam – readings, lectures, ID	20%
Participation, cooperation, attitude	<u>15%</u>
	100%

Additional Requirements for 6280

Students enrolled for graduate credit will complete all assignments listed previously and, in addition, will give at least 1-30 minute presentation on 1 ecosystem with appropriate readings and discussion. Students enrolled for graduate credit will also submit for grading at least 15 additional plant specimens and 5 additional animal specimens for their field collection.

Specifics

Plant collection – each student will be required to collect and properly prepare (to herbarium standards) a minimum of 8 plants properly dried, pressed, identified, catalogued and mounted in the class notebook.

Animal Collection – each student will be required to complete ONE of the following assignments:

- A. Prepare at least three museum quality specimens (skin and skull) properly mounted, identified, and catalogued for the class collection, or
- B. Submit to the instructor at least 30 high quality digital photos of vertebrates in natural habitat.

Field Journal – Each student will keep an accurate and complete record of all daily field activities including lectures and notes on the natural history and ecology of common species (plant and animal) with notes (including map or GPS coordinates of collection location) on location of collection, observations of behavior, weather, habitat and other necessary field data.

Books

Required or optional (provided by instructor)

Plant and animal field guides to Prairies, eastern and western Mountains (as appropriate), deserts.

Ecology text

Natural and/or cultural history of destination area.

Recreation

There will be opportunities for some leisure and recreational activities including

Raft trip on Rio Grande River in New Mexico

Hiking as time allows

Commercial or tourists shopping and restaurants

Museums and Native American Culture

Lodging

While this is a field course, lodging will include motels (while traveling) and university field stations but also camping in primitive, backcountry campsites lacking modern bathroom facilities. Students must be constantly aware of their surroundings and take proper precautions regarding safety, exposure to the elements, native animals, and clean drinking water.

General Guidance

Students are expected to be fully prepared for all field work, to fully participate in all field activities and to be prepared by reading all assigned material. Daily activities will include field trips in a variety of conditions (hot, humid, dry, cold, and/or wet) to observe and/or collect specimens and regular lectures by instructor of local experts or land managers. Students will divide and fully participate in all duties such as shopping, cooking, cleanup, and camp setup/breakdown, packing and unpacking, lectures and hikes.

Course Policies

Academic Honesty: Students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the University Academic Honesty Policy at all times. Strict adherence to the policy as outlined in "*A Culture of Honesty: Policies and Procedures on Academic Honesty*" (www.uga.edu/ovpi) is expected and required. During examinations or quizzes, any form of assistance is unauthorized unless specifically approved by the instructor. Any form of assistance on class assignments outlined in Section 5, Part 2b of the University's Academic Honesty Policy is unauthorized unless specifically approved by the instructor. Violations of the policy will be vigorously pursued and prosecuted.

Please note -- All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe (http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honesty/hon_penalties.htm) and ignorance is not an acceptable defense.

In addition, I will require all students to sign the following statement on all graded work: UGA Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." I will not grade work that is not signed.

In accordance with host university policies – there will be no alcohol in any field station or host facility at any time. Students must agree to abide by all applicable laws and regulations. Failure will result in immediate dismissal from class and students will be sent home at their own expense on either bus, plane or train.

In addition, students will follow all rules of the host facility including campgrounds (rules related but not limited to proper food storage, camp clean-up, and fires). Students will conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times and practice safety in all activities.

Cell Phones: All cell phones will be turned off or disabled during class. Use of a cell phone, PDA, video phone or other non-approved electronic communication device during a test or quiz shall be considered a violation of the UGA Student Honor Code and dealt with according to stated policy of the course and university.

Personal Equipment List (for students to purchase, rent or borrow prior to the trip):

Sturdy hiking shoes (well broken in)
Sleeping bag (to 0⁰)
Sleeping pad and pillow
Tent (can share)
Water bottles (2 liter minimum)
Camera/binoculars (optional)
Batteries
Field Guides
Journal or field notebook (Rite-in-the-Rain preferred)
Day pack
Rain gear
Warm clothes including field clothes and layers (avoid cotton)

Tentative Daily Travel Schedule

DAY	ACTIVITY OR TRAVEL	REQUIREMENT
1	Travel to Dallas, TX	TBA
2	Travel to Carlsbad, NM	TBA
3	Visit Carlsbad National Park, cave, Living Desert Museum	TBA
4	Travel to Socorro, NM – Sevillita National Wildlife Refuge	TBA
5	Set traps	TBA
6	Check traps	TBA
7	Check traps	TBA
8	Check traps and move to Cibola National Forest, Magdalena, NM	TBA
9	Set Traps	TBA
10	Check Traps	TBA
11	Check Traps and move to BLM campground along Rio Grande R.	TBA
12	Relax and raft trip on Rio Grande	TBA
13	Move to some other nearby national forest and set traps	TBA
14	Check traps	TBA
15	Check traps and move to Nederland, CO – CSU Mountain Res. Stn.	TBA
16	Set traps, visit Rocky Mountains National Park	TBA
17	Check traps, visit Rocky Mountains National Park	TBA
18	Check traps	TBA
19	Recreation day off	TBA
20	Move to Konza Prairie Manhattan, KS	TBA
21	Set Traps, lecture about prairie	TBA
22	Check traps	TBA
23	Check traps and travel to Athens, GA	TBA
24	Travel to Athens, GA	TBA