

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH
COLLEGE OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE
COURSE DESCRIPTION

Course numbers: BIOL*4700, 4800, 4900 (0.50 credits); 4710, 4810 (0.25 credits)
Title of courses: FIELD BIOLOGY
Semesters offered: S'12, F'12, W'13
Course coordinator: Dr. Tom Nudds (tnudds@uoguelph.ca)
Office hours: By Appointment
Lecture time/room: One annual information session held in the evening during the first week of November (For S'12-W'13, scheduled for **Monday, November 7th, 2011 at 5:00pm in SCIE 1511**).

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Guelph students who wish to take field courses offered by Guelph faculty DO NOT sign up for the field course using these course numbers, which are reserved solely for use by students taking field courses offered through OTHER schools. Guelph students' sign up for Guelph field courses using Guelph course numbers. To see how to determine in which category a field course falls, and how to register for it, please see the flow chart at:

http://www.uoguelph.ca/ib/pdfs/W10_course_outlines/Field_courses/Field%20Course%20Decision%20Tree_Nov09.pdf

I. MAJOR COURSE THEMES OR CONCEPTS

Typically, the ability of any one university to offer a selection of courses in field biology is limited by the expertise of the available instructors to restricted plant or animal taxa or specific kinds of environments, and/or by available resources (e.g., equipment, access to field stations, faculty time). To increase the availability and variety of field courses offered to students interested in field biology at Guelph, students can take field courses offered through other schools or institutions, and receive credit for them using these Field Biology course numbers. About 40 courses per year are available from which to choose. Students can study plants, invertebrates or vertebrates in aquatic ecosystems from marine to freshwater, and in terrestrial ecosystems from desert to montane. Latitudinally, courses are offered from the tropics to the arctic, and longitudinally, from Indonesia to Iceland. Course content ranges from natural history surveys to those with strong emphasis on the design and execution of field experiments. Depending on the student's program, there can be opportunity to take several field courses.

There are two ways to enroll in Field Biology and receive credit for field courses taken elsewhere.

- (1) If the field course(s) is NOT taken through an accredited partner school/institution in the Ontario Universities Field Program in Biology (or OUPFB, which now includes most Ontario universities), then the normal procedures to transfer credits to Guelph (letters of permission, etc.) apply. It is the student's responsibility to make these arrangements with their Program Counselor and to advise the coordinator of Field Biology courses that she/he has enrolled in Field Biology courses on letters of permission. This is to ensure that grades can be submitted and credits obtained with minimal disruption. **To see how to determine which category a field course falls in, and how to register for it, please see the flow chart at:**

http://www.uoguelph.ca/ib/pdfs/W10_course_outlines/Field_courses/Field%20Course%20Decision%20Tree_Nov09.pdf

- (2) If the field course is taken at an accredited partner in OUPFB, then the following procedures apply. OUPFB provides students with opportunities to take field courses offered through other Ontario universities, or their affiliates (such as the Huntsman Marine Science Centre in New Brunswick, which has a long association with Ontario universities), for credit at the University of Guelph without the need for letters of permission or other formal means of transferring credits; the participating schools have agreed that any field course offered by any school is considered of adequate quality and equivalent experience to those at any other school, and are therefore completely substitutable.

II. CONTENT OF LECTURES AND LABORATORIES

OUPFB strives for uniformity of approach to try to ensure equity among workloads across courses. Course content varies with instructors, but, in general, the strong emphasis in field courses is on working and evaluating students in field environments. The intent is not simply to duplicate a normal classroom experience in a remote location. Many courses, nevertheless, typically have some components of evaluation take place after the return from the field setting, such as report writing (see COURSE PROCEDURES below). Students can obtain specific information about individual courses at the OUPFB website, which is hosted by McMaster University,

www.oupfb.ca

and should consult the local OUPFB coordinator at Guelph for more information (contact information above).

III. REQUIRED READING FOR THE COURSE(S)

Consult the OUPFB website for information about preparation for particular courses.

IV. METHODS OF EVALUATION

Consult the OUPFB website for information about evaluation procedures in particular courses.

V. COURSE PROCEDURES

1. At any time, but particularly at course selection time, visit the latest version of the OUPFB website for an idea of the range of field courses (called modules there) that are typically offered, where they are offered and the cost. About 70-80% of the modules listed are offered annually; about 20-30% “turnover” each year. If you have questions about a particular module, such as whether it will be offered the year you want to take it, whether the cost or the dates will be the same, and so forth, you can contact the individual instructors whose e-mail addresses are listed with the modules. However, **individual module instructors are NOT able to sign you into their modules, so DO NOT make inquiries of this sort. ALL procedures for applying to take OUPFB modules are carried out through the local OUPFB coordinator only.**

2. Contact the Field Biology courses coordinator as early as possible and indicate your interest in specific modules. Your local coordinator *may* have an opportunity to reserve spots in modules if she/he is alerted to individual students’ particular interests well before the annual OUPFB coordinators’ meeting, held in early December each year. As all course assignments are on a

first-come-first-served basis, it is advised that students plan well ahead to improve their chances of getting into courses that are their first choices (see 9 below).

3. The province-wide steering committee for OUPFB meets annually in early December to finalize the slate of modules to be offered for the *next* Spring through Winter semesters. The website, with the current module offerings, is opened to students to browse and select modules by mid-December.

4. Identify one or more modules that satisfy your interests and your program requirements. Different programs allow for variable opportunities to slot in field courses for credit. At present, the maximum number of OUPFB modules that Guelph students can take, if not limited by other program requirements, is 5 for a total of 2.0 credits. Students may take up to 2 1-week modules each worth 0.25 credits (BIOL*4710 and 4810), and 3 2-week modules each worth 0.5 credits (BIOL*4700, 4800 and 4900). In general, the amount of time used to calculate credit weights is considered to be that time actually spent in the field. However, there are two main reasons why the actual, total time spent in course-related activities may not equate simply to the time spent in the field.

First, travel to and from the field site is not considered instructional time. In some cases, for remote locations, it can be substantial. In rare cases, including travel time, modules may run for up to 3 weeks, but the maximum credit that can be earned is 0.50. This information should appear on, or be apparent from, the descriptions of the individual modules. You may contact individual instructors for clarification about information for each module, **but DO NOT ask whether there is space in the module or to be signed into it. ALL procedures for applying to take OUPFB modules are carried out through the local OUPFB coordinator only.**

Second, in most cases, all assigned work for a module(s) is completed on site or relatively early in the semester immediately following. In some cases, restrictions at particular participating schools, or the necessity for instruction prior to leaving for the field, may require that students attend introductory (or, rarely, follow-up) meetings at the school that offers the particular module. Typically, these will be easier for students to attend if their “home university” is in close proximity. In some cases, instructors will oblige “long-distance” students the opportunity to attend courses without attending initial (or follow-up) meetings, or make other arrangements; in other cases, it is not recommended, and this will restrict the opportunity for some students to take some modules. This information should appear on, or be apparent from, the descriptions of the individual modules. Again, you may contact individual instructors for clarification about information for each module, **but DO NOT ask whether there is space in the module or to be signed into it. ALL procedures for applying to take OUPFB modules are carried out through the local OUPFB coordinator only.**

5. For reasons relating to liability, only in-course students may attend OUPFB field modules, the same as any other university course. Students need not be enrolled and taking other courses in the semester during which they take a field module (since most are taken in the spring semester) but students **MUST** be pre-registered in one of the Field Biology courses before they are allowed to attend. When you drop off your application, you will be asked to fill out two registration forms: a Course Add form, and a Course Waiver Request form. We will then register you into the course with the appropriate course code(s) and into the appropriate semester(s). (See also 7 below.)

6. Also for reasons relating to liability, the University Senate has mandated that all students taking field courses abroad **MUST** take an orientation course offered through the University's Centre for International Programs (CIP). There is no cost associated with the course. Once

registered, students will be given a password in order to complete the course on-line. Students should visit

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/cip/page.cfm?id=328> for more information.

7. There are two ways to have the credits earned in Field Biology courses applied to your transcript. Keep this in mind as you decide among modules to which you'd like to apply.

Option 1. You can apply the credit(s) in the same semester in which you go on the field trip. Typically, this is the option used by students in their last undergraduate semester, when that semester is the Spring or Winter. In this case, you **must** take a module for which all assigned work will be completed and graded in time for module instructors to submit grades to the local OUPFB coordinator to report to the registrar. It is the policy of OUPFB that all course work should be completed within 4 weeks of return from the field and marks available to students 4 weeks after that. However, faculty being faculty, this is sometimes forgotten and is not practicably enforceable, so students should make inquiries to particular module instructors as to that instructor's intent with respect to sending grades to students' home universities. Failure to do so could result in a grade submission of 'no mark received'. As a rule of thumb, if the field course ends by the middle of June, you should be able to register for it in the Summer semester as the grades should be available in time for Guelph's final grade uploading deadline. Anything beyond that will have to be registered in the Fall semester.

Option 2. (See also 5 above.) Typically, students take a field module(s) in one semester and enroll in one or more of the Field Biology courses in the next semester and apply the credit(s) then. In rare instances, enrolment in a Field Biology course(s) can be deferred longer, but there is no advantage to this and should only be an option if students had to withdraw from the semester immediately following the semester during which they attended a module(s).

8. Students should make every effort to attend the annual information session. For S12-W13, the meeting will be **Monday, November 7th, 2011 at 5:00pm in SCIE 1511**. Further questions can be asked and answered at this time.

9. Print the application form (3 pages) from the OUPFB website and fill them out completely, following all instructions carefully. This form plus a course waiver form constitute a complete application form. No applications will be accepted without these forms attached and proof of (1) pre-registration in one of BIOL*4700, 4710, 4800, 4810 and/or 4900 (see 5 above) and (2) completion of the mandatory orientation course for travel abroad through CIP, if applicable (see 6 above). For S12-W13, completed applications are **due in the office of Ms. Lori Ferguson, Department of Integrative Biology (SCIE 2483), with a cheque made payable to the University of Guelph to cover a \$250 deposit for each module to which application is made, by 4:00 PM Friday, January 27th, 2012**. At that time no further applications will be accepted.

10. Provision is made at the time of application to choose and rank alternate modules in the event students cannot get into their first choices. Students are *guaranteed* a spot in as many modules as they apply for, though not necessarily in modules that are their first choices, so alternate modules should also be selected with as much care as 'first choices'. Thus, there are no refunds of deposits if students withdraw except (1) on compassionate (emergency medical or other) grounds; or (2) a replacement can be found to take the spot in the module. In the case of withdrawal by a student who had a *reserved* spot in a module (see 2 above), the first right of refusal for the spot in the module goes to the school that reserved the spot.

11. Students will be notified of the results of the application process by late February. Until this time, **DO NOT contact module instructors with questions about the fate of your application. They are NOT involved in the selection procedure, and do NOT have any information to share about it (even if they think they do). Instructors find out which students have been assigned to their modules when students do.** After this time, the website will be reopened and students can make contact, or resume contact, with the instructors of the modules to which they have been assigned. In particular, students will need to find out how and where to pay the balance of the cost of the module, which is paid to the school that offers the module.

12. **Be sure that you have been pre-registered in BIOL*4700, 4710, 4800, 4810 or 4900 as appropriate. Grades from other schools will not magically appear somewhere on your transcript.** Students must be registered in one or more of these courses with Guelph course codes, and therefore appear on one or more of the class lists for these courses, to obtain credit(s) for the module(s) taken. Please check on WebAdvisor to make sure you have been registered – the Summer registrations will be done very soon after acceptance into a field course, and the Fall registrations will be done in late August.