

IB496 – NATURAL HISTORY OF CORAL REEFS (1 hr. credit)

Course Description:

An introduction to the taxonomic groups, identification, and natural history of both vertebrates and invertebrates that inhabit and form coral reefs. Ecosystem processes and conservation of coral reefs will also be discussed. One 1.0 hr. lecture per week from 20 January to 14 March plus a week-long field trip to Roatán during Spring Break (14-21 March). A course fee of approximately \$3500 will be assessed to cover all travel expenses to Roatán.

Instructors:

Dr. Christopher A. Taylor, Rm. 80 Natural Resources Building, 244-2153, cataylor@illinois.edu
Office Hours: By appointment

Field Trip Co-leader – Dr. Enrique Santoyo Brito, Rm. 74 Natural Resources Building,
esbrito@illinois.edu

Course Requirements:

Students must have the approval of instructor prior to registering for course and have taken IB 150 or an equivalent course. Students must be proficient swimmers and possess a valid passport.

Students with disabilities who require assistance to participate in this class are asked to see the instructor during the first week of class.

Course Objectives:

To develop an understanding of and an appreciation for coral reefs. The course will stress the natural history of coral reef ecosystems and deal with the identification, biology and life history of the common coral reef organisms found in the Caribbean Sea. The conservation of and threats to coral reefs will also be discussed. The lab will emphasize field experiences on coral reefs and focus on the ecology and identification of common reef species and will consist of a week-long field trip to Roatán during Spring Break.

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students will be able to:
identify major invertebrates and vertebrates that inhabit and form coral reefs
explain major coral reef ecosystem processes
demonstrate an understanding of coral reef conservation
apply basic natural history observational skills

Course Calendar:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LECTURE TOPIC</u>
Week 1	Jan.21 Course introduction, field trip information, classification of marine ecosystems
Week 2	Jan. 28 Distribution of reefs, how reefs are built, adaptations to marine life
Week 3	Feb. 4 Invertebrates of coral reefs
Week 4	Feb. 11 Invertebrates of coral reefs cont.
Week 5	Feb. 18 Vertebrates of coral reefs
Week 6	Feb. 25 Coral reef processes/ecology of coral reefs.
Week 7	Mar. 4 Mangroves, conservation of coral reefs/Identification of organisms
Week 8	Mar. 11 Lecture Exam
Week 9	FIELD TRIP (March 14-21)

Basis of Grade:

1 hour lecture exam during week of March 10th = 100 points
Participation in lecture = 50 points
Participation in field trip activities, field notebook,
and final exam at end of the field trip = 150 points

Total points 300

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following standard scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage	Total Points
A	90-100%	270 - 300
B	80 - 89.9	240 - 269
C	70 - 79.9	210 - 239
D	60 - 69.9	180 - 209
F	0 - 59.9	0 - 179

Attendance Policies:

ATTENDANCE AT LECTURE IS REQUIRED. There is no textbook for the lecture component of this course, so material for the lecture exam will be derived entirely from the lecture material. Lecture slides (e.g., PowerPoint presentations) WILL NOT necessarily cover all material discussed during class. Therefore, there is no substitute for regular attendance in lecture. If attendance is not possible due to illness or other emergency situations, the student must contact the instructor PRIOR to absence.

ATTENDANCE AT FIELDTRIP IS ABSOLUTELY REQUIRED.

Lectures:

Lectures will be available for download prior to class on Canvas. If you do not have access to Canvas, please contact Dr. Taylor immediately.

Academic Integrity:

Course policy on dishonesty follows Article 104 (1-401 through 1-406) of the Student Code, http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1_part4_1-402.html, which should be consulted for details. To learn about likely penalties for violations of the Student Code on academic honesty, see http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1_part4_1-403.html.

All students are assumed to have read and to understand the UI Student Code.

Disability Accommodations:

Disability Accommodations -To obtain disability-related academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the course instructor and the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) as soon as possible. To contact DRES you may visit 1207 S. Oak St., Champaign, call 217-333-1970 (V/TTY), or e-mail a message to disability@illinois.edu.

Diversity Statement:

Everybody has a right to study science regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender, nationality, race, or disability status. If you want to learn about the diversity and biology of coral reefs, then I want to teach you. I will not tolerate people creating a hostile learning environment for others.

Field Trip:

Roatán is home to the largest coral reef in the Western Hemisphere and the second largest in the World. The field trip for this course will be held from 14-21 March 2026 at the Roatán Institute of Marine Science (RIMS) at Sandy Bay, off the northeastern coast of Honduras. The majority of our time in Roatán will be spent on the water visiting different reef and near-shore coastal habitats. Students will be required to provide their own snorkeling equipment. Students will also be required to maintain a field notebook/journal with species lists and natural history observations. Course fee will cover airfare and three meals a day as well as lodging at RIMS and required supplement health insurance. Students are encouraged to bring extra money for miscellaneous expenses.

Textbooks required for field trip (*= required):

*Humann, P. and N. DeLoach. 2013. Reef Creature Identification: Florida, Caribbean, Bahamas – **3rd Edition**. New World Publications. (\$34.63 at Amazon.com)

*Humann, P. and N. DeLoach. 2014. Reef Fish Identification: Florida, Caribbean, Bahamas – **4th Edition**. New World Publications. (\$41.95 at Amazon.com)

Humann, P. and N. DeLoach. 2002. Reef Coral Identification: Florida, Caribbean, Bahamas – **3rd Edition**. New World Publications. (\$29 at Amazon.com)