

**University of Ottawa**  
**Ontario Universities Program in Field Biology**

Course Title	Introduction to Tropical Ecosystems
Instructor	David Currie (dcurrie@uottawa.ca)
Dates	April 30 – May 13
Location:	Several sites in Costa Rica
Cost:	<p>Around \$4100 CAD. The final price will depend upon the exchange rate with the US dollar and on airfares. Please consult the course website (see below) for the most recent price updates.</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• airfare from Toronto to Costa Rica, including cancellation insurance</li> <li>• all lodging, meals, activity fees, and transportation within Costa Rica</li> </ul> <p>Excludes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health insurance (see below)</li> <li>• Immunizations and health costs</li> </ul>
Prerequisites:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One year of university-level introductory biology</li> <li>• A one-semester introductory ecology course</li> </ul>
Enrolment:	16 students (6 reserved for University of Ottawa)
Description:	<p>Costa Rica has an amazing array of different tropical ecosystems. Our provisional itinerary includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-montane elfin forest on the edge of Poás volcano. If the clouds (and volcanic activity) permit, you will be able to look down into the volcano's crater.</li> <li>• Tropical dry forest in Guanacaste Province, home to three species of monkeys, green iguanas, ctenosaurs.</li> <li>• A Ramsar Convention-designated wetland in Palo Verde National Park (if there has been rain, there are typically jaribu storks, roseate spoonbills, and many species of herons and other wading birds.</li> <li>• A magnificent, nearly deserted beach on the northwest Pacific coast. There, we will see a mangrove forest, and primary succession on sand dunes. We will do a small study of marine invertebrates in tidal pools along the shore. There will be time for a swim in the ocean.</li> <li>• The magnificent Monteverde Cloud Forest Preserve and, near-by, a "sky-walk": bridges suspended above the forest canopy. Near-by, we will do a study of aggressive interactions among hummingbirds.</li> <li>• Arenal Volcano National Park. An eruption in 1968 buried one side of the volcano under lava and ash. We will see primary succession on lava fields. In the evening, take a dip in volcanic hot springs.</li> <li>• Fabulously diverse primary rainforest in Corcovado National Park</li> <li>• Snorkeling on reefs off Cano Island</li> </ul> <p>At several sites, we will quantify forest structure, as well as the diversity of plants, birds, and insects. We will relate these to the physical environment conditions. Participants will carry out small studies of animal behavior, island biogeography theory or related subjects. If time permits, participants will also design and carry out a small independent research project at Corcovado.</p>

\*\*\*\$350 Deposit is due at time of registration.

Tuition at your home institution is *in addition* to any field module costs.

Students who drop a field course should not expect a refund of any field course costs.

Students are encouraged to purchase cancellation insurance if airline tickets are required.

Students are responsible for all fees incurred by the home or host university due to any bounced cheque.

Evaluation:	<p>Students are required to read, before the course, <i>Tropical Nature: Life and Death in the Rain Forests of Central and South America</i>, by Adrian Forsyth and Ken Miyata (1987).</p> <p>Quiz on the book on the first day of the course 5%</p> <p>An oral presentation, prepared in advance, on a subject relevant to tropical ecology (see the website for suggestions). 15%</p> <p>Final exam, written in the field 20%</p> <p>Participation 10%</p> <p>Field journal, prepared during the course 10%</p> <p>Two written reports, to be submitted by June 15, one on a project carried out during the course, or on the ecosystem structure data 20%+20%</p>
Further information, price update	<p>Course website: Here you will find more information about the planned itinerary, a packing list, suggested topics for presentations, a course handout, etc.</p> <p><a href="http://mysite.science.uottawa.ca/dcurrie/?q=content/oupf-tropical-ecosystems">http://mysite.science.uottawa.ca/dcurrie/?q=content/oupf-tropical-ecosystems</a></p>
Risks	<p>Living involves risks. International travel and fieldwork involve certain risks beyond those at home. You will find a statement of risks on the web site, and a waiver form. A condition of participation in the course is that you must read the statement of risks and sign the waiver, indicating that you accept responsibility for the risks involved in participation in the course. Since provincial health insurance does not necessarily cover all medical expenses outside of Canada, students will also be required to document that they have private health insurance for travel abroad (you may already be covered under a parent's policy). Finally, students should consult a travel physician prior to travel regarding immunizations and desirable precautions.</p>

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