

G'Day and Welcome to the UGA Maymester Study Abroad in Queensland, Australia

Field Animal Behavior
BIOL 3720L (3 credits)

This is a sample syllabus intended as a general guide only and deviations may be necessary (a final syllabus will be included in the course-book or available by contacting the office)

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Course Description

This course is an introduction to the study of animal behavior in the field offered in Queensland, Australia. Skills taught will emphasize observation, behavioral description, sampling methods, and simple data analysis. Organisms to be studied will depend on availability and weather, but will include various birds, flying foxes, sea cucumbers, coral reef fish, crabs, ants, and wallabies. The majority of class time will be spent in the field (including two World Heritage listed sites) observing behavior and conducting simple non-invasive experiments. Students will gain firsthand field experience with animals living in diverse habitats (rain forest, coral reef, national parks) that illustrate behavior principles and provide experience with methods and techniques used in animal behavior research. Written communication of results and their interpretation are important emphases.

Course Objectives

By the end of the program students will:

1. Learn various approaches and methodology used in field studies of animal behavior;
2. Have first-hand experience with diverse organisms, many of them unique to Australia;
3. Explore a range of concepts fundamental to the field;
4. Learn basic non-parametric statistical procedures commonly used in behavioral data analysis;
5. Hone skills in written science communication.
6. Conduct yourself in a manner consistent with Discover Abroad's Professional, Academic, and Ethical Code of Conduct (refer to the *Program Manual* for a description and course-related implications).

Course Credit

Credit is offered for a total of 3 semester hours for undergraduate credit in Field Animal Behavior (BIOL 3720L).

Prerequisites

BIOL 1108; BIOL 3700 recommended.

Attendance

Punctual attendance at all scheduled program–related activities is required, including group meetings, discussions, field excursions, as well as lectures and any other scheduled activities. Participation in field activities (such as hiking, snorkeling, swimming, etc.) is voluntary and at the discretion of the student; however, should you wish not to participate you must inform the instructor. An excused absence or decision not to participate in one or any of these field activities will not affect your course grade. During the field studies, no student may leave the group without the consent of the faculty supervisor. Unless an absence is approved by one of the instructors or the program director, students will lose 10% of their final grade for each day or part-day they fail to participate. Unexcused absences or chronic late arrival to program activities may, at the discretion of the Program Director, be grounds for dismissal from the program.

Academic Honesty

All academic work must meet the standards contained in the University's Culture of Honesty policy (www.uga.edu/honesty). All students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The penalties for academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to) award of a failing grade for the course, suspension, notification placed on the student's transcript of their having been found guilty of cheating, and expulsion from the university, and ignorance is not an acceptable defense. Academic dishonesty will be reported to the University Academic Policy Panel.

Special Accommodations

Any student(s) who require special accommodation(s) or other requirements in this course must contact the instructor before or at the UGA on-campus orientation and register with UGA Disability Resource Center (www.drc.uga.edu). Some activities include moderate exercise, such as hiking and snorkeling.

Course-book

You are required to bring a laptop or notebook with Microsoft Word software (ipads, kindles, or other similar electronic reading devices are not acceptable for course assignments). The course-book will be provided electronically via jump drive, which is available for purchase at Bel-Jean's Copy/Print Service, 163 East Broad St, Athens, GA 30601. To purchase, please order online from <http://www.bel-jean.com/study-abroad-uga.php>, via phone at 706.548.3648 or via email at campusrep@bel-jean.com. An optional hardcopy is also available, though not required. The program accepts no responsibility for lost or stolen items and we recommend that you consider purchasing insurance for any expensive personal items before bringing them on the course.

You will also be required to bring one field notebook and one personal flash drive (4MB minimum). We also strongly recommend bringing the following: binoculars, headlamp, and laptop computer with MS Office.

Background Material

Some advance familiarity with the four field sites we will visit may be helpful. Useful internet sites are the following:

1. <http://www.takarokka.com.au/> - details on accommodations and facilities where we stay with thumbnail sketches of Carnarvon NP attractions; for more on the National Park visit <http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/projects/park/index.cgi?parkid=49>
2. <http://www.ladyelliott.com.au/> - details on every aspect of this Great Barrier Reef coral cay including flora and fauna, eco initiatives, diving, accommodation

3. <http://www.basecampfraserisland.com.au/> - accommodation facility on Fraser Island;
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fraser_Island - overview of Fraser Island
4. <http://www.coralbeach.com.au/> - townhouse style accommodation convenient to everything

Basic background readings for each activity will be provided in the BIOL 3720L course-book. To the extent possible, you are also expected to search primary literature databases and internet resources to discover relevant journal articles and/or reviews that will enable you to more fully relate results to prior research and theory.

An interactive Wiki has been established for this course (<http://biol3720l.wetpaint.com/>) and you are requested to join. Please use your real name (e.g. Bob Matthews) as your sign in identification as otherwise it can be hard to know who is who in this course. We will use the Wiki in as many ways as we can to facilitate your access to information relevant to the course.

Course Operating Procedure

Prior to the laboratory activity you are expected to have read the activity and to come prepared to discuss methodology and potential hypotheses for the activity. At the conclusion of each activity student data will be collected by the TA who will be responsible for collating and loading it into Excel. Once the collated data are available, specific discussion questions relating to the activity will be assigned, and an individually written results/discussion report of about 500 words presented in scientific journal format (*Animal Behavior* preferred) will generally be due at the same time as announced for the written module questions. Not all laboratory activities will be formally analyzed and reported; group discussion of those not selected for write up will be scheduled as needed. Expect to write 4 - 5 reports, the last of which will be due at the time of the final.

Course Requirements

1. *Written laboratory reports*

The laboratory reports will be weighted equally with the exception of the first report which will be weighted less than the following reports.

2. *Contributions to class discussion (95%)*

There will be no exams. Report grading will be based on data analysis and interpretation and quality of scientific thought and communication. Measurable progress in scientific writing skills is also an important consideration.

3. *Resident expert assignment (5%)*

Grade Assessment

Final grades will be assigned as follows:

A	93 – 100 percent
A-	89.5 – 92.9 percent
B+	87 – 89.4 percent
B	83 – 86.9 percent
B-	79.5 – 82.9 percent
C+	77 – 79.4 percent
C	73 – 76.0 percent
C-	69.5 – 72.9 percent
D	59.5 - 69.4 percent

F below 59.4 percent

Course Itinerary

Refer to the sample itineraries available online. Final itineraries will be distributed on arrival in-country or contact the office for the most recent version. A tentative schedule of course activities (weather and other factors may alter) includes:

Pre-departure:

1. 'Resident expert' Animal assignments

Brisbane:

1. Introduction/orientation at Lone Pine Sanctuary – koalas, sheep dog herding, etc.
2. Australia Zoo – behind the scenes tour with animal keepers
3. Sampling methods - waterfowl behavior
4. Human groups - vigilance
5. Tutorial on using Excel for data analysis and presentation
6. Discussion of 'resident expert' assignment

Carnarvon Gorge:

1. Roadkill census (en route to Carnarvon, collect data from Roma to Carnarvon Gorge) discussion of ecological traps, maladaptation
2. Sugar glider and yellow belly glider spotting and vocalizations
3. Meat ant foraging and communication
4. Ant lion pit construction and feeding

Lady Elliott Island:

1. Coral diversity and health
2. Ghost crab abundance, spacing behavior
3. Symbiotic reef relationships
4. Optimal foraging – jelly beans

Fraser Island/Noosa:

1. Fig pollination
2. Flying fox census
3. Honeyeater foraging behavior

Sydney:

1. TBD

There is a website established for the Australia Maymester courses. There you will find additional course information and have the opportunity to upload your own photos to share with family and friends. The link is <https://sites.google.com/site/ugaaustralia/home>. Check it out and share the link with others.