



**Introduction to Field Ethnobiology**  
(*Duke University - BIO 282LA*)

**Class Meeting**

A detailed calendar with topics, instructors, and meeting times is provided in the document “Day by Day”. However, scheduling is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances typical of a field course (e.g. weather, last-minute cancellations, etc.). Meeting locations will be specified upon arrival at each research station or field site.

**OTS Lead Faculty**

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**Statement of Accessibility**

This course represents an environment that is open and welcoming to all students. If you believe you may need accommodations during this class that may not traditionally be available, please contact any of the instructors of the course to plan a way to meet these needs within the potential logistical restrictions posed by a field course. Please communicate with us openly and recognize that accommodations are collaborative efforts between students and faculty.

**Course Description**

This course will focus on the relationship between the diversity of environmental settings and human cultures. Ethnobiology will also delve into how cultural differences and their activities are responsible for environmental change and human health; the importance of considering these connections when working outside our own culture and, finally, how environmental change also ends up effecting human culture. The course visits indigenous settlements such as the Kekoldi Indigenous Reserve or the Boruca community, as contrasting case studies to increase students’ understanding about the dynamic relationships between people, biodiversity and changing environments. In addition, the students will examine the interactions with and the uses of natural resources in human communities surrounding each of the visited OTS field stations. We will review the ethical considerations required when conducting scientific research involving human populations.

**Learning Objectives**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Recognize the multidisciplinary nature of the field of ethnobiology and its interaction within a perspective of environmental change.

- Identify the role of ecosystems and their services in different cultural settings, the environment, and human health.
- Analyze and assess cultural and environmental complexity and the role of biocultural approaches and practices in local and regional development.
- Address the issue of local livelihoods and practices, both rural and urban, in the context of globalization – environmental change- economic, social and political forces.
- Understand the role of culture as a key element in global health (both human and environmental), and the current questions and challenges to address when managing the environment.

## Course Evaluation

Type of Evaluation	Grade (%)	Points
Participation	15	150
Journal Club	10	100
Presentation assignment (Study case)	15	150
Quizzes	10	100
Exams (1 Midterm and 1 Final)	50	500
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1000</b>

## Statement of Expectations for Student Conduct

We expect you to conduct yourself in a professional, honest, and ethical manner and adhere to Duke University's academic policies. As such you will be held to the highest standards regarding academic integrity. Academic dishonesty includes: lying (communicating untruths or misrepresentations); cheating (using unauthorized materials, information, or study aids); fabrication (falsifying or inventing information); assisting (helping another commit an act of academic dishonesty); tampering (altering or interfering with evaluation instruments and documents); plagiarism (representing the words or ideas of another person as one's own); and stealing (appropriating the property of another without permission). For additional information about academic dishonesty at Duke University, please go to <https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/conduct/z-policies/academic-dishonesty>

## Grading

Course grade (%)	Letter grade
97-100	A+
93-96.99	A
90-92.99	A-
87-89.99	B+
83-86.99	B
80-82.99	B-
77-79.99	C+
73-76.99	C

## Course Requirements and Assignments

### Participation (15% - 150 points)

Students are expected to actively participate in all the scheduled activities for this semester abroad experience. This includes a wide range of activities, like **helping move boxes with research equipment during field trips**, but also showing active interest about the lectures by asking questions after the lectures, and being able to verbally express different insights from this study abroad experience during daily wrap up sessions or to answer questions about the main topics learned on any given day. The goal of this activity is to encourage students to reflect about all the different aspects of doing field research abroad. The points for this kind of participation will be 50 points (5% of the total).

During the semester, certain community-based activities will take place that will require an active participation by students (e.g. activities related to the field trips to Nicaragua and the OTS stations). These 100 points (10%) will be awarded to reflect the level of active involvement that the student demonstrates during these special activities. If you are respectful and fully engaged, you will earn all of these points.

Journal Club (10%) (100 points): All students will be involved with the journal club. With your assigned group, you will choose one current article in a recognized scientific journal on an important, interesting, or controversial theme regarding environmental change and human culture.. Articles will be sent to the faculty at least five days in advance of the discussion session. Once approved by the faculty, the article should be sent to all the classmates. The goal of the journal club discussion is to critically yet constructively evaluate the article and place its content in the context of larger local, regional, or global issues. Students may also stimulate the class to discuss the study's methods and the writing style and format of the article they choose, but the majority of the discussion should center on the article's content. Each student will be expected to formulate questions about the articles discussed, raise and/or answer questions from their peers and/or faculty participating in the session. Discussions should last approximately 30 minutes

### Presentation assignment – Study Case-- (15% - 150 points)

The effects of Environmental Change (EC) can already be seen throughout most parts of the world and predictions for the future include a strong need for adaptation. In the middle of all these processes and changes, human cultures are responding and thus shaping their future. Whether this form of adaptation contributes as being part of the solution for EC or just adapting to it.

Individually or in pairs, students will present different case studies assigned in advance by the faculty about particular cases around the globe where the culture (way of living, beliefs, religion, values, traditions, customs and more) had significant EC consequences in a local, regional or global scale or the culture has been impacted by those consequences.

Objectives of the presentation:

- Investigation of an EC case, synthesis of literature and resources, critical thinking and analysis, oral and visual presentation and discussion.
- Learning about a variety of situations around the world associated to culture and EC.
- Reflecting on the importance of the culture as a filter to reality, and the impacts of human actions to some cultures/countries regarding changes in their living environment.

#### Quizzes (10% - 100 points)

There will be three short quizzes during the term. These quizzes will be designed to test your knowledge and mastery of the concepts and ideas presented in the course (it includes readings, laboratories, activities, classes, and field trips). These quizzes will be announced in advance at the beginning of each block of the semester. The quizzes may take a number of formats, oral or written (one single question, multiple questions, homework, etc.). After grading, quizzes are returned to students (when applies) for 48 hours during which time you may review your answers and ask questions. All appeals regarding grading decisions must be made within this period and in writing to the instructor(s) administering the quiz.

#### Exams: (1 Midterm and 1 Final Exam) (50%):

There will be two exams during the semester. Exams will cover material presented in class, in readings, and during laboratories, activities, and field trips. Exam questions may take a number of formats, including but not limited to: written multiple choice, matching, short answer, or essay prompts. Exams are intended to encourage you to review the information presented and demonstrate to the instructors your understanding of and ability to synthesize course material. We will make every effort to grade exams within a reasonable time frame. After grading, exams will be handed back to students for 48 hours during which time you may review your answers and ask questions. All appeals regarding grading decisions must be made within this period and in writing to the instructor(s) administering the exam.

#### Late Submissions:

Late submissions are not accepted.