

# Tropical Vertebrate Zoology

Summer I, 2004

3100:495 Class# 34348 Course ID 001162 (undergraduate)

3100:695 Class# 34349 Course ID 00123 (graduate)

<http://www2.uakron.edu/londraville/tfb.htm>

3 Credits. Course requires travel to San Salvador, Bahamas.  
Course Fee \$1200

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## Course Description:

Tropical Vertebrate Zoology is a field course designed to give students experience doing field research on vertebrates in the tropics. Students will work in groups to investigate a discrete research question with intensive effort over a relatively short amount of time. During the course of their research, students will learn to appreciate the tropical environment, and problems associated with doing field research in the tropics.

## Goals and Objectives:

Students will complete a well-defined research project centered on a discrete hypothesis. They will relate their findings to those found in the scientific literature, and will use appropriate statistical analyses to interpret their results. Students will present their findings in a research-meeting styled format (talk or poster).

## Course Policies:

### Grading

There are specific elements that we want to stress, but we are flexible in how you convince us that you have achieved these goals. Specifically, we want you to account for a proposal, a presentation, and effort. How you account for these—we will leave up to you. For example, you may say you will write a proposal with another class member—each of you responsible for a different aspect of the proposal. In the presentation, each of you presents his/her aspect of the unifying broader question. Finally, for effort, each of you presents a data notebook that logs all of your hours and data, with an evaluation of each member's overall contribution to the project. The result of these negotiations will be a contract between the student and instructors on how you will receive your grade. The instructors reserve the right to veto any aspect of the contract that we judge to be impractical/not meeting the goals of the course.

**Proposal-** A description of experiments you want to perform, complete with relevant scientific literature citations. You should specify the length of the proposal in your contract.

**Presentation-** A powerpoint-style presentation on the results of your research. We will bring laptop computers with us.

**Effort-** 1 credit during a summer session is equivalent to 45 hours of lab time, therefore 3 credits is 135 hours. For a lecture class, this is 45 hours of class time. This class is more lab than class. If we subtract class time in Akron, this equates to about 10 hours per day devoted to the course while we are in San Salvador. Typically we will start at 8 AM, and work into the night (breaking for meals). Some of your projects will definitely require times when your group needs help (e.g. collecting animals)-and in those cases everyone is expected to help. We don't necessarily expect your project to work, but we do expect you to make every effort to make it work.

**Plan Ahead-** The library at Gerace is very limited. If you need research articles to interpret your data (and you do)-you will need to bring these with you on the trip.

**Civil Behavior-** Please remember you are representatives of the University of Akron traveling in a foreign country. Loud, obnoxious, drunken, illegal behavior will not be tolerated, and you may be sent home at your expense.

**Tips-** "Swim Ear" is an over-the-counter remedy for water buildup in the ear (highly recommended). You may want 2 towels-one for the truck and one for the shower. 50 sunblock and a good hat are essential.

**Schedule:** (may change due to weather/availability of vehicles)

5/25-  
Arrive late AM  
Lunch  
Snorkeling Lesson at Government Pier (PM)  
Dinner  
Lab Setup (night)

5/26-All day truck  
Breakfast  
Truck to French Bay (AM)-snorkeling  
Lunch on the Truck  
Snorkeling -Grotto Beach (PM)  
Dinner  
Gecko observation, collection (night)

5/27-All day truck  
Breakfast  
Truck to Pigeon Creek-snorkeling (AM)  
Lunch on the Truck  
Pigeon Creek systematic transects-snorkeling (PM)  
Dinner  
Night snorkel at Government Pier (night)



5/28-boat trip to Catto Cay & Lizard Island

Breakfast

Boat to Lizard Island-behavioral observations of lizards (1/2 of group)

Other  $\frac{1}{2}$  of group snorkels on Dump Reef

Lunch

Repeat of morning, with those that went to Lizard Island going to Dump Reef

Dinner

Finalization of Research Proposals (taking into account all constraints learned in Days 1-4)

5/29, 5/30, 5/31, 6/1

Groups work independently on Dump Reef, Government Pier, Grahams Harbor, Gerace Campus, White Cay

All within walking distance of campus

Night-data analyses

6/2- Truck  $\frac{1}{2}$  day

Breakfast

Truck to East Beach, Light house, and Cave (AM)

Lunch at Gerace

Longitudinal study- The group will contribute data to a long-term longitudinal study.

Groups Present Projects at night (all students at Gerace invited)

6/3

Return to U.S.

