Course Information
J-Term 2022 - ZOO BIOLOGY, ENSS 128 / BIO 128L
3 credit hours

Course description: This course will provide an overview of the field of zoo biology, with emphases on the role of zoos in conservation, species survival plans, captive management of small populations of exotic animals (especially including endangered species), and the use of behavioral research and environmental enrichment methods in captive animal welfare. The course will have a significant component of experiential learning, including work at Blank Park Zoo in Des Moines and Disney’s Animal Kingdom in Florida.

Prerequisite: BIO 025 (crosslisted as PSYC 024), permission of instructor.

Students in the Zoo & Conservation Science program are given priority for enrollment in this course.

Note: In addition to being the largest and most expensive theme park in the world, Disney’s animal Kingdom is a state of the art zoo, fully accredited by both the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (North America) and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums. It is acknowledged as a leader in exhibit design, scientific research, animal management, conservation, and visitor experience.

Course Itinerary:
- Jan 3-14: Working in Des Moines, mostly at Blank Park Zoo
- Jan 18-21: Working at Disney’s Animal Kingdom, Orlando, Florida

Our schedule at Disney’s Animal Kingdom will include a combination of class exercises designed to take advantage of the resources uniquely available at this location, seminars with the Disney professional staff (subject to their availability), and paid experiences that highlight course-related content (the cost for these is included in course fee). The specific schedule will be determined based on several factors:
- Which paid experiences are – and are not – reopened after the pandemic (if a planned activity is unavailable, the cost will be refunded).
- Park hours during our time on site
- Which of the staff are available during our visit

Workload will be managed to ensure that there is at least some free time when the parks are open.

The Florida portion of the course will occur entirely within the “Disney Bubble,” which – due to their safety protocols – was able to operate through most of the pandemic without COVID outbreaks. We will stay in Disney hotels, utilize the on-site transportation system, and eat meals at Disney properties. Students will make their own travel arrangements to and from Florida to allow those who wish to do so to add additional time at Disney (at their own expense). We will arrange a group flight if a sufficient number of students wish to travel on the dates that immediately precede and follow the formal portion of the class.