

Subject: OTS Grad course opportunities Costa Rica

I wanted to remind you about the **March 1** application deadline for the following three field courses in Costa Rica:

Tropical Biology: An Ecological Approach 2016-3 June 8 – July 19, 2016 (6 credits*)

Tropical Plant Systematics 2016-9 June 9 – July 12, 2016 (6 credits*)

Tropical Fungi and Fungi-like Organisms May 21 – June 4, 2016 (2 credits*)

**graduate level credits – transferable from the University of Costa Rica*

To help you imagine what these courses are like, we invite you to view the [OTS Grad Video](#) and/or click on any of the course titles below for more details.

[Tropical Biology: An Ecological Approach](#) is an intensive, six week field-based experience in tropical biology for graduate students. For over 50 years, this classic OTS course has trained tropical ecologists and evolutionary biologists using an active learning approach, which engages students in a fun and fast-paced research environment. With guidance from expert scientists, students gain experience in critical thinking, research design, data analysis, analytical tools, science communication, ecological modeling, and collaborative research—all in the beautiful tropical setting of Costa Rica. Instructors **Jennifer Stynoski** and **Patricia Salerno** will be joined by invited professors from Latin America and the USA.

The course includes a **Science Communication** workshop lead by [Days Edge productions](#) and [Black Llama Films](#). Students learn the importance of communicating their findings to those outside the scientific community and in the process develop [short videos](#) as a means to accomplish this. In addition students maintain a [Course Blog](#) and create podcasts. Tweeters @OTSgradcourse, @ots_tropicaledu and Instagram® are also tools used for this purpose.

[Tropical Plant Systematics](#) is an intensive, five week field immersion focusing on the identification, inventory, classification, and phylogenetic analysis of tropical vascular plants. This course is primarily for plant systematists but will also interest ecologists, zoologists, and conservation biologists – anyone whose research requires a broad knowledge of plant relationships and classification. This year's instructors **Robbin Moran**, **Mauricio Bonifacino** and **Amanda Grusz** will be joined by invited professors from Latin America and the USA.

[Tropical Fungi and Fungi-like Organisms](#) is a two-week intensive field course that will focus on the ecology, diversity and basic classification of tropical macro- and micro-fungi, and fungal-like organisms, including slime molds "myxomycetes." We examine how fungi are associated with other living and dead organisms (symbionts and saprotrophs), other microorganisms (hyperparasites), insects (entomopathogens), plants (pathogens, endophytes, mycorrhizae), and animals (symbionts). The course will cover collecting fungi from high elevation to mid-elevation forested areas, as well as short field and lab research projects. In addition, we will discuss how fungi affect conservation, our lives and society. Instructors **Priscila Chaverri** and **Greg Mueller** will be joined by local invited professors in Costa Rica.

OTS member institution students have priority for admission into these courses, and receive a generous discount on course fees. OTS also has additional funds available for partial scholarships based on financial need. Applicants will be advised of their admission about 4 weeks after the deadline.

Apply to these courses online at the updated OTS education website: www.tropicalstudies.org

Please help us make these opportunities readily available to graduate students.

Best,

Andres Santana, M.Sc.

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