

**TENTATIVE SYLLABUS**  
**CARIBBEAN BIODIVERSITY BSC4363**  
**FALL 2016**  
**MODESTO MAIDIQUE CAMPUS**

Lectures: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 11:00 – 11:50 AM. Green Library 132

**Instructor:**

- Dr. Javier Francisco-Ortega (ortegaj@fiu.edu - Room: OE-242 - Phone: x2080); email is best but **must** use 'BSC4363' in subject line.
- Office hours at FIU: Mondays, Wednesdays, 1:00 – 2:30 PM

Day	Lecture or activity
1. Monday, August 22 – Week 1	Introduction, class attendance will count for final grade
2. Wednesday, August 24 – Week 1	Research on Islands: Classic and Recent Approaches 1. <b>iClicker devise/system tests</b>
3.- Friday, August 26 – Week 1	Research on Islands: Classic and Recent Approaches 2
4.- Monday, August 29 – Week 2	Research on Islands: Classic and Recent Approaches 2
5.- Wednesday, August 31 – Week 2	Island Biogeography: Species Numbers and Community Assembly 1
6.- Friday, September 2 – Week 2	Island Biogeography: Species Numbers and Community Assembly 2
7.- Monday, September 5 – Week 3	<b>Holiday – Labor Day</b>
8.- Wednesday, September 7 – Week 3	Island Biogeography: Species Numbers and Community Assembly 3
9.- Friday, September 9 – Week 3	Island Biogeography: Species Numbers and Community Assembly 4
10.- Monday, September 12 – Week 4	<b>Journal Club 1 (Science 281: 695-697; Science 294: 1525-1528)</b>
11.- Wednesday, September 14 – Week 4	<b>Exam 1 (100 points)</b>
12.- Friday, September 16 – Week 4	Arrival and Change: General Patterns for Organisms 1
13.- Monday, September 19 – Week 5	Arrival and Change: General Patterns for Organisms 2
14.- Wednesday, September 21 – Week 5	Global Significance of Island Biodiversity-Evolution and speciation 1
15.- Friday, September 23 – Week 5	Global Significance of Island Biodiversity-Evolution and speciation 2
16.- Monday, September 26 – Week 6	Caribbean Palms - Invited Speaker: Dr. Scott Zona
17.- Wednesday, September 28 – Week 6	Plant Exploration in the Caribbean Islands – Invited Speaker: Nichole Tiernan
18.- Friday, September 30 – Week 6	<b>Class canceled</b>
19.- Monday, October 3 – Week 7	Global Significance of Island Biodiversity-Evolution and Speciation 3
20.- Wednesday, October 5 – Week 7	<b>Exam 2 (100 points)</b>
21.- Friday, October 7 – Week 7	Caribbean Environments 1

22.- Monday, October 10 – Week 8	Caribbean Environments 2
23.- Wednesday, October 12 – Week 8	Caribbean Biogeography 1
24.- Friday, October 14 – Week 8	Caribbean Biogeography 2
25.- Monday, October 17 – Week 9	<b>Exam 3 (100 points)</b>
26.- Wednesday, October 19 – Week 9	Video: The Central Florida Ridge & Caribbean Vegetation and Ecology Caribbean Vegetation and Ecology 1
27.- Friday, October 21 – Week 9	Caribbean Vegetation and Ecology Caribbean Vegetation and Ecology 2
28.- Monday, October 24 – Week 10	Caribbean Conservation Biology 1
29.- Wednesday, October 26 – Week 10	Caribbean Conservation Biology 2
30.- Friday, October 28 – Week 10	Caribbean Conservation Biology 3
31.- Monday, October 31 – Week 11	<b>Journal Club 2 (<i>Quaternary Science Reviews</i> 86: 89-98; <i>Journal of Biogeography</i> 39: 1891-1899)</b>
32.- Wednesday, November 2 – Week 11	<b>Exam 4 (100 points)</b>
33.- Friday, November 4 – Week 11	Plant Biodiversity in the Caribbean Islands 1
34.- Monday, November 7 – Week 12	Plant Biodiversity in the Caribbean Islands 2
35.- Wednesday, November 9 – Week 12	<b>Journal Club 3 (<i>Science</i> 294: 1920-1923; <i>Conservation Biology</i> 27: 927-935)</b>
36.- Friday, November 11 – Week 12	<b>Holiday – Veterans Day</b>
37.- Monday, November 14 – Week 13	Vertebrates in the Caribbean Islands 1
38.- Wednesday, November 16 – Week 13	Vertebrates in the Caribbean Islands 2
39.- Friday, November 18 – Week 13	<b>Class canceled</b>
Friday, November 18, Week 13, 4:00 PM	<b>Visit to Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden (optional, 5 extra credit points)</b>
Saturday, November 19 – Week 13, 4:00 PM	<b>Visit to Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden (optional, 5 extra credit points)</b>
Sunday, November 20 – Week 13, 9:00 AM	<b>Visit to Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden (optional, 5 extra credit points)</b>
40.- Monday, November 21 – Week 14	<b>Exam 5 (100 points)</b>
41.- Wednesday, November 23 – Week 14	Caribbean Biodiversity: The Phylogenetic Perspective 1
42.- Friday, November 25 – Week 14	<b>Holiday – Thanksgiving</b>
43.- Monday, November 28 – Week 15	Caribbean Biodiversity: The Phylogenetic Perspective 2
44.- Wednesday, November 30 – Week 15	<b>Class canceled</b>
Wednesday, November 30 – Week 15, 9:00 AM	<b>Visit to Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden (optional, 5 extra credit points)</b>
Wednesday, November 30 – Week 15, 4:00 PM	<b>Visit to Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden (optional, 5 extra credit points)</b>
45.- Friday, December 2 – Week 15	<b>Exam 6 (100 points)</b>
46.- Monday, December 5 – Week 16	<b>Week of final exam (time and room tba) Final exam only for students who need to have make up exams</b>

**Course Description:** This one-semester, three-credit, undergraduate-level course is an introduction to the main issues concerning the evolution, conservation and diversification of the biota of the Caribbean Basin with a focus on the West Indies. It also includes an overview of major topics in Island Biology and Biodiversity. The course will have journal clubs and lectures by the instructor and guest speakers. It will give the students a general knowledge of the biodiversity patterns of the biogeographical region where South Florida is located. This is one of the most fascinating and complex regions of the world. Lectures will cover the origin of the Caribbean and the major climatic and geological events that have shaped its environment. The journal club sections will be devoted to read some relevant papers on Island Biogeography and on Caribbean Biodiversity and its conservation. Living collections of Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden will be visited as an extra credit activity. During the visit the students will fill an evaluation form that needs to be completed by all of the students. Students will need to spend time filling this form and to answer its questions seriously to obtain the 5 extra credit points. Students can attend the Fairchild visit only one. **This is the only extra credit activity** of this course and the instructor will not provide any other opportunity to gain extra credit. The instructor is already offering this activity **five different times** to accommodate to the students work/class schedule.

**Syllabus Document:** This syllabus serves as a legally binding contract between the professor and students. Every aspect of the course is outlined within this document. If there are any questions or problems (e.g., schedule conflict with a holiday or personal issue, extra credit activity in Fairchild schedule), these need to be brought to my attention **THE FIRST WEEK OF CLASS**. Otherwise, all dates, class formats, etc. are set within this document. Any changes to the syllabus will be immediately shared with students in class and via electronic postings (i.e. emails, BlackBoard).

**BlackBoard:** The entire course will be administered through BlackBoard. The BlackBoard login can be found here: [FIU BlackBoard login](#)

The syllabus, Power Point Presentations, PDFs of Journal Club papers, and other class updates will be posted here. Students are responsible for checking the site and keeping up with all posted materials and information. Please contact me if you have questions about using this site.

**Lecture Structure:**

- During my lectures, I will use active-learning approaches (i.e. **iClicker**) to help reinforce the learning experience. These activities are designed to draw you into the educational process. While this approach reduces lecture time, it does reinforce learning of key concepts and will help you develop critical thinking skills.
- Students must register their iClicker in blackboard. Details found in: [http://ecampus.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Icler\\_BBLRegister.pdf](http://ecampus.fiu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Icler_BBLRegister.pdf)
- The first day of class we will have member of the FIU Iclicker unit who will provide details of the iclicker that can be used in this course and how to register this device in blackboard. Students **cannot use** their smartphones or the internet to answer clicker questions. You can purchase the clickers at the MMC bookstore (details will be delivered the first day of class).
- Students **will NOT be allowed** to use the i-clickerGO which is used through smartphones/ipads/laptops because some of the lecture rooms we use do not have wi-fi and therefore the i-clickerGO will not work.
- **If a student is caught with more than one clicker in their hand, the instructor will confiscate both clickers, take a picture of the clicker ID numbers, return the clickers to the students and let them know that neither one of them will be receiving any credit at all for the clickers.**
- Lecture slides are produced just as a learning tool for students but the core course material will be delivered during the presentations. Therefore, class attendance is mandatory and critical to ultimate great success (i.e. an A grade). Clickers responses will be used to evaluate your class attendance.

- There is no text-book on Caribbean Biodiversity and its conservation. Lecture notes are based on several texts and they are available as Power Point presentations. These presentations will be posted in FIU Blackboard.
- Any material covered in the **instructor lectures, journal club discussions, and guest presentations** can potentially be included in any of the texts/exams of this course. It is likely that part of this material is not in the actual Power Points since it will be brought about during regular class discussions.
- **During my lectures cell phones and smart phones are allowed, but please do not use them to send emails or messages.**
- Chatting and eating are disruptive not only to the instructor but to the other students; therefore students are asked not to eat in class and not to chat with other students. To follow the Power Point presentations and answer the clicker questions the students should print the lecture slides in advance before each lecture.
- **Disability Students:** If you are registered with the Disability Center at FIU make sure to provide Kristy with a copy of the document at the **beginning** of the semester so that she can accommodate you with whatever your needs are for the class.
- **Religious Holidays:** Students must notify us **at the beginning of the semester** if there is a conflict with their religious holiday and an exam date so that we can make accommodations from the very beginning.
- **Sexual Harassment Policy:** The Faculty Senate voted to require each professor to include a statement about this in the syllabus. FIU's sexual harassment policy is available online at: [http://www.fiu.edu/hr/eop/Forms/Policies/Sexual\\_harassment.pdf](http://www.fiu.edu/hr/eop/Forms/Policies/Sexual_harassment.pdf)
- All students must email Dr. Javier Francisco-Ortega their email address in the first two weeks of this course. Students cannot use their relatives' or friends' email. They must use their own email accounts. The subject line of this email must follow this format "**CARIBBEAN STUDENT, PANTHER ID, FIRST NAME, LAST NAME**"

**Grades:**

- Exams count for 600 points (80% of the final grade). There are six mid-term exams and each one counts for 100 points. The final exam is **only** given to students who need to have a make-up exam.
- Class attendance is evaluated through Clicker questions (20% of the final grade). For every clicker question done in class, a student can receive a max of 2 points per clicker question. The student will get 1 point for participating in the question and another point for getting the answer correct. So let's say that in one day of lecture there are 3 clicker questions, the student can receive up to 6 points that day. At the end of the semester we will add up all the RAW clicker points and whatever is the highest amount of RAW clicker points someone received in their section will be the student that receives 86 points and everyone will be scaled from there.
- Students who have scholarships, or work, or are applying for jobs, or are in the army, or are in their last semester, or need to have a high grade because of their future career plans will be evaluated based on their class performance **ONLY**. All these extra-curriculum activities will not have any influence concerning their final grade.
- Final grade scores for this course will follow the scale listed below:

A	712-800
B+	680-711
B	656-679
B-	640-655
C+	600-639
C	560-599
D	480-559
F	<480

### **Exams:**

- There will be 6 Exams. All exam scores will count towards your final grade. An incomplete grade will be delivered under **VERY EXCEPTIONAL** circumstances such as **MAJOR UNEXPECTED** health problem of the student or his/her family. Likewise, makeups will be **only** available under very exceptional circumstances that need to be documented. Emergency situations are:
  - Medical emergency with Medical Doctor's note/emergency room.
  - Automobile accident with police or garage report (lack of ride is **NOT** an emergency case).
  - Death of immediate family members.
- The exams will be based on all the material taught or discussed during classes. This material includes lectures from instructor, invited speaker presentations,, journal club sections, and content of videos that might be shown in class. Each exam will be based on multiple choice questions and/or short essay questions.
- Please bring two sharpened #2 pencils with erasers to all exams. All other materials will have to be placed at the front or back of the class, so it is best not to carry anything to the room on exam day. You must sign your exam. It will be turned in when you are finished. No one can leave unless they have returned the exam. When you are finished, you must return ALL materials given to you during the test whether filled out or not. No talking is allowed. Cheating will be dealt with seriously and severely. Grades will be posted online in the FIU Blakboard. Students can check their exams (**for a maximum period of 10 days after the exam has been taken**), but exams will not be given back to the students. **Notes cannot be taken** when the exams are being checked. After the Final Exam students can check all of their exams. The day of the exam we strongly recommend the students to come to FIU long before the time of the exam. Students must plan well in advance their schedule for the exam day; it is their responsibility to be sure that the day of the exam they will not face any conflict with other activities and **that they can be in FIU at least one hour before the exam**. If the student cannot fulfill this requirement because he/she has conflicts with other personal/professional activities then the student **should not register for this course**.
- **ARRIVING LATE TO AN EXAM: (Please read this carefully as we will follow a very strict policy on this requirement)** If you arrive to an exam more than 20 minutes late, or after the first person finishes the test (whichever comes first) you will not be allowed to take the exam.
- We will follow strictly the "Student Handbook" regarding cheating. Procedures for both formal and informal procedures can be found under the section "Academic Misconduct" in the "Conduct & Policies" chapter. Anyone caught cheating will be asked to leave the class, will be given an "F" for the course and a petition will be sent to Academic Affairs. I will go strictly by the University's policy on this issue.