

**The University of Findlay**

**College of Sciences**

**Summer 2026**

**The mission of The University of Findlay is to equip our students for meaningful lives and productive careers.**

**Course Number:** ASLA 445-01 Wildlife Conservation and Care: Costa Rica Rescue Center

**Credit Hours:** 4 credit hours

**Class Time/Place:** Loop Abroad Costa Rica: Rescue Center Costa Rica Session 1: August 16th-August 29th, 2026

**Prerequisites, Co-requisites and Course Description:**

This course focuses on maintaining, caring for, and rehabilitating wild animals in a sanctuary, rescue, or rehab and release setting, with unique opportunities to learn about native mammals, reptiles, and/or birds. Students are taught by veterinarians and other professionals about the biology, physiology, husbandry, common conditions, and medical management of captive wild animals. Throughout this course, students will learn about specific threats to different species in the wild as well as measures being taken to promote conservation. The course is repeatable with a maximum of 9 total credits provided the topics are unique.

**Instructors:** Erica Ward, DVM

**Instructor Contact Information:** [erica@loopabroad.com](mailto:erica@loopabroad.com)

**Office Hours:** upon request

**Course Objectives:**

The following Learning Objectives will be addressed or assessed as part of the course:

- **Understand** comparative anatomy of common native species of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians
- **Understand** the principles of restraint and handling techniques for a wide variety of captive wild animals
- **Understand** the indications for and **Apply** knowledge gained to perform various diagnostic techniques and methods
- **Apply** knowledge gained to assist in the treatment of captive wildlife

- **Apply** knowledge gained to perform physical examinations and health checks on various species
- **Analyze** specific threats to a variety of wildlife species and how the welfare of different species impacts other species
- **Analyze** major strategies to promote the conservation of species and whole ecosystems
- **Analyze** the role veterinarians play in conservation strategies and in wildlife management and rehabilitation
- **Create** a Public Education project to inform the public about how they can play an active role in conservation

**Required Textbooks and Other Materials:**

Students are not required to purchase textbooks for this course. All required texts, research articles and information will be provided in class.

- Loop Abroad’s workbook that corresponds to the class section (if applicable).
- Materials for notes (notebook and/or laptop, writing utensils, etc.), wrist watch, snacks, refillable water bottle, insect repellent, and sunscreen.
- There may be a required dress code depending on the program location. Clothing may get dirty or ripped.

**Instructional Strategies:**

Case Analysis	x	Library and Internet Research	
Debate		Practice/drill	x
Discovery/Independent Research		Problem solving	x
Discussion/Questioning/Interviewing	x	Reading assignments	
Experiential Learning	x	Role playing/simulation games	
Field Experience	x	Service Learning	x
Group Presentation	x	Video/Audio Review and Critique	
Laboratory Experiences	x	Other	
Lecture	x		

**Methods of Assessment:** Your course grade will be determined as follows:

Abstracts		Participation	x
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Attendance	x	Peer Evaluation	
Capstone Project		Portfolio	
Case Study		Portfolio Lab Performance	
Exams	x	Presentations	x
Group Projects	x	Professional Evaluation	x
Homework Assignments	x	Quizzes	
Internet Research		Research project	
Journaling		Other	
Lab Performance	x		
Oral/written review of literature	x		

**Grading:** Your course grade will be determined as follows:

Exam: 30%

Assignments: 50%

Class Attendance, Participation, and Lab Performance: 20%

Assignments will be completed while the student is participating in the program. The exam will be proctored on the last day of the program and will be a closed book exam. Completed writing assignments should be submitted to your assigned veterinarian instructor in a word document or google document by the designated time and due date. Details on the assignments and assessments will be distributed on the first day of the program.

Throughout this course, instructors will assess students on their participation in labs and activities both in and out of the classroom. To do well on this assessment:

- Be sure to do your best in all labs and activities and complete corresponding handouts and pages in workbook
- Be an active and engaged participant (pay attention during class, volunteer answers, ask questions, etc)
- Be a team player and be helpful to your peers and instructors both in and outside the classroom
- Be prepared and on time for all activities

Please note: this is not an exclusive list. A student's behavior, attitude, and actions throughout their Loop Abroad or CELA program may have an impact on their Participation and Performance Score.

**Grading Scale/Distribution:**

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Grading Scale</u>
A	4.00	93-100
A-	3.67	90-92
B+	3.33	87-89
B	3.00	83-86
B-	2.67	80-82
C+	2.33	77-79
C	2.00	73-76
C-	1.67	70-72
D+	1.33	67-69
D	1.00	63-66
D-	0.67	62-60
F	0.00	below 60
U	0.00	

**University Honor Code:**

Each and every student of the University will adhere to the following Honor Code:

“I will not knowingly engage in any dishonorable behavior, cheat, steal, lie, or commit any act of plagiarism during any academic work, course, or endeavor. If I observe an act which I believe violates the University’s Honor Code, I may, at my discretion, report it to the appropriate personnel.”

**Student Acknowledgement of University Honor Code:**

“I acknowledge that I have fully complied or will comply with all aspects of the University’s Honor Code in submitting this work.”

**Student Rights and Responsibilities Statement, Article VIII-Academic Integrity:**

<http://catalog.findlay.edu/en/current/Undergraduate-Catalog/Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities-Statement/VIII-Academic-Integrity>

**University Diversity Statement:**

As part of our commitment to achieve excellence, the University of Findlay values and actively promotes a welcoming and supportive environment that honors the many aspects of diversity. We aspire to foster acceptance of, respect for, and appreciation of all persons in our campus community. We celebrate our commonalities and unique differences, and we acknowledge that diversity broadens learning, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and prepares our students for meaningful lives and productive careers.

**Course Policies and Practices:**

Attendance and Participation Policy

Students are expected to attend all class meetings for which they are registered. This is regarded as a matter of individual student responsibility. The only excused reasons for

absences will be illness that impairs ability to attend and function within the classroom setting or an unavoidable personal emergency.

Students are expected to attend all class sessions on all days of class. It will be the responsibility of the student to contact the course instructor or site director, preferably before the absence, to provide the appropriate documentation and verification for the reason for the absence, and to make arrangements with the course instructor for missed work. Students are responsible for all missed class material. Students may be subject to limited participation in hands-on practice at the instructor's discretion if they have missed the underlying material needed to safely perform the task at hand.

**Final Exam Date:** TBD, Please see Loop Abroad Schedule

**Special Services:** If you are a student with a disability, it is your responsibility to inform your instructor and register with the Office of Disability Services ([ods@findlay.edu](mailto:ods@findlay.edu)) at least one week prior to a needed service so reasonable accommodations can be made.

**Course and Instructor Evaluation:** Each student is expected to complete the course and instructor evaluation which is sent electronically to the student by the Office of the Registrar. The electronic notification comes in the form of an e-mail from the UF Registrar's Office with the following subject line: Online survey for the designated course (e.g., BIOL 102).

**Last Date of Attendance Policy:** Instructors are required to indicate the last known date of attendance when a final grade of "F" or "U" is assigned to a student.

**Tentative Course Outline:**

Based on the program location, these are possible lecture and lab topics.

**Possible Lectures**

- Enrichment Assignments, Expectations and Proposals, Presentations
- Physical Exams
- Wildlife Capture and Restraint
- Daily Veterinary and Animal Care Rounds
- Birds
- Ethics and Animal Welfare
- Veterinary Diagnostics and Therapies
- Intro to Suture Patterns and Hematology
- Rainforest Mammals
- Reptiles
- Internal and External Parasites
- Necropsies
- Zoonotic Diseases
- Wildlife Immobilization

- Nutrition
- Conservation in Action

### **Possible Labs**

- Behavioral Observations
- Physical Exams
- Vet Team
- Manuel Antonio National Park Wildlife Hike
- Sloth Team
- Vet Shadowing and Procedure
- Animal Team
- Enrichment Implementation
- Suture, Clinical Skills, Hematology, Drug/Fluid Calculations
- Poas Volcano Visit
- Fecal Lab
- Necropsies
- Equine Medical Check-ups, Ranch Tour
- Workshop: Wildlife Triage
- Isla Tortuga Experience
- Workshop: Conservation in Action
- Dart Making and Darting Competition