

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 446 Elephant Management and Medicine: Thailand Veterinary Semester Abroad

Credit Hours: 3 credit hours

Class Time/Place: Loop Abroad Thailand VSV

Prerequisites, Co-requisites and Course Description:

This course focuses on elephant management and medicine including anatomy, physiology, behavior, husbandry, nutrition, diseases, and conditions as well as challenges often faced when managing elephants in a captive or wild setting. During in-person course sections, students will have the opportunity to help with husbandry and other volunteer tasks, study elephant behavior, and observe and participate in elephant medical treatments and/or routine veterinary care. 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

Office Hours: upon request

Course Objectives:

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

- **Understand** the unique anatomy and biology of elephants
- **Understand** how to perform physical examinations, diagnostic and therapeutic techniques on elephants and the unique challenges encountered when performing these tasks. During in person programs, students **Apply** this knowledge in practice.
- **Analyze** common diseases and conditions of elephants and their management
- **Understand** basic husbandry, treatment and management of captive elephants in free and/or protected contact settings

- **Analyze** the plight of elephants and measures being taken to improve their welfare and conservation
- **Analyze** the different management systems and training practices for elephants
- **Evaluate** elephant behavior and assess their welfare in captivity

Required Textbooks and Other Materials:

All textbooks and readings will be provided during the course.

- Loop Abroad’s course workbook
- Fowler’s Zoo and Wild Animal Medicine, 8th ed. Miller, Fowler, 2014.
- Biology, Medicine, and Surgery of Elephants, 1st ed. Fowler, Mikota, 2006.
- Materials for notes (notebook and/or laptop, writing utensils, etc.), wrist watch, snacks, refillable water bottle, insect repellent, and sunscreen.
- Students may wear closed-toed shoes each day or leave a pair at the shelter throughout the course, but should have them available each day. Clothing will get dirty or ripped.

Instructional Strategies:

Case Analysis	x	Library and Internet Research	
Debate		Practice/drill	
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		Video/Audio Review and Critique	
Laboratory Experiences		Other	
Lecture	x		

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

Abstracts		Participation	x
Attendance		Peer Evaluation	
Capstone Project		Portfolio	

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

Grading: Your course grade will be determined as follows:

Exams: 30%

Assignments: 50%

Class Participation and Lab Performance: 10%

Assignments will be completed while the student is participating in the Loop Abroad 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 program may have an impact on their Participation and Performance Score.

Grading Scale/Distribution:

Grade	Points	Grading Scale
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) 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 and course section, these are possible lecture and lab topics.

Possible Lectures:

- Natural History, Ethics, and Management Systems
- Elephant Anatomy
- Elephant Physical Exams
- Elephant Behavior
- Elephant Welfare and Enrichment
- Positive Reinforcement Training for Medical Procedures in Elephants
- Clinical Pathology and Diagnostics, Preventative Medicine, and Therapeutic Techniques
- Internal and External Parasites
- Conservation and Human-Animal Conflict
- Elephant Foot Care and Conditions
- Elephant Nutrition
- Infectious Diseases of Elephants
- Non-infectious Diseases of Elephants
- Therigenology, Neonatal Care, and Musth Management
- Sedation, Anesthesia, Analgesia, and Surgery

Possible Labs:

- Elephant Volunteer Activities
- Elephant Physical Exams

- Elephant Medical Treatments
- Behavioral Observations and Ethograms
- Enrichment Projects
- Elephant Nutrition Study
- Positive Reinforcement Training with Elephants
- Cytology: Blood smears, WBC Identification, and Estimated Platelet Counts
- Cytology: Fecal Floats and Parasite Identification
- Nail and Pad Trimming Session
- Community Outreach