

Hello, graduate students,

We are looking for a fall teaching assistant for our field course, California Ecology and Conservation.

See below and our website <https://ucnrs.org/teaching/cec/> for more information about the class. This is an incredible teaching experience, where you will serve as an advisor and mentor for a talented and diverse group of aspiring ecologists and conservation biologists. For this term, we have put in place extensive COVID-19 safety protocols and are happy to share this plan with you.

To apply or ask any questions, please email Krikor at [kandonia@ucsc.edu](mailto:kandonia@ucsc.edu). The deadline to apply is **Wednesday, August 26<sup>th</sup>**.

### **Course Description:**

*California Ecology and Conservation* is a program of intensive science instruction and research training for UC undergraduates undertaken entirely within the network of protected areas that make up the University of California Natural Reserve System. Undergraduates come from across the UC campuses to participate.

The course runs as a continuous 50-day circuit of natural reserves around the state.. The circuit begins and ends each term at Blue Oak Ranch Reserve in the Hamilton Range east of San Jose, with the specific itinerary set to take advantage of unique seasonal opportunities afforded by different reserves across the NRS network. The course leadership team meets at Blue Oak the day prior to each term's launch for an introductory dinner and planning session.

Our Fall 2019 term runs from **Oct 1 to Nov 19**, with the itinerary as follows:

- Reserve 1 – Blue Oak Ranch Reserve, Mt. Hamilton
- Reserve 2 – Hastings Natural History Reservation, Carmel Valley
- Reserve 3 – Landels-Hill Big Creek Reserve, Big Sur
- Reserve 4 – back to Blue Oak Ranch Reserve, Mt. Hamilton

### **Course Leadership**

The course operates with a five-person leadership team: two instructors, a graduate student teaching assistant, and two field camp managers.

The INSTRUCTORS are responsible for course organization, instructional content, staffing, and coordinating use of reserve landscapes and facilities with on-site management.

The TEACHING ASSISTANT provides instructional support in the form of field research supervision, feedback on student presentations and papers, a topical lecture, and a

research presentation, as well as tracking equipment usage and administering departure procedures from each reserve on travel days.

The FIELD CAMP MANAGERS administer campsite logistics and meal planning. They procure all food and kitchen supplies for the course, organize student cook crews, and oversee meal preparation each morning and evening.

All members of the leadership team have important roles in overseeing student conduct and safety and in attentiveness to student concerns, and meet weekly to discuss these and other issues.

### **Teaching Assistant Responsibilities**

Instruction is provided by two lead instructors and a teaching assistant/graduate student instructor. We provide instruction in the geology and climate of California and in the state's landscapes and biological diversity; in ecological concepts and conservation challenges that are relevant to protected areas in California; and in hypothesis formulation and testing, research design and sampling, statistical analysis and graphing, and scientific presentation and writing. Students put all this training to service in answering questions and solving challenges of their own conceiving, with the instructional team acting as research advisors to increasingly independent student researchers across the term.

TA responsibilities are structured to provide experience that is valuable to the graduate student in her or his training as an instructor, researcher, and supervisor, while also benefiting the undergraduates' instructional and research experience and assisting the instructors with course administration.

The majority of the TA's work time is spent advising students on their research ideas, both informally and following student presentations and research proposals, and interacting with students in the field as they engage in research. The exception to this comes at the midway point of the course, when the TA will devote a full week's work to reviewing and critiquing student research papers.

Additional instructional and administrative responsibilities of the TA are as follows:

#### *Instruction*

- a 50-minute lecture on a topic in ecology and conservation of the TA's choosing
- a 15-minute research presentation on the TA's dissertation research

#### *Administration*

- the TA oversees equipment usage and care, and administers loading of the vans on travel days
- for spring and fall terms, the TA assists the instructors in shuttling course vans from Blue Oak Ranch Reserve to UCSC Fleet Services approximately one month before course begins for maintenance and safety inspection