

## **Rancho Dominguez Adobe Museum California Naturalist Class Fall 2017**

### **Course Syllabus and Class Schedule**

#### **Instructor Information: Lauren Chroman, MS**

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Hi there, folks! I am a biology professor and California Naturalist. I study animal behavior, focusing on social behavior and behavioral adaptations to ecology. My background also includes botany, mammology, ornithology, fire ecology, marine biology, evolutionary biology, and conservation biology.

#### **Course Description:**

The California Naturalist Program seeks to foster a committed corps of volunteer naturalists and citizen scientists trained and ready to take an active role in natural resource conservation, education, and restoration. The California Naturalist course will introduce you to the wonders of our local ecology and engage you in the stewardship of California's natural communities. These 10 classes and 3 field trips cover the natural and cultural history of California, with an in-depth look at our South Bay ecology. The course will combine a science curriculum with guest lecturers, field trips and project-based learning to immerse you in the natural world of the South Bay and surrounding areas.

#### **Course Location:**

In a spirit of partnership and to introduce students to more of our regional history, this course is shared between the Rancho Dominguez Adobe Museum and Rancho Los Cerritos. Please refer to the course schedule at the end of this syllabus for information regarding where classes are held for each meeting.

#### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Understand what it means to be a naturalist
- Understand the abiotic, biotic, and cultural factors that make California and the South Bay region historically and ecologically unique
- Demonstrate skills in making and recording natural history observations in a field notebook and on iNaturalist.org
- Demonstrate skills in communicating and interpreting natural resource information
- Apply knowledge of South Bay ecosystems to local and global environmental issues.

**Required Text:**

California Naturalist Textbook

**Components of the Course:*****Class & Readings***

The class will be held on **Saturdays from 10AM to 1PM**. Classes will **begin on Saturday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017**. Classes meet at the Rancho Dominguez Adobe Museum, unless otherwise noted. In preparation for lectures, all assigned readings from the California Naturalist Handbook should be completed before each class where they appear on the syllabus. There will be short homework assignments based on the reading. Classes will be a mix of lecture, discussion, and some outdoor exploration. Dress appropriately for the weather—you never know when the instructor may send everyone outside!

***Field Trips***

Saturday Field trips (see below for dates) will run from **10AM – 3PM**. We will meet at the field trip location unless otherwise noted. Participants may not bring guests or children on any field trips. We highly encourage carpooling to field trips whenever possible! Directions will be given at the first class meeting. **There are three field trips during this course.**

***Field Notebooks***

All participants are required to keep a field notebook during the course. Field notebooks may be checked by the instructor periodically during the class or at the end. We will be using these notebooks during class, on field trips and hopefully on your own time. Keeping a field notebook is one of the best ways of fostering continued learning and getting to know a place intimately.

***iNaturalist***

Over the course of the California Naturalist class, each participant will be responsible for registering for an iNaturalist account (<http://www.inaturalist.org/>) and adding at least **5 observations**. We will go over the iNaturalist web tool on the first day of class. This is a great tool and so easy to use!

***Capstone Project***

Participants are required to complete a volunteer service project in one of four areas: Stewardship, Education/Interpretation, Citizen Science and Program Support. The Capstone project provides an opportunity for participants to integrate the in-class material with an applied work project that is done in conjunction with a natural resource agency or organization. Participants are encouraged to work in teams when

appropriate (no more than 3 people). We will deliver and individual or group presentations on the projects on graduation day. Presentations will be 5 minutes long per person (so 15 minutes for a 3 person group). The instructor will provide a Capstone project proposal form, list of approved project ideas, and feedback as necessary. Participants who would like to propose a Capstone project that is not on the list will have an opportunity to do so. Capstone projects must include at least 12 hours of volunteer service.

### ***Attendance***

Participants must attend all evening classes. If a class is missed, the participant will be expected to complete make-up activities on their own time at the direction of the instructor. Please talk to me if you are going to miss a class. **Only one class session can be missed and still complete the certificate.** Because of the unique aspects of the field trips, participants are encouraged not to miss a field trip. If that occurs, participants will need to make a field trip of their own to the site and complete an assignment there.

### ***Homework***

Reading is assigned for each class meeting (check the class schedule below), based on the topic to be covered that day. Participants are expected to read the chapters assigned for that day before the class meeting times, so that the materials are more relevant as they are presented. There will be short quizzes or group exercises to reinforce the material in class.

### ***Volunteer management system (VMS):***

Participants will be provided an on-line account to track their volunteer hours, including hours spent on their Capstone project. Tracking volunteer hours is an essential way to prove need and impact of a program like the California Naturalist Program. While not required for certification, naturalists are also encouraged to complete at least 40 hours of volunteer service each year. Throughout the class, you will be introduced to the Dominguez Rancho Adobe Museum program and other local organizations and volunteer opportunities.

#### *Criteria for service*

The activity needs to:

- Relate to California's natural, environmental, or cultural history
- Occur in the South Bay or surrounding area
- Be sponsored by a participating organization
- Be unpaid
- Fit into one of the four following categories: Stewardship, Education/Interpretation, Citizen Science, Program Support

### ***Graduation day***

Graduation day will be on Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at Rancho Dominguez Adobe Museum, followed by a potluck picnic lunch.

**Required Items:**

- The California Naturalist Handbook by Greg de Nevers, Deborah Stanger Edelman and Adina Merenlender (available locally at the Rancho Dominguez Adobe Museum, or online)
- An e-mail account
- A field notebook for nature observations and drawings, pencil(s)
- Suggested but Not Required: hand lens (10x), binoculars

**Recommended supplemental reading:**

***Field Guides***

- A Natural History of California, Schoenherr, A.A., University of California Press. 1992
- An Island called California, Bakker, E., University of California Press. 1984
- California Insects, Powell and Hogue, University of California Press. 1980
- Introduction to California Plant Life (California Natural History Guides, 69), Ornduff et al., UC Press. 2003
- Mammals of California (California Natural History Guides, 66), Jameson and Peters, UC Press: 2004
- Spring Wildflowers of California of the Foothills, Valley and Coast (California Natural History Guides, 75), Munz, P.A., University of California Press: 2004
- The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America, Sibley, D.A., Knopf Publishing: 2003
- Trees and Shrubs of California (Calif. Natural History Guides 62), Stuart, Sawyer, UC Press: 2001

***Ecological/ Perspectives***

- Ecosystems of California, Mooney, H. and Zavaleta, E. editors. UC Press. 2016
- In Full View: Three Ways of Seeing California Plants: Keator, G., Yamane, L., Lewis, A. Heyday Books & Headlands. Center for the Arts: 2001
- Secrets of the Oak Woodlands, Marianchild, Kate. Heyday Press: 2014
- Tending the Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources, Anderson, M.K., University of California Press: 2005
- The Big Burn: Teddy Roosevelt and the Fire that Saved America, Egan, T., Mariner Books: 2009
- The Song of the Dodo: Island Biogeography in an Age of Extinction, Quammen, D., Scribner: 1997

## California Naturalist Program

### Dominguez Rancho Adobe Museum

#### Class Schedule (\*Speakers tentatively scheduled)

Date	Course Topic	Instructor/Speaker	Readings	Class Time	Capstone Progress Reports	iNaturalist Reports	Class Meeting Location
9/9	Introduction to California's Natural Resources and the California Naturalist Program	Sabrina Drill or CalNat representative, Lauren Chroman, Chantal Ochoa	Chapter 1	10AM – 1PM			Dominguez Rancho Adobe Museum
9/16	Soils, Geology, and Weather	Joe Holiday	Chapter 2	10AM – 1PM		Application Installation Check	Dominguez Rancho Adobe Museum
9/23	Wildlife	Lauren Chroman	Chapter 6	10AM – 1PM	Topics Due		Dominguez Rancho Adobe Museum
9/30	Water Resources	Brynne Bryan	Chapter 3	10AM – 1PM			Dominguez Rancho Adobe Museum
10/7	Field Trip to Madrona Marsh			10AM – 3PM		2 Observations Due	Madrona Marsh
10/14	Local History	Luis Fernandez	Assigned Readings	10AM – 1PM	1 <sup>st</sup> Progress Report Due		Dominguez Rancho Adobe Museum
10/21	Interpretation and Communication	Tracy Drake	Chapter 8	10AM – 1PM			Rancho Los Cerritos
10/28	Forests	Lauren Chroman or US Forest Service representative	Chapter 5	10AM – 1PM			Rancho Los Cerritos
11/4	Energy and Global Environmental Issues	Lauren Chroman	Chapter 4	10AM – 1PM	2 <sup>nd</sup> Progress Report Due	2 Observations Due	Rancho Los Cerritos

11/11	Break for Veteran's Day!						
11/18	Field Trip to White Point			10AM – 3PM			White Point
11/25	Break for Thanksgiving!						
12/2	Field Trip to Gardena Willows			10AM – 1PM		1+ Observation Due	Rancho Los Cerritos
12/9	Plants	Gretchen North	Chapter 7	10AM – 3PM	3 <sup>rd</sup> Progress Report Due		Gardena Willows
12/16	Capstone Presentations and Graduation	Sabrina Drill or CalNat representative, Lauren Chroman, Chantal Ochoa		10AM – 1PM	Final Presentations		Rancho Los Cerritos