

January 16, 2008

ANT COURSE 2008: First Announcement

ANT COURSE 2008, August 9- 19, Estación Biológica Alberto Fernández Yépez, Rancho Grande, Parque Nacional Henri Pittier, Aragua, Venezuela

In 2008 the courses focuses on the Ants of South America. English and Spanish are the official languages.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION: April 1, 2008

<http://www.antweb.org>

COURSE OBJECTIVES. – ANT COURSE is designed for systematists, ecologists, behaviorists, conservation biologists, and other biologists whose research responsibilities require a greater understanding of ant taxonomy. Emphasis is on the classification and identification of more than 115 ant genera of South America. Lectures will include background information on the ecology, life histories and evolution of ants. The course also addresses the conservation of ants and their role as bioindicators and their importance in agroecosystems such as coffee and cocoa. Field trips are structured to teach collecting and sampling techniques, and associated lab work provides instruction on specimen preparation, sorting and labeling. Information on equipment, literature, and myrmecological contacts are also presented.

COURSE SIGNIFICANCE. – Ant Course is a unique opportunity to acquire training that is unavailable elsewhere. This course will provide students with 1) the confidence and skills to identify the major ant genera of South America; 2) an understanding of modern specimen processing and curation techniques; 3) an appreciation for the diversity of ants and their role in ecosystems, and 4) experience keying to the species level.

SPONSORS. – California Academy of Sciences, Museum of Comparative Zoology, with funding in part from National Science Foundation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION. – ANT COURSE will be taught from August 9 – 19, 2008 at the [Estación Biológica Alberto Fernández Yépez](#), Rancho Grande, Parque Nacional [Henri Pittier](#), Aragua, Venezuela. The Station is centered amid one of the richest ant faunas in South America. This course is offered annually, and in 2008 the focus is on South American ants.

PARTICIPANT ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA. – ANT COURSE is open to all interested individuals. Priority will be given to those students for whom the course will have a significant impact on their research with ants. An entomological background is not required. We aim to include students with a diverse interest in biology, including ant systematics, ecology, behavioral biology and conservation. The high instructor to student ratio will allow students to receive individual attention. ANT COURSE 2008 will be presented in English as well as Spanish and is limited to 30 participants.

COSTS. – Tuition for the 10-day COURSE is \$325 for current students and \$675 for non-students. In addition Rancho Grande Station fees for this period, covering dormitory

room and board, are estimated at \$240. Transportation costs between home and Maracay or the nearby airports of Valencia or Maiquetia are to be borne by all participants.

FELLOWSHIPS. – Four fellowships are available for 2008. Two fellowships cover tuition fees and two fellowships cover station fees. Students may apply for additional fellowships to assist in travel. Those interested in attending the course should seek all possible avenues to secure funding for the course. You should only apply for the Ant Course fellowship if you can not find other support and it is essential for your participation in the course. Beware that if you apply for an ant course fellowship it implies that fellowship funding is essential to your participation in the course. Thus, if you are not selected for a fellowship, you might not be accepted into the course. Please notify the course if your funding request status changes before the application due date.

COURSE APPLICATION. – Find an application form in pdf or doc format posted on <http://www.antweb.org>. Send the COMPLETE application with subject line “Ant Course application” to bfisher@calacademy.org.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Aug. 8. For those arriving to Maiquetia airport.
- Aug. 9 Travel to Rancho Grande field station
- Aug. 19 graduation and farewell party
- Aug. 20. 8 am departure to airports (Maiquetia and Valencia)

2008 INSTRUCTORS (tentative):

Brian Fisher (Coordinator), Dept. of Entomology, California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, CA, USA, bfisher@calacademy.org

John Lattke (Coordinator), Museo Inst.Zoología Agrícola, Universidad Central de Venezuela, Apartado 4579, Maracay 2101-A, VENEZUELA, piquihuye@fastmail.fm

Inge Ambrecht, Departamento de Biología, Universidad del Valle, Apartado Aéreo 25360, Cali, Colombia

Leeanne Alonso, Rapid Assessment Program, Conservation International, Washington, DC, USA

Beto Brandão, Museu de Zoologia da Universidade de São Paulo, Av. Nazaré 481, São Paulo SP, BRASIL 04263-000

Fabiana Cuezso, Instituto Superior de Entomología (INSUE), Facultad de Cs. Naturales e IML, Miguel Lillo 205, T4000JFE - San Miguel de Tucumán, ARGENTINA

Fernando Fernández, Instituto de Ciencias Naturales, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Apartado 7495, Bogotá D.C, COLOMBIA

Bob Johnson, Dept. of Biology, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, USA

Mike Kaspari, Dept. of Zoology, University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK, USA

Jack Longino, Lab I, The Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA, USA

Corrie Moreau University of California, Berkeley, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 3101 Valley Life Sciences Building, Berkeley, CA 94720, USA

Andrew Suarez, Departments of Entomology and Animal Biology, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL, USA

Ant Course 2008 application form

Walter Tschinkel Department of Biological Science Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL, USA

Phil Ward, Department of Entomology, University of California, Davis, CA, USA

TA: Edith Rodriguez, Museo Inst. Zoología Agrícola, Universidad Central de
Venezuela, Apartado 4579, Maracay 2101-A, VENEZUELA

ANT COURSE 2008

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION: April 1



Application Guidelines: a complete application must include:

- 1) this 3 page form;
- 2) your curriculum vitae;
- 3) a letter which describes 1) your research interests and future plans together with 2) a statement of your reasons for wishing to participate in the course (see #11 below);
- 4) one letter of reference from a professor or colleague familiar with your work (see #12 below).

You can cut and paste this application into a MS Word document.

1. Name

2. Sex (for dorm room assignments): Male [] Female [] (check one).

3. Institutional address:

4. Phone number:

5. E-mail address:

6. Current position:

7. Highest university degree, year granted and institution:

8. Brief statement of current ant research activities (one sentence).
9. Emergency contact information during course: Name, address, phone number.
10. Do you want to sign up for Veggie meals at the field station? Yes []; no [] (check one).
11. On a separate sheet, please describe your reason(s) for wishing to take the Course. As this statement will be used to evaluate your suitability as a Course participant, be sure to respond thoughtfully and in some detail. Note: The most important criteria for selecting students is **your** explanation as to how the course will impact your current and future research activities with ants.
12. Please ask someone who knows you and your interest in the course to send a letter via email in support of your application to: **bfisher@calacademy.org** and include the subject heading: Ant Course letter of support.
13. Name and address of person whom you have asked to send letter of reference (see #12 above):
14. Did you apply for Ant Course in a past year? Yes []; no [] (check one).
15. Fellowships. Two fellowships cover tuition fees and two fellowships cover station fees. If you wish to apply for a fellowship, please have the person writing your letter of recommendation indicate why you need to apply for the fellowship. Remember, those interested in attending the course should seek all possible avenues to secure funding for the course. Ant Course selection committee looks favorably on those who have received outside or institutional funding to attend the course. You should only apply for the Ant Course fellowship if you can not find other support and it is essential for your participation in the course. Beware that if you apply for an ant course fellowship it implies that fellowship funding is essential to your participation in the course. Thus, if you are not selected for a fellowship, you might not be accepted into the course. Please notify the course if your funding request status changes before the application due date.

Are you applying for a fellowship? Yes []; no [] (check one).

17. PLEASE RETURN APPLICATION via email to: bfisher@calacademy.org. Please put "Ant Course application" in the subject line of the email.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: APRIL 1

On April 1, you will be notified that your application is complete. If you do not receive a confirmation that your application has been received, please contact Brian Fisher. You will be notified of your acceptance to the Course by APRIL 15.

ANT COURSE is limited to 30 participants. Selection of participants will be carried out by committee, based on your reasons for wishing to take the course at this time. Priority will be given to those students for whom the course will have a significant impact on their research with ants. Because the Course will be offered yearly, and because many well-qualified candidates cannot be accepted because of limited capacity, we urge applicants not selected for this session to apply again the following year.

Revised January 16, 2008

