

## In Darwin's Footsteps: A Journey to the Galapagos

### Course syllabus

#### Instructor:

- Eric J. Simon, Ph.D.
- [ericjsimon@berkeley.edu](mailto:ericjsimon@berkeley.edu) (feel free to email any time)

#### Course Description:

- From 1831-6, Charles Darwin circumnavigated the globe on HMS *Beagle*. In 1835, as part of the homeward journey, he spent five weeks exploring the Galapagos Islands off the coast of South America.
- Throughout the voyage, Darwin collected data. After decades of study, reflection, and experimentation, he published his ideas on evolution by natural selection in his best-selling book *On the Origin of Species*. The ideas presented in that volume remain the foundation of all modern biological thought.
- Drawing upon original source materials and the instructor's photos from two visits to the Galapagos, this course will present the historical and cultural context of Darwin's era, follow the 5-year journey, discuss how Darwin came to his ideas of "descent with modification," explain his theories in detail, and discuss modern extensions of evolutionary thought.
- This course does not require or presume any prior knowledge of biology or evolutionary theory.

#### Course schedule:

- All sessions will happen on Zoom for 90 minutes from 10:30AM-noon Pacific time.
- Each class will consist of a 45-50 minute lecture, a 10-15 minute break and Q&A, a 20 minute lecture, and a final 10 minute Q&A.
  1. Tue Sep. 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024: Darwin's early life and education
  2. Tue Sep. 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024: Beginning the journey
  3. Tue Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024: The east coast of South America
  4. Tue Oct. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024: Arriving at the Galapagos archipelago
  - ~~Tue Oct. 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024: No class~~
  5. Tue Oct 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024: Exploring the Galapagos archipelago
  6. Tue Oct. 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024: Voyaging home
  7. Tue Nov. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024: Writing *On the Origin of Species*
  8. Tue Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024: Darwin's theories and later developments

Instructor biography:

After receiving a Ph.D. in biochemistry from Harvard University, Eric J. Simon has been a professor of biology for over 30 years, the last 22 in the Department of Biology and Health Science at New England College in Henniker, New Hampshire. An avid traveler and award-winning nature photographer, Eric leads educational international trips for both undergraduates and lifelong learners to such destinations as Belize, the Galapagos, Tanzania, Cuba, the Amazon River, Patagonia, Costa Rica, Panama, and Iceland. Prof. Simon is the author of a widely used series of college biology textbooks with over 2 million books in print that help teach biology to students in over 40 countries. Eric also teaches adult online learners via Zoom at a variety of institutions.

