



Stable isotopes in Ecology and Environment: a tool to integrate scales and complexity

Lecturers/Organizers: Cristina Máguas (CE3C, FCUL).

Date: June 4th-8th 2018, Intensive 5 days course, seminars + lab classes.

Duration: 36 hours

Schedule: 9:00-17:30

Overview: Currently, climate changes or alterations are known to be reflected on the stable isotope ratios of Hydrogen, Nitrogen, Carbon, Oxygen and Sulphur present in atmospheric gas forms, fresh or ocean water, as well as in plants and animals and organic matter in the soil. Samples from those matrices can provide a record for such changes across a given length of time and / or space. Also, ecological and physiological processes often reflect on stable isotope ratios, again setting a record in plant, animal or other living tissues. Many such processes will establish typical “isotopic signatures” which can allow for a geographical discrimination of the origin (or growth) of a given living tissue; at the same time, the time scales involved in establishing those isotopic markers will depend upon metabolic turnover time of a given isotope, residence time of a given organism or cycling time in the ecosystem. For those, and other, reasons, stable isotopes ratios are widely used in diverse ecological areas of research, integrating multidisciplinary approaches together with biochemistry, molecular biology, physiology geochemistry and climate sciences.

Objectives: Introduction to stable isotopes ratios as tools to understand global, ecosystem and community level bio/geo cycles; Light isotopes: H, N, C, O and S isotopes, geo cycles and ecological significance; Sampling and analytical methodologies in stable isotope analysis.

Program:

Stable isotopes ratios as tools to understand global, ecosystem and community level bio/geo cycles:
What are stable isotopes; isotopic abundance; stable isotope ratio notation;
Equilibrium and kinetic fractionation; stable isotope ratios sources of variation;

Reading stable isotope ratios in global, ecosystem and community level bio/geo cycles; geological and historical record; isotopes as proxies for ecosystem functions and human activity.

Stable isotopes of the bio-elements:

H, N, C, O and S isotopes and their bio/geo cycles;

Water, CO₂ and Nitrogen – the major natural bio/geo cycles, their relations to climate change and human activity;

Sulphur and fossil fuel pollution; N and C in food webs; forensic applications; isoscapes.

Methods:

Isotope ratio mass spectrometry (IRMS);

Sample automated introduction systems for IRMS: online, offline, EA-DUMAS, thermal conversion, equilibration, GC-IRMS;

Sampling and matrices: sample preparation in diverse matrices (plants, animals, soils, specific compounds).

This course can have a recognition of 6 ECTS for FCUL PhD students enrolling in it as part of their first doctoral year. For students only requiring 5 ECTS recognized in their specific PhD programmes the last 6 hours of the course are not mandatory and the certificate will be on 'Topics in Stable Isotopes in Ecology'.

Nº (min, max) students: 10-20

Minimal formation of students: Bachelor in Biology, Natural Science or related areas

Directed to: Teachers, researchers, 2nd and 3rd cycle students, laboratory technicians in the areas of environmental studies, ecology, health, ecosystem management, conservation.

Fee: free for 1st year PhD students in the Doctoral program in Biology (FCUL), Biodiversity, Genetics and Evolution (BIODIV UL; UP) and Biology and Ecology of Global Changes (BEAG UL, UA) when the course counts credits for their formation, in which case the delivery of a final report done after the course is mandatory; 25 € for PhD students from institutions of the PEERS network (cE3c, CFE); 125 € for FCUL Master students and unemployed; 180 € for BTI, BI and other PhD students; 250 € for Professional and postdocs.

When the maximum number of students is reached 10 vacancies will be available for non-paying 1st year PhD students mentioned above, being, by order of preference: 1) cE3c students; 2) BIODIV students (not from cE3c); 3) FCUL students (not from cE3c); 4) BEAG students (not from FCUL).

Deadline for applications: April 20th 2018

To apply send an e-mail to to Cristina Máguas (cmhanson@fc.ul.pt) with a cv, motivation letter and the following information:

Full Name:

E-mail:

Phone:

Professional activity: Professional/Postdoc, BTI, BI (or other non-post-doc research grant), PhD student (with/without scholarship), Lic. (Bachelor)/Master student

Academic formation:

PhD student of the 1st year of Doctoral programme BIODIV (FCUL/FCUP), Biologia (FCUL) or BEAG (FCUL or UA)?:

If yes to the above question, PhD student doing the Course to count credits for 1st year?:

PhD student of cE3c or CEF (Centro de Ecologia Funcional):?

If PhD student from another programme/centre, which: