Introduction to The Mojave Desert Tortoise
Online Lectures – Friday and Saturday, Oct. 23 & 24, 2026
Syllabus

Friday October 23, Day one, 12:00 to 17:00 Pacific Time

Times (minutes)	Topic
12:00 (20)	Welcome, course logistics, Instruction on using ZOOM (David Hedrick)
12:20 (10)	Course introductions (Ed LaRue)
12:30 (70)	The Mojave Desert Tortoise: taxonomy, anatomy and physiology, ecological characteristics, habitats and distribution, seasonality, nutrition and feeding, reproduction, behaviors. (Dr. Kristin Berry)
13:40 (10)	Q&A
13:50 (20)	Break
14:10 (35)	Threats to Tortoises (Dr. Michael Tuma)
14:45 (10)	Q&A
14:55 (35)	Field Evaluations of Desert Tortoises for Health and Disease; Effects of Diseases on Populations (Dr. Kristin Berry)
15:30 (10)	Q&A
15:40 (20)	Break
16:00 (40)	Translocations: Issues and Options (Dr. Kristina Drake)
16:40 (30)	Question and Answer panel (Q&A for Dr. Drake and then add Ed LaRue, Dr. Berry, Dr. Tuma)
17:00	End of day one (Ed LaRue, David Hedrick)

Saturday October 24, Day two, 09:00 – 14:00 Pacific Time

09:00 (10)	Welcome to day two, assure all is working, confirm logistics (Dave Hedrick)
09:10 (10)	Course Introductions (Ed LaRue)
09:20 (60)	Tortoise Field Surveys, Data Collection, and Interpretation (Dr. Alice Karl)
10:20 (10)	Q&A
10:30 (50)	Finding Tortoises and Distinguishing One Type of Sign from Another (Peter Woodman)
11:20 (30)	Video on proper tortoise handling (Rachel Woodard)
11:50 (10)	Q&A
12:00 (20)	Break
12:20(30)	Overview of Regulations & Permitting (Peter Sanzenbacher, USFWS)
12:50 (10)	Q&A
13:00 (30)	Resource Monitoring on Construction Projects (Ed LaRue)
13:30 (30)	Q&A (Ed LaRue, Dr. Karl, Peter Woodman, Peter Sanzenbacher)
14:00	End of class. Reminder of what's next (quiz and field day) (Dave Hedrick)

Sunday – Wednesday (October 25 – 28): Complete the online quiz to be eligible to attend the field portion of the course.
EITHER Sunday November 1 **OR** Monday November 2 Attend the field workshop in Ridgecrest CA.
Complete an online evaluation of the course. Participants will receive certification of attendance by snail mail by mid-December after everything has been completed and **if we have correct mailing addresses.**

***Schedule is subject to change if needed.**

See our website for details about our symposium, memberships, etc.: https://deserttortoise.org/
Email intro-course@deserttortoise.org with issues or questions.

Participants will receive a list of speakers with contact information, pdf files of lecture outlines, suggested references, and a handout listing the agencies that oversee aspects of desert tortoise work in the field.