Education Experience Abroad- Belize

GLS 120
Summer 2013
3 Credits

Instructor: Professor Brian Ritter
Office: Nahant Marsh E.I.C.C.
Telephone: (563) 323 - 5196
Email address: Britter@eicc.edu

Instructor: Professor Thomas Klee (Hillsborough Community College- FL)
Office: DSCS 207
Email Address: tklee@hccfl.edu

Class Meeting times: TBA
Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description:

Exploration of historic sites, cultural features and geography, combined with reading from applicable sources, will enable the student to draw conclusions about the significance of individual events in a context of culture/civilization in Belize. This course provides a structured short-term study experience in a Belize, preceded by preparatory study and followed by project completion after return from travel. Additional cost for travel.

Specifically, this three credit course provides an interdisciplinary study of issues in tropical environments. The natural ecology of a terrestrial rainforest ecosystem, a coastal mangrove swamp ecosystem, and an offshore barrier reef ecosystem will be studied. The alterations of these ecosystems by human activities will be examined. Further, the social, political, and economic reasons surrounding both the exploitation and the conservation of these systems will be investigated. Sustainable resource extraction from these ecosystems will be explored and compared to the consequences of biodiversity loss, societal issues, and ecological foot printing.

Course participants will be expected to observe aspects of Belizean culture and interact with both fellow Belizean students enrolled in the course and other Belizean hosts for approximately two weeks.

Note: You must successfully complete an application process as part of the pre-departure component. A significant portion of this class will occur in the water. Therefore all students must be proficient swimmers.

Also, this is a service learning course which involves two separate service learning activities which involve physical labor. In addition, a “reflections essay” is included in the grade determination.

Course Outcomes:
Upon completion of the course the student should be able to:
1. Understand the basic scientific principles of tropical terrestrial and marine ecosystems.
2. Interact with citizens of nations in tropical locations and experience first hand the complex sociological and economic issues of the land use, resource extraction, and poverty.
3. Comprehend the difference between ecological foot printing and sustainability.
4. Perceive how environmental degradation and biodiversity loss are interconnected, and how these concepts affect both the local human population and our global society.
5. Recognize the components, interactions, and flow of energy and matter through all terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems studied.
6. Meet all additional costs attached to this course.

Pre-requisites:
ENG:013- Basic Writing or minimum English placement score based on college assessment.
RDG:032/033- Introduction to College Reading or minimum reading placement score based on college assessment.
Instructor Permission

REQUIRED Textbooks:
1. Jolly, K and McRae, E., The Environment of Belize, Our life support system, Cubola Productions 1998. **Note: this book will be provided.**


Additional Requirements:
1. Internet and email access
2. Valid U.S. Passport (and/or other supporting documentation if not a U.S. Citizen)
3. Valid Health Insurance
4. Meet any other requirements for travel to Belize as advised by the U.S. State Department (including up-to-date immunizations).
5. Have the ability to swim.

Grade Determination: An average grade will be calculated from the exams and writing assignments and research projects given during the semester, plus any additional assignments given.

Tentative:
Group Project: Students will work in groups on research projects. There will be separate projects for Hill Bank and South Water Caye. Students will choose and conduct a field study during their time at each location and present the results to the rest of the group before we leave that location.

Exam: There will be two take home essay exams on the readings from the required textbooks and other relevant travel literature. There will also be a “service learning reflections essay” and a pre-departure test.
Field Journal: You will be keeping a field journal the entire time you are in Belize and will be graded on the work you do in your field journal.

Pre-departure essay exam: you will have an essay exam over pre-trip reading assignments.

Research Paper (2): Demonstrate analysis of learning about a selected topic related to the travel experience by composing 2 in-depth, 10-15 page papers on an environmental, geographical, cultural, historical, political, economic or religious/philosophical topic inspired by the travels. This objective may be completed by creating an in-depth physical research study project or portfolio upon instructor approval.

NOTE: An orientation session will be held by the instructor or others responsible for planning the travel to facilitate the accomplishment of these objectives. This will be in addition to the discussion sessions on required readings. It is understood that attendance at content focused discussion/lecture sessions prior to the trip and participation in the travel itself is essential for credit for this course.

Grade Scale:

Average of 90-100 = A
Average of 80-89.9 = B
Average of 70-79.9 = C
Average of 60-69.9 = D
Average below 60 = F

*there is NO EXTRA CREDIT AVAILABLE

- take home essay exams (2) = 100 pts. Each
- class participation/field journal = 75 points
- one pre-departure test = 50 points
- one service learning relections essay = 25 points
- (2) group projects (rainforest/reef) = 50 points each
- research paper (2) = 100 points each

Testing: Exam format may include multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the-bank, and short answer/essay questions. The results of any test should not be considered absolute. The instructor may require the students to take another exam covering the same material where questions concerning the validity of the results are present. The original test will be given a zero grade.

Academic Dishonesty Policy: In the event that a student violates any provision of the Eastern Iowa Community Colleges policy on academic integrity, as specified in the EICC Student Handbook and Academic Planner, the instructor reserves the right to assign whatever grade for the course the instructor judges to be appropriate, including a grade of F, without regard to the student’s accumulated points. It is the student’s responsibility to be familiar with the policies of the college regarding academic integrity and to avoid violating these policies.

Attendance Policy: Daily class attendance will be taken. It is the student’s responsibility to make up any work missed. Attendance will be taken into consideration when determining borderline grades. If you
are excessively late, leave excessively early or walk out of class for excessively long periods of time, you will be marked absent. “Attendance” is mandatory for important logistical arrangements and other concerns at the proposed pre-trip meetings.

**Instructional Methods:** This course provides hands-on field experience in tropical terrestrial and marine ecosystems. Instruction will include a lecture component and a field study component. Students will familiarize themselves with the flora and fauna of Belize. Students will conduct investigations of selected animal and plant species native to Belize. Students will keep a field journal and will take notes and make illustrations whenever appropriate. Students will also experience a different culture through their interactions with Belizeans. Emphasis will be placed on the connection between anthropogenic environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity. Students will attend guest lectures.

**Request for Accommodations:** Any student whose disability falls within the American Disabilities Act (ADA) and requires accommodations should contact the Student Services Office.

**Instructor Comments:**
Final grades will be posted on eBridge. Grades will not be released via email or over the telephone. Retain this syllabus for the duration of the course. You will need to refer to it often as you are responsible for understanding and complying with these policies.

**Course Schedule:** T.B.A. See separate Itinerary provided by Programme for Belize. We depart on June 10 and Return on June 21. The course includes a service learning component during our stay in Belize.