

TROPICAL BIOLOGY: BELIZE

3 Credits

Tentative Winterterm 2005 Syllabus

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The class will meet 9:30 AM-11:40 AM, MTWR for the first, second, and fourth week, Jan. 15-23 we will be in Belize. There will be assignments during several afternoons. Students should expect to spend considerable time studying/reading while not in class.

The course will provide students with a basic understanding of tropical ecosystems with **emphasis on the barrier coral reef ecosystem**. The culture of modern Belize as well as that of the Mayan civilization will also be studied. We will discuss issues involved with international travel. Students will also learn some basic guidelines for improving their photographic skills as well as the basics of web page design and construction.

Course requirements:

Week 1 & 2 - Through lecture and out of class assignments, students will learn about the tropical ecosystems they will encounter and will be required to learn a number of organisms they are likely to encounter during the field portion of trip. They will also learn about the Mayan civilization and the country of Belize. Some time will be spent discussing travel photography and web page design.

Week 3 (9 days)- Belize, C.A. - During our stay, students are expected to act responsibly and obey instructions given by the course instructors as well as our hosts in Belize. Students acting irresponsibly will have their grade penalized and may, at the discretion of the faculty, be sent home early at their expense. During our stay, students will be expected to keep a field journal of their experiences and a list of the dominant species of organisms observed.

Week 4 - Students are expected to be active participants in the design and production of a web page, power point presentation, or other activity arranged in advance with the professor.

Course Evaluation:

This is a graded course and the course grade will be based on performance on quizzes and the journal as well as participation in class activities and field activities. While in Belize irresponsible behavior or failure to follow instructions will negatively impact the grade.

COSTS

The trip will cost \$1850. This includes all airfare, room costs, meals, tips, and field trips while in Belize. Passport fees, airport departure fees (\$20), souvenirs, and snacks are not included.

TROPICAL BIOLOGY: BELIZE
Tentative Class Schedule - 2005

Monday, Jan. 3

Introductory comments, web page examples. Distribution of reading and study materials. Notes on travel safety and packing. Ecosystem introduction.

Tuesday, Jan. 4

Overview of Tropical Ecosystems, Introduction to Coral Reefs and Reef Fishes

Wednesday, Jan. 5

Continue Reef ecology

Thursday, Jan. 6

Reef creatures, coral organisms and other invertebrates

Monday, Jan. 10

Tropical terrestrial ecology

Travel photography - Tips and Techniques

Tuesday, Jan. 11

Mayan history and culture

Wednesday, Jan. 12

Review of basic concepts, fish and invertebrate identification

Thursday, Jan. 13

Evaluation of students' knowledge of tropical ecosystems and Mayan civilization

Saturday, Jan. 16 -

Sunday, Jan. 23

Travel to Belize (see itinerary on separate page)

Monday, Jan. 24 -

Thursday, Jan. 27

Recap of course, web page design and construction or other projects.

BELIZE ITINERARY - January 2005

	MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING
Day 1	Leave Indy	Arrive Belize City and drive to Clarissa Falls in the Cayo District	Explore
Day 2	Visit Mayan Ruins at Xunantunich, the Panti Medicine Trail		Free time
Day 3	Subterranean River Tubing, Lunch at Jaguar Paw, Visit Belize Zoo		Free time
Day 4	Drive to Belize City Fly to Amergris Caye	Snorkel lagoon	Evening free to explore island
Day 5	Snorkel Mexico Rocks – Patch Reef Ecosystem All Day		Beach barbeque Chicken Drop
Day 6	Snorkel Mangroves and Coral Gardens	Visit Caye Caulker	Night snorkel
Day 7	Terrestrial ecology	Free time*	Beach serine
Day 8	Snorkel Hol Chan and Shark-Ray Alley, all day		
Day 9	Free time	Depart for home	Arrive Indy

This itinerary is very tentative, we will probably do all the activities listed, as time permits and the order of the activities will depend on weather, tides, etc.

Some evenings we will meet for about one hour after dinner to discuss the day's activities and brief you on the activities planned for the next day. The remainder of many evenings will be available for you to explore.

* Free time activities might include parasailing, windsurfing, scuba diving (only if you are certified), fishing, kayaking, or exploring the island on bike or by golf cart.